

During the 18th century, the Mitre Tavern on London's Fleet Street was home to various sorts of clubs and associations, such as the Society of Antiquaries, the Royal Society Club, and various Masonic lodges.¹ As the host-venue of these societies' meetings, the Tavern was part a larger network of coffeeshops, theaters, and salons in what has been termed the emergent public sphere of enlightenment Europe. Making possible the communicative exchange of rational debate between men, and to a lesser extent women, these sites made up the institutional base of an emerging civil society. Yet, on the 5th of February 1739, something quite askew from the image of an enlightened public sphere took shape at the Mitre Tavern.² That wintery Thursday evening, a tobacco pipe maker by the name of William Wilder entered the pub and was led to a small room, where he was told to undress, put on a blindfold, and await the unexpected. Indeed, what might have initially appeared like a common gathering of men at the Mitre Tavern had in fact become a meeting for Masonic Lodge No. 1, as Wilder would undergo his initiation into the ancient fraternity of freemasons.

As he most likely expected, Wilder would have to answer a series of questions on the history and duties of freemasonry and also swear an oath to uphold the secrecy of the society. Yet, despite what he may have heard from friends or read in exposés, Wilder could not have prepared himself for a certain physical sensation that the ritual of initiation identifies as part of the pleasures of fraternity. Standing blindfolded in his drawers, William would be taken by the hand and led around the lodge, where, under the heavy sound of gavels banging, he would hear a voice announce: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"³ Unbeknownst to the blindfolded man, it is likely that the mason who held his body was of noble descent, and it might have been the first time in this pipe maker's life that he ever touched let alone held hands with a man of so high a rank.⁴

Like so many people in Britain, and especially those that lived in London, Wilder would have had some sense of the royal court's glamour. As a child, his parents might have regaled him with stories of the magical body of the king who could heal the sick with his touch. As he grew up, he likely

came across one of the many treatises and pamphlets on the proper etiquette of a gentleman. Yet, the allure of the royal court and the pageantry of its aristocratic courtiers no longer monopolized the attention of so many ‘new moneyed’ men like William, who preferred to spend their time in the growing associational world of clubs, coffeehouses, and societies that made up the 18th century’s emergent public sphere. Like many of the other men in Masonic Lodge No. 1, Wilder could not claim noble lineage, but unlike at the king’s court, such title did not amount to much in the masonic lodge. In contrast to the stratified world outside the Mitre Tavern, William would find in this lodge men from a variety of class backgrounds and ranks, such as sailors, fishmongers, haberdashers, merchants, lawyers, and gentlemen, who all purported to meet together in relations of equality and brotherhood.⁵

Of all the clubs and groups making up Western Europe’s emergent civil society, freemasonry was by far the largest and most widespread. After undergoing reorganization in the early 1720s, masonic lodges began to appear across Britain, the European continent, and various colonies; by mid-century, Freemasonry had inducted some fifty thousand men into the fraternity.⁶ Historiographies of the public sphere often laud the secret society for playing a central role in its development.⁷ In his *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas argues that in the early 18th century,

Reason ... needed to be protected from becoming public because it was a threat to any and all relations of domination.... Its sphere of publicity had still to rely on secrecy; its public, even as a public, remained internal. The light of reason, thus veiled for self-protection, was revealed in stages. This recalls Lessing’s famous statement about Freemasonry, which at that time was a broader European phenomenon: it was just as old as bourgeois society – “if indeed bourgeois society is not merely the offspring of Freemasonry.”⁸

Exemplary of the communicative exchange that Habermas takes to be constitutive of the public sphere, the masonic lodge provided a secure space in which men could develop the critical force of reason against hegemonic forms of domination. Alongside the coffeehouse and salon therefore, Habermas argues that the masonic lodge “replaced the celebration of rank with a tact befitting equals,” and thus contributed to the formation of democratic practices of sociability that militated against the hierarchical public at court.⁹

Since deliberative exchange presupposes an equality between speaking subjects, what are the pre-conditions that enabled bourgeois speech, previously considered unworthy of being taken into account, to become politically intelligible?¹⁰ One response provided by queer and feminist critics of Habermas is that the exclusion of women's bodies from the public sphere organized the conditions of bourgeois deliberation, determining not only which bodies could speak in public but also how they could intelligibly participate in the public voice of reason.¹¹ Contrary to Habermas's claims that the representative body disappeared with the rise of the public sphere, this criticism reveals the ongoing importance of the semiotics of the body. Displacing the aristocratic body and its public displays of status, the gendered body gained new symbolic currency, as the exclusion of women was not accidental to but rather constitutive of the gendered equality of the bourgeois public sphere.

While the exclusion of women's bodies certainly played a formative role in the emergence of the bourgeois public, was this exclusion sufficient to constitute the intelligibility of bourgeois speech? What transformations had to take place between bourgeois men – transformations that were dependent on but not reducible to women's repression – for new relations of gendered equality to come about? Building on queer feminist criticism of the bourgeois public sphere, this paper argues that new corporeal practices of homosociality created in the sex-segregated institutions of the public sphere in turn created new relations of equality between men by subverting entrenched hierarchies of status. A reorganization of the traffic in men's bodies in the 18th century enabled the bourgeoisie to overcome aristocratic relations of rank and build new egalitarian ways of relating out of which their political deliberation became possible.

In highlighting the reorganization of men's bodily relations, this paper attends to the constitutive effects played by both the exclusion of certain bodies and the inclusion of others.¹² In so doing, I argue that linguistic practices mediating relations between citizens in public do not replace a prior traffic of bodies but originate from their reconfiguration. The role of the masculine body in the

formation of the bourgeois public sphere reveals how bodily relations set the conditions for the intelligibility of democratic speech. However, it would be wrong to consider the body's role as merely prior and thus secondary to a politics that primarily takes place in discourse. Rather, the relations and practices of the body are not only the conditions for democratic speech but also that which lend such speech the affective resonance necessary for the birth of democratic egalitarianism.

I. The Case Study of Freemasonry

With many masonic archives first becoming accessible in the late 20th century, scholars are only beginning to unravel the role played by the masonic lodge in the political transformations of the 18th century.¹³ Unlike the more familiar sites of the bourgeois public sphere, such as the coffeeshop, theater, and salon, the masonic lodge served a unique infrastructural node in what historians have described as a “mass movement among the gentry and influential professional classes.”¹⁴ Initially similar to other guilds and confraternities of an earlier age,¹⁵ Freemasonry underwent a profound reorganization following the formation of the Masonic Grand Lodge in 1717, establishing a new and distinct set of associational practices across a growing landscape of lodges.¹⁶ Freemasonry trained men not only in the arts of sociability characteristic of the public sphere but also in republican practices of self-government.¹⁷ Featuring “a constitutional form of self-government, complete with constitutions and laws, elections and representatives, [who could be deposed by the members]” Margaret Jacob argues that the masonic lodges were “microscopic civil polities, new public spaces, in effect schools of constitutional government.”¹⁸ Often shut down or outlawed,¹⁹ freemasons and their lodges appeared to pose a threat to the political hegemony of European monarchies.

While historians have uncovered practices of sociability and self-government taking place in the masonic lodge, we have yet to attend to how freemasons made use of a symbolic politics of the social contract on the one hand and a material politics of the body on the other in order to subvert and transform the dominant model of patriarchal kingship. Unlike the coffeeshop or salon, entry into

the masonic lodge required its members to undergo a ritual of initiation through which men entered into contract with the fraternal society. By enacting a symbolic break from the logic of the ancient constitution, the masonic contract instituted a new political beginning for men inside the lodge.²⁰ The contract enabled masons to develop forms of association based not on principles of patriarchal deference (to fathers) but rather on equality between brothers. Invoked in order to justify the 1688 revolution, to which freemasons were themselves associated, the social contract thus illuminates the distinctly political nature of the masonic lodge as an institution of the emergent public sphere.²¹

Rather than simply situate the freemasons within an intellectual context familiar to intellectual historians and political theorists,²² this paper explores how a political movement such as freemasonry sought to subvert the hegemonic politics of monarchism by transforming men's bodily relations, and in so doing, materialize a symbolic politics of fraternal equality. The masonic social contract entered into during a mason's initiation ritual was not just an oral pledge of commitment to new principles of unity but involved a reconfiguration of the bodily relations common to the aristocratic world of rank and status. Seeking to produce new relations of fraternal love, masonic rituals organize the lodge as a space of affect centered on the body.²³ Opposed to the courtly practices of distance, masons sought to generate new practices of intimacy oriented around proximity and horizontality in order to constitute egalitarian relations within the lodge. Given the concern shared among social contract theorists to cultivate new bonds of feeling in order to consolidate the relations of equality underpinning the contract,²⁴ freemasonry thus showcases how political actors engendered affective relations of equality by mobilizing the charged force of choreographed rituals of the male body.

In order to create relations of equality, freemasons mobilized new symbolic practices of fraternity, many of which were organized around forms of bodily comportment. Masons built an egalitarian public both inside and outside the lodge by reworking the corporeal gestures that constituted, via their signifying practices, courtly relations of hierarchy. Masonic rituals thus challenged

the political regimes of hierarchy associated with the royal court by subverting the hegemonic relations of meanings accorded to men's bodily practices. Made possible through the exclusion of women, such rituals are, to borrow from Foucault, a "political technology of the body" that produce not only new gendered subjects – masons and men – but also new political relations.²⁵ By re-signifying its members' bodily practices, masonic rituals of initiation illustrate how freemasonry mobilized binary gender difference in order to transform individuals mired in the hierarchical politics of kingship and thus build a new world of masculine association based on principles of equality. The proliferation of novel bodily rituals in the early 18th century thus form a new set of political relations based not on hierarchy and patronage but equality and reciprocity, which ultimately come to define not just a new egalitarian mode of publicity but a novel political form of association.

II. The Fraternal Social Contract

Despite the common use of the singular noun, 'the bourgeois public sphere', Peter Clark estimates that during the 18th century, there may have been up to 25,000 different clubs and societies in the English speaking world.²⁶ Given this wide-ranging diversity, we need a political heuristic to make sense the oft repeated claim that the bourgeois public sphere emerged in opposition to aristocratic public at court. After all, it is not readily apparent why newfound associations such as the Poker Club or Botanical Society should pose a challenge the hierarchical world of the royal court.²⁷ In order to understanding the possible contestation of monarchical rule, we must therefore first attend to how contemporaries gave meaning to and made sense of their political relationship to the monarch.

In 16th and 17th century England and France, the authority of the king was both symbolically and juridically modeled on the authority of the father.²⁸ Patriarchal theories of kingship portrayed subjects as children who are born into natural subjection to their divinely ordained father-king. In naturalizing political subordination, patriarchal kingship ruled out the possibility that political relations could be grounded on relations of consent between equals. Although William III referred to himself

as “the common Father of all My People” at the turn of the 18th century,²⁹ and Louis XVI would continue to do so until his own head turned at the century’s close, by the late 17th century, there had already emerged theoretical models contesting this understanding of political rule. In opposition to relations of obedience rooted in models of fatherhood, political treatises such as John Locke’s *Two Treatises of Government* gave new meaning to politics as a relationship of “brother[hood], the Name of Friendship and Equality.”³⁰ As Locke’s great influence Richard Hooker put it: “Indeed the king is a brother; but such a brother as unto whom all the rest of the brethren are subject.”³¹ Refigured as a brother, the monarch was no longer *naturally* superior to his subjects. Accordingly, any asymmetries of political power were artificial and thus required not only justification but consent.

Whereas earlier historians believed that the novel accounts of sovereignty presented by social contract theorists destroyed the familial model of government, feminist political theorists in the late 20th century demonstrated how resistance to monarchical absolutism continued to mobilize familial logics.³² As Carole Pateman shows in her ground-breaking work *The Sexual Contract*, new egalitarian relations between men relied on a prior sexual contract granting men patriarchal control over women’s bodies. In order to overcome their subordination to the father-king and constitute a new political society of equal brothers, social contract theorists democratize not only the father’s power of making laws for the public good but also his sexual domination over women. Accordingly, Pateman reveals the egalitarian political model of the social contract to be “a civil fraternity” rooted in the law of masculine sex-right, which ensures “access by each man to a woman.”³³

Pateman’s analysis of the social contract tradition thus provides an historically informed feminist heuristic through which to analyze the *political* form of the 18th century public sphere, and in particular the masonic lodges. Though rarely analyzed through the lens of the social contract, the pioneering work of Margaret Jacob and Steven Bullock shows how the masonic lodge included many of the features characteristic of the social contract tradition.³⁴ In order to enter the brotherhood and

thus join the “masonic nation,”³⁵ a mason would voluntarily pledge allegiance to the society “of my own free Will and Accord.”³⁶ Once inside the lodge, he would discover a system of representative government with elections and a constitution. Joined together with nobleman, gentlemen, merchants, traders, and artisans in relations of equality, a mason’s consent would be constantly invoked in rituals and practices, whether admitting new members, using lodge funds, or even singing songs.³⁷ Unlike other sites of the public sphere therefore, the masonic lodge explicitly served as a foundational structure for organizing a new society based on voluntary consent.

As in the social contract tradition, the masonic appeal to consent was predicated on men’s natural equality. “[P]erhaps I am the first that ever spoke to you after this Manner,” Robert Samber begins the first public declaration to masons published in 1722.³⁸ Accounting for what kind of relations he shares with his fellow brothers, Samber writes that Masons are

fit Companions for the greatest Kings; and no wonder, since the King of Kings hath condescended to make you so to himself, compared to whom the mightiest and most haughty Princes of the Earth are but as Worms, and that not so much as we are all Sons of the same one Eternal Father (v-vi).

Echoing arguments made by John Locke, who the masons claimed as one of their own brothers, Samber rejects monarchical claims of subordination by asserting that men’s natural equality derives from their common fatherhood of God.³⁹ Opposing the courtly logic of patriarchalism, in which the father-king served as the focal point mediating relations of differentiated subordination, Samber employs the symbolic logic of fraternity in order to re-figure the king as a brother to all men. “What is a Mason?” asks *The Grand Mystery of Free-Masons Discover’d* (1724), “A Man begot of a Man, born of a Woman, [and] Brother to a King.”⁴⁰ Freemasonry thus contests monarchical relations of hierarchy by substituting the court’s symbolic logic of patriarchal deference with a new vision of association premised on men’s fraternal equality under god.

While the masonic imaginary envisions all men as naturally equal, such that masons claimed that men “of all ranks, from the duke to the peasant, were admitted without respect to person,”⁴¹

freemasonry did not seek to eradicate all distinctions between men. As *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons* states, “For though all *Masons* are as *Brethren* upon the same *Level*, yet *Masonry* takes no Honour from a Man that he had before; nay rather it adds to his Honour.”⁴² Structurally evidenced by the organization’s degree structure, electoral practices, and educational initiatives, freemasonry sought to elevate virtue and promote excellence among its members consistent with a classic tradition of republicanism.⁴³ The brotherhood, grand master De Witt Clinton remarked, “admits of no rank except the priority of merit, and its only aristocracy is the nobility of virtue.”⁴⁴ While critical of inherited notions of rank, freemasons nonetheless refused to level all differences between men even as they asserted that all masonic brothers are on the same level equal.

While critics have suggested that the masonic emphasis on distinction undermines the fraternity’s primary claims of equality, the seeming tension between disparity and equality arises because we tend to think of equality as a political principle that eradicates difference.⁴⁵ Rather than think equality as a principle that establishes sameness, Linda Zerilli argues that we consider equality as a “political principle that must *relate* different beings, ... far from denying differences (only likes can be treated alike), [equality] takes them for granted as things that must be brought into a certain kind of relation with each other (unlike must be treated alike).”⁴⁶ To understand equality as a principle that does not erase difference requires the introduction, Zerilli argues, of a “third term or party, a *tertium comparationis*” that is independent of and yet shared by the compared objects.⁴⁷ Rather than constitute an identity between two objects, the third term transforms equality into a relational concept, raising the question what kind of relations ought to be established between the objects in the first place.

From within their historical conditions of hierarchy, freemasons turned to symbolic figure of the brother as this third term that could unite particular men together in new relations of equality without eradicating their differences. For instance, Masonic songs made clear the fraternity’s opposition to the symbolic regime of nobility. “Ensigns of State that feed our Pride, / Distinctions

troublesome and vain, / By *Masons true* are laid aside, / Arts *Freeborn Sons* such Toys disdain.” Rejecting the stately signs of hierarchy, the chorus of the second degree initiation song goes on to affirm the symbolic name of the brother as the common term of their relation: “*Innobled by the Name they bear*,” the masons sing together, “*Distinguish’d by the Badge they wear*” (92).⁴⁸ Brotherhood thus serves as the symbolic term in and through which masons could reorganize their common relations against the court’s markers of difference. Rather than eradicate all disparities, the figure of the brother established a shared symbolic framework that enabled masons to put their differences in a new relation.

Freemasons thus turned to the symbolic figure of the brother in order to reconstitute the possible meanings of men’s relations and give name to a different way of organizing the family romance of political life. Despite this opposition to the prevailing form of monarchical politics, *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons* nonetheless banned political discussion inside the lodge.⁴⁹ Given that overtly political societies frequently faced state repression, Reinhart Koselleck argues that the masonic ban on political discussion meant to reassure the state of freemasonry’s non-subversive nature while enabling the masons to cultivate new political relations under the veneer of moral improvement.⁵⁰

While the outward eschewal of politics did appear to protect freemasonry, even in cases when members engaged in political rebellion,⁵¹ the ban on political discussion did much more than simply shroud their activities. In contrast to the coffeeshop, where the open flow of political discussion tended not to suspend relations of status so much as dramatize political differences, the masonic ban on politics sought to prevent the invocation of status differentials that could emerge in the heat of political disagreement.⁵² But if masons could not openly articulate the kind of oppositional politics displayed in Samber’s polemics, how then did they actively constitute new relations of equality? How, in other words, did they overcome ingrained habits of hierarchy in order to materialize the symbolic relations of equality promised by the figure of fraternity?

III. Class, Gender, and the Bonds of Attachment

The problem of building egalitarian forms of association within a monarchical world thoroughly suffused by aristocratic feelings of superiority on the one hand and habits of deference on the other was, according to social contract theorist Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a paradox of political foundation. “In order for an emerging people to appreciate the healthy maxims of politics,” Rousseau writes, “the effect would have to become the cause; the social spirit, which should be the result of the institution, would have to preside over the founding of the institution itself; and men would have to be prior to laws what they ought to become by means of laws.”⁵³ In order for a people to institute themselves as a new type of collectivity, Rousseau argues that they must already feel the “social spirit” that draws them together. However, as the sign of an already united people, this social spirit can only be “the result of the[ir] institution.” Paradoxically therefore, the affective force binding their association cannot and yet must precede the people’s foundation: “the effect would have to become the cause.” Put simply, how can a people constitute itself as equals united in fellowship if all they have known are the habits and practices of hierarchy and submission?

In order to account for new relations of solidarity built in the masonic lodge and the bourgeois public sphere more generally, scholars tend to focus on new economic ties of class emerging in the capitalist economy. In a clientelist economy that depended on aristocratic patronage, “masonic and pseudo-masonic orders,” John Brewer argues, provided “traders and merchants [with] ... freedom from the economic political control of the patricians.”⁵⁴ Freemasonry not only served as a forum for building new circuits of commercial relations but also as a cushion against the problem of indebtedness that constantly threatened men without landed capital.⁵⁵ New class relations thus enabled freemasons to overcome historical relations of dependence and patronage, consolidating the bourgeoisie as a new economic association. Yet, given that the masonic lodge brought together nobles, professionals, merchants, and artisans in relations of equality, historians have also pointed to this mixed-class membership in order to argue that freemasonry “worked to deny the significance of class difference.”⁵⁶

How then could economic ties serve as a new mode of association opposing hierarchical bonds of patronage if freemasonry also seemed to undercut the viability of class as a category of relation?

Far from a contradiction in analysis, this sort of class disavowal was central to the rising hegemony of bourgeois politics. As Karl Marx argues in *On the Jewish Question*, the 18th century bourgeois revolutions that overthrew the rule of feudal monarchs “made state affairs the affairs of the people, and the political state a matter of *general* concern.... Public affairs as such became the general affair of each individual.”⁵⁷ In order to overcome the private rule of monarchs and make politics a public concern, Marx contends that the bourgeoisie rendered what were previously political questions of property and religion into private matters and thus no longer the ‘public’ prerogative of the state. In principle, therefore, politics became a public affair of all citizens, while in reality the economy was no longer considered a political object of dispute. As such, Marx argues, “*political* man is [for the bourgeoisie] only abstract, artificial man.”⁵⁸ For Marxist theorists like Nancy Fraser, this abstraction meant the “bracketing” of material questions of class in the bourgeois public sphere.⁵⁹ In disavowing the particularity of their class position in the name of an abstract universal, bourgeois politics undermined the possibility of class to serve as an open and public basis of egalitarian attachment.

Consistent with Marx’s argument, Freemasons did not turn to the economic language of class in order to reject aristocratic relations of obedience and hierarchy. Rather, they invoked a political grammar of brotherhood to give name to the affective glue meant to unite men in relations of equality and mutual aid. “United by the endearing name of *brother*,” one mason announces to his fellow brethren, “*Free-Masons* live in an affection and friendship rarely to be met with even among those whom the ties of consanguinity ought to bind in the firmest manner. That intimate union ... which prevails among *Free-Masons*, diffuses pleasure that no other institution can boast.”⁶⁰ In opposition to the blood relations of ancestral descent that organized royal dynasties, the symbolic figure of the brother aimed to build new affective relations between men.⁶¹ Indeed, the common description of

these relations as “friendship” only clarified what kinds of emotional bonds of equality the lodge aimed to cultivate.⁶² Consequently, Masons often boasted of their fraternal spirit of collectivity, claiming that the masonic lodge presented a “unanimity not elsewhere to be practised.”⁶³

Far from rejecting class as a category of attachment, however, we should consider these fraternal bonds to originate in a re-organization of property relations. As Pateman makes clear, the fraternal relations of the social contract result from the ownership of women’s bodies on the one hand and the refusal of the ownership of men’s bodies on the other. Though Pateman does not emphasize this latter refusal, in the patriarchal world of the father-king, not only were all women and children the property of some man but also, as Randolph Trumbach reminds us, “many men were the property of other men.”⁶⁴ The fraternal social contract thus involves both the democratization of men’s patriarchal ownership of women and the refusal of men’s propertied subjection to other men.⁶⁵ As such, new relations of fraternal equality are built in and through each man’s recognition of other men as property owners not only of their own bodies but also of women’s. “Without this recognition,” Pateman argues, “[other men] will appear to the individual as mere (potential) property, not owners of property, and so [their fraternal] equality disappears.”⁶⁶ Consequently, gender becomes the medium through which new class relations are constituted, as women’s bodies form the mediating object binding together fraternal relations of equality.

Given the historical subjection of many men to other men, we cannot presuppose binary gender difference as an already existing basis for the creation of new relations of equality. As Thomas King demonstrates, in the 17th and early 18th century, “Manliness was not a set of privileges accruing to the membership of a ‘natural group’ of biological men.”⁶⁷ Relegated to the position of childlike subjects to their father-king, freemasons would thus have to constitute themselves as a distinct “natural group” on the basis of which gendered claims of natural equality could be made. In a lecture explaining the reason for Saint Paul’s entry into freemasonry, one masonic orator quotes Paul and

says, “*When I was a child* says he [Paul], *I understood as a Child ... but when I became a man* (an Expression Emphatically Significant among us) *when I became a man then*, says he, *I put away Childish things*.”⁶⁸ Not to be but to “become a man,” a phrase the speaker repeats for his audience, is an “expression emphatically significant” to the masonic project. Rather than draw on a prior manliness, freemasonry sought to negate men’s status as children under the patriarchal king by simultaneously transforming children into men and men into brothers.⁶⁹

According to Pateman’s socialist feminist account of the social contract, the constitution of manliness and the formation of fraternal bonds of equality originate in the transformation of men-as-property into men-as-property-owners (of their own and of women’s bodies). In establishing men’s access to women’s bodies and denying access to other men’s bodies, the social contract is not simply a sexual contract but more specifically, as Monique Wittig notes, a heterosexual contract.⁷⁰ The social contract’s masculine association is thus an aggregation of heterosexual men who appear to have little if any interest in their brothers except for their shared ownership in women’s bodies.⁷¹ Yet, given that heterosexual exchange had been in place prior to the emergence of the social contract as Pateman describes it, how do men who were otherwise unrelated to each other except by their place in an inherited hierarchy come to develop bonds of civic solidarity? Egalitarian forms of associations predicated on manliness did not pre-exist but had to be developed. As such, the exchange of women is a necessary but not sufficient condition of this fraternal world-building. In restricting fraternity to the question of hetero-patriarchal exchange therefore, we risk undertheorizing the fraternal practices involved in the construction of male democratic subjects and their egalitarian bonds.

Since the opposition between hetero-and homosexual desire was only starting to become consolidated in the early 18th century, we must understand how the heterosexual contract comes to regulate the relations of male-male intimacy that held the fraternal contract together. As Kenneth Loiselle admits in his study of masonic networks of friendship, letters shared among masons contained

“intense expressions of love that many men today undoubtedly would find uncomfortably close to the vocabulary of erotic relationships.”⁷² Given that the masonic project aimed to cultivate such affectively intense relations of love between men, what kind of ritualistic practices of homosociality did masons enact inside the secret confines of the lodge in order to generate the kind of felt sensibilities that could sustain relations of equality between men. The instantiation of the social contract inside the masonic lodge reveals that men did not seek to deny access to other men’s bodies but rather reorganize what this access entailed. Attentive to both the traffic in women’s and men’s bodies, a queer-feminist lens of political analysis will disclose how differences in this gendered economy of bodies marks the difference between the social contract’s patriarchal relations of domination on the one hand and homosocial relations of equality on the other.

IV. The Bodily Practices of the Symbolic Brother

So how exactly did masons reconfigure their relations in order to realize the political principle of equality promised by the symbolic figure of the brother? While a discursive configuration of the public sphere would suggest centering analysis around masonic practices of communicative exchange, masons tended to focus their attention on questions on bodily practice. Indeed, freemasons were well acquainted with the structures of etiquette organizing the royal court, especially in the early years of modern freemasonry, as many masons served as magistrates and politicians, with some even attending to royalty in their bedchambers.⁷³ Consequently, freemasons such as Robert Samber challenged the structures of bodily etiquette materializing court hierarchies. Though he advises fellow masons to “avoid as much as possible the Court,” Sambers argues that

[if any mason] should happen to be in any Employment which obliges your constant Attendance here; if your Prince ... should cast his Honours on you unsought, unlookt for; exert your selves like Men. Be affable and courteous to all Men, and that not in Words only, but in Reality. And especially to the Brethren; it is your Duty *particularly* to be kind to them.⁷⁴

Attuned to the gestures of subordination organizing courtly relations,⁷⁵ Samber enjoins his fellow masons to extend the friendly practices of courtesy to all men regardless of rank. Masons must do so,

he writes, not solely “in Words, but in Reality,” that is, in the corporeality of their everyday conduct. Rather than use their bodies in aristocratic displays of rank, masons must “act accordingly, and shew yourself (what you are) MEN.”⁷⁶ Opposed to the symbolic regime of status, masonic society traffics in the sign of manhood, and more particularly, in the name of the brother as a symbol of equality. In order to orient themselves around the new masculine figure of the brother therefore, the mason must learn to conduct himself as a man. He must, in other words, learn a bit of drag.

Against the courtly gestures of subordination that constituted so many men as the dependent boys of the father-king, freemasonry aimed to create a new society of equal men by transforming the material practices of the masculine body in and through rituals of the social contract. As the first public exposure of masonic ritual in 1723 revealed, the mason “is to behold a thousand different Postures and Grimaces, all of which he must exactly imitate, or undergo the Discipline till he does.”⁷⁷ While Masonic attention to the details of the body may seem like a quaint holdover of the aristocratic world of courtesy, I am inclined to see it as part of freemasonry’s larger engagement with novel transformations taking place in the domain of knowledge. Rooted in arguments put forward in John Locke’s *Essay Concerning Humane Understanding*, enlightenment ideals of science in the 18th century presented a new paradigm of knowledge founded on the sensuous body.

If it shall be demanded then, *When a Man begins to have any Ideas?* I think, the true Answer is, When he first has a *Sensation*. For since there appear not to be any *Ideas* in the Mind, before the Senses have conveyed any in, I conceive that *Ideas* in the Understanding, are coeval with *Sensation*; which is such an Impression or Motion, made in some part of the Body, as produces some Perception in the Understanding.⁷⁸

Affected by the external world, the body and its sensations, Locke argues, become the means through which humans come to have ideas about their world. Not simply the origin of thinking, Locke argues that bodily sensation is fundamental to the work of “reflection,” which is “the mind[’s ability] ... to reflect on its own operations about the ideas got by sensation.”⁷⁹ Contrary to a Habermasian

conception of reason as the adjustment of ideas according to the force of the better argument, Locke centers embodiment and the body's capacity to be affected in an account of human understanding.

By the early 18th century, Locke's empiricism and its theory of association influenced new models of scientific research that sought to explore how the body's sensory organs enable humans to grasp their empirical reality.⁸⁰ According to the new science of sensibility, it is no longer the abstract space of the soul but rather the materiality of the sensing body that provides the key to ideational thought.⁸¹ These enlightenment ideals of science were, as historians have amply documented, widely promoted and publicized throughout the network of masonic lodges.⁸² Less commonly noted is how the very style of these scientific lectures showcased the affective understandings of knowledge formation central to ideas of sensibility. For instance, the influential masonic reformer and scientific lecturer, John Theophilus Desaguliers, developed innovative methods for demonstrating scientific theories by way of practical experiments rather than pure mathematics.⁸³ Steeped in new empiricist ideas regarding the role of bodily senses in the apprehension of knowledge, masonic educators such as Desaguliers sought to persuade audiences not by giving abstract proofs by way of propositional logic but rather by turning to the affective force of the example grasped by the body's senses.

The masonic lodge was therefore a venue for the promotion of new scientific theories rooted in empiricism, and the use of affective rituals for pedagogical purposes suggests that the lodge was itself the site for an ongoing experiment in the science of sensibility. "We are creatures of sense rather than of intellection," Reverend John Clark told fellow masons:

[T]he majority of mankind cannot be made to feel the force of truth that stands naked and unconnected with something sensible. Masonry has kept this fact full in view, and endeavoured to meet the difficulty in its mode of inculcating duty. This mode consists in the use of sensible signs, addressed to the eye, the ear, and the touch.... The mode of teaching by sensible objects is as much more impressive than [discourse by metaphors and similes].⁸⁴

Freemasonry aims to teach its members the duties of fraternity by way of the affective force of symbols apprehended through the bodily senses rather than what Clark calls the intellection of philosophical

lectures. Echoing Locke's argument that "*Ideas* in the Understanding, are coeval with ... an Impression or Motion, made in some part of the Body," Clark writes that "if [symbols] are addressed to the senses, and the truths associated with them understood, they will produce an impression."⁸⁵ Masonic rituals aim to sensually impress and impress upon their participants' bodies. Unlike the court's rituals, however, oriented to the reproduction of patriarchal relations of subordination vis-à-vis the king's body, masonic rituals seek to produce, as Clark puts it, a "growing attachment between the individuals, who ... feel stirring within them the same emotions ... [and are joined together as] a band of brothers."

Rituals, as anthropologists often note, make use of symbolic motions and gestures of the human body in order to communicate meaning to their participants.⁸⁶ Masonic rituals of the social contract channel the meaning of fraternity as a sensible feeling in and of the body. Through the practice of freemasonry, men "learnt to love men without fear," as one mason put it; inside the lodge, "one can surrender oneself without reservation to the movements of the heart and be enveloped voluptuously be celestial friendship."⁸⁷ Actively engaging the sensuous bodies of its members, the masonic lodge belies its common representation as solely a site of linguistic exchange. Situated within the scientific enlightenment's nexus of power/knowledge, freemasonry stressed the transformative power of bodily affections rather than the force of the better argument. The ritual of the masonic contract thus showcases what social contract theorists commonly argued is the central role of the passions in re-constituting subjects of the contract. By reorganizing their bodily practices, masonic rituals cultivate new fraternal sensibilities, teaching masons how to relate to the symbolic figure of the brother as the common term uniting them together in new relations of equality. Seeking to transform subordinate boys into equal men, masonic rituals thus become a prime site of gender trouble.

V. Masonic Rituals of Initiation

To enter into the polity of the masonic lodge, a mason must undergo a ritual of initiation, where, as one mason described the process, he would "leave behind the previous man, the man of our

century, and become a new man, the masonic man.”⁸⁸ According to Masonic historian David Harrison, the “ritual was at the center of [Freemasonry’s] ‘modernisation,’” such that the history of modern freemasonry can be understood as the history of its rituals.⁸⁹ Despite their centrality, however, Kenneth Loiselle suggests that scholars have largely neglected the study of masonic rituals because of their concern with “Freemasonry’s political significance.” The rituals, he argues, “were not corrosive to the Old Regime,” and thus should be interpreted not politically but theologically, as “generat[ing] a form of ‘ritualized friendship’ that was anchored in the moral foundation of an ecumenical Christianity.”⁹⁰ Intended as a corrective to secularist interpretations of freemasonry, Loiselle’s emphasis on the ritual’s theological elements need not oppose its political analysis, however. Read within the tradition of political theology, the masonic ritual is an eminently *political* ritual that transgressed the embodied political structures of the *ancien régime*. Accordingly, we could say that the political analysis of freemasonry has neglected masonic rituals not because of the absence of politics in the ritual but rather because of the absence of the body in our political analysis.

The ritual of initiation marks a mason’s threshold of entry into a new society of men organized on principles of fraternal equality. In entering into the masonic contract, a mason symbolically breaks with the monarchical world and its patriarchal logics of subordination by pledging allegiance to strangers who he must learn to love as his brothers. Far from simply an exchange of words, the masonic contract involves an intricate choreography of men’s bodies (fig. 1). Located within an 18th century tradition of sentimental dramaturgy, Pannill Camp argues that the masonic ritual’s affectively rich performances “produced male bodies that were intimately bound to each other” and in so doing, “promoted passionate homosocial affection that was vital to fraternal cohesion.”⁹¹ Attending to such masonic body performances in light of the royal court’s structures of etiquette, I argue that ritual of initiation scrambles aristocratic regimes of status and impresses upon men’s bodily relations new symbolic meaning. Enveloping the neophyte within its elaborate theatrics, the masonic ritual subverts

corporeal relations of distance and verticality characteristic of courtly hierarchy and reorganizes men's bodies according to new relations of proximity and horizontality. In so doing, these rituals make use of the masculine body in order to foster egalitarian attachments between men and make flesh the symbolic figure of brotherhood.

In reconstructing the masonic ritual, the following analysis draws on documents published during the early to mid-eighteenth often by self-avowed freemasons intending to reveal the secrets of freemasonry. Publicly accessible via newspapers and bookstores, these exposures served not only as advertising for freemasonry, increasing its social prominence in the bourgeois public, but also as manuals of instruction for a rapidly rising number of lodges throughout the 18th century.⁹² Exposures published in England, France, and the Hague were often translated, plagiarized, and repurposed in texts across the Channel, suggesting not only that the ritual form cannot be considered of distinctly English origin, but also that broad continuities in ritual practice likely existed across the transnational landscape of lodges.⁹³ In drawing from a collection of exposures therefore, the following account presents the general corporeal scheme of the masonic ritual in order to highlight how the affectively charged choreography of the masonic body subverted practices of aristocratic conduct and instituted a new relations of fraternal equality.⁹⁴

Ritual of the Entered Apprentice

To join the brotherhood and start his journey in becoming a new man and a mason, members must pass through the initiation ritual of the entered apprentice. Entering the lodge, the initiate is led to a small room and stripped of his clothing and any kinds of metals on his body, until he is left only in his drawers (fig. 1 & 2). Divested of his clothing and any metals, the ritual enacts not only an economic leveling in a context where mobile capital increasingly marked differentials of power but also a political leveling, as the candidate loses all material accoutrements that signified his status, such as jewelry, buckled shoes, insignias of rank, expensive fabrics, and also weapons such as swords.⁹⁵ The

loss of these status signifiers meant the momentary loss of his symbolic position in the aristocratic hierarchy operative outside the lodge. Eradicating political and economic differences, stripping the mason also served to emphasize the difference of gender, as the candidate's exposed breast "assure[s] the Lodge] that they were not imposed on by a Woman."⁹⁶ The naked breast and the meaning of its binary gender difference makes possible the reorganization of men's relations according to a gendered logic of the masculine body. The ritual of the masonic contract thus begins by suspending the candidate's worldly status, reducing him to a natural condition of equality with other men *as men*.

Blindfolded, the candidate is then led around the lodge "in a halting-moving Posture, by the Hand of a Friend, whom I afterwards found to be a Brother" (fig. 3).⁹⁷ Symbolizing his ambiguous and uncertain status in the world, the initiate moves hesitatingly, unsure of his steps and position in the lodge. Under the disorienting sound of gavels hammering, the candidate might tighten his grip around his fellow brother's hand or arm, as he hears a voice announce: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"⁹⁸ The candidate must then answer a series of questions concerning masonic history and swear an oath of loyalty to his newfound brethren. Having "sworn to love each other,"⁹⁹ the candidate is asked "Who I put my Trust in," to which he answers, "In God," at which point he is taken again by the hand and told to "fear no Danger."¹⁰⁰ The candidate thus gives his vulnerable body over to his brother masons, showcasing his trust in god as the trust of his fellow brother. Herein, the ritual imparts the meaning of fraternity as a relation of trust learned in and through the tactical sensation of another man's guiding touch.

Having been led around the lodge, the initiate clasps the hand of the lodge master and learns the masonic grip and word of the entered apprentice as the distinctive gestures that marks him out as a mason. Testing his knowledge, the brother beside him asks for the masonic word, to which the initiate responds, in a demonstration of fraternal reciprocity, "I'll halve it with you." Hand in hand, both men then split the word.¹⁰¹ In forming a single word out of their split speech, the brothers seem

to articulate themselves as part objects that make up a larger fraternal whole. In one exposure, the masonic word is whispered from mason to mason around the lodge, from the youngest to the most recently initiated, thus forming a closed circle of speech.¹⁰² As such, the ceremony appears to end with the performance of an allegory of fraternity, as the contiguity of their bodies formed by their clasped hands create, as it were, a new body politic, singular in voice and united in body.

As I have attempted to showcase in narrating the ritual of the entered apprentice, the initiation ritual establishes new relations of association between men, as the initiate is divested of the corporeal aesthetics that previously defined his wordily status and is reborn as a new man and brother. By mobilizing an intricate choreography of the masculine body, the ritual imprints upon the mason the symbolic meaning of fraternity. As the mason Leon Hyneman puts it, “Within the mystic sanctums brother meets brother in fond embrace and vows of fidelity are registered on the heart which neither flint nor steel can erase. The pulse of affection beats strong, as, hand firmly grasped in hand, the mystery is communicated which binds in a golden chain the members of the mystic tie” (14). But what exactly is the political content of this mystery that the ritual communicates through the reorganization of the masonic body?

The conduct and etiquette of bodies at court displayed the nuanced differences of status and distinction that upheld the aristocratic world of hierarchy. Organized along the axes of distance and verticality, the corporeal architecture of the royal court both expressed and reproduced relations of attachment and obedience to the body of the king, which sat the peak of the royal court’s hierarchy. Many of the men undergoing initiation into freemasonry would have rarely if ever shaken hands with, let alone place their vulnerable bodies in, the arms of a man from another class. “*In all [ancient] Contracts and Agreements ... it was usual to take Each Other by the Right Hand,*” an essay entitled *A Defence of Masonry* printed in the 1738 edition of the *Constitutions* reads, “such a Conjunction was a Token of *Amity and Concord*; whence at all friendly Meetings they join Hands, as a Sign of the *Union* of their

Souls.”¹⁰³ In placing the bodies of men from various class backgrounds in new relations of intimacy, the ritual transgresses the royal court’s stratified codes of conduct and imparts to its participants new meanings for the association of men. By reorganizing a mason’s bodily relations therefore, the masonic contract’s choreographies of intimacy negate the candidate’s prior attachment to aristocratic chains of hierarchy and sets the conditions for the formation of new bonds of reciprocity between men.

Ritual of the Master Mason

Having entered the brotherhood and started his journey in learning the virtues and etiquette of freemasonry, the mason may at some point become ready to obtain the degree of Master Mason, the highest rank a mason can earn.¹⁰⁴ Emerging in England in the early 1720s and adopted by French lodges in the 1740s, the degree of master mason is a distinctive feature of modern freemasonry.¹⁰⁵ Compared with the ritual of the entered apprentice, the intensified corporeal intimacy of the master mason’s initiation further showcases the masonic project of constituting new egalitarian relations between men as a pedagogical project of bodily affect. Moreover, the ritual of the master mason reveals freemasonry to be a political theology of brotherhood opposed to the royal court’s theological politics of paternal kingship.

While all the masonic degree rituals follow the same general scheme outlined above, the novel innovation of the master mason’s initiation ritual is the symbolic transformation of the candidate into Hiram Abiff, freemasonry’s mythical founder and chief architect to king Solomon.¹⁰⁶ Suddenly transformed into Hiram, the candidate is accosted by a series of men who demand to know the master mason’s secret word. Having already pledged his oath of allegiance, the candidate must refuse and so is struck three times: first, “across the Throat with a twenty-four inch gauge”; second, “with the square on his Left-breast”; and finally, “with a common Gravel, or Setting-Maul, upon his Head, which prov’d his Death.”¹⁰⁷ Providing texture to this scene, exposures note that the ritual “requires no small Share of Courage, for the Blows are frequently so severe, that the poor Candidate falls backward on

the Floor;” in fact, so “great his Terror” that “many instances can be produced, of Persons in this Situation, who have requested on their Knees to be set at Liberty, and others have made their Escape as fast as possible out of the Lodge.”¹⁰⁸ Beaten and then buried by his murderers (at some lodges he is wrapped in a carpet), the candidate-as-Hiram awaits his fate.¹⁰⁹

Much like the divestment of the candidate’s material accessories in the first ritual, the beating of the candidate’s body intensifies the destruction of his prior social standing outside the lodge. Breaking down the candidate’s worldly status by breaking down his body, this early form of fraternal hazing showcases how masons materially enact the social contract as a symbolical break from men’s status relations in order to form new bonds of attachment. The ritual deploys the affective force of terror and strikes, quite literally, at the candidate’s nervous system in order to wear down his psychophysical defenses.¹¹⁰ As Locke puts it, if “apprehension and concernment accompany [the words or names that men frequently use]; ... [then] the idea is likely to sink the deeper, and spread the further.”¹¹¹ And so, just as a “violent impression upon the body forces the mind to perceive, and attend to it,”¹¹² the press of other men’s bodies makes the candidate more susceptible to receive the impression of fraternity’s deeper meanings. Bruised and broken, the candidate-as-Hiram is not simply vulnerable to but in fact reliant on his fellow masons – as he will soon discover, it will be a brother’s embrace that will return his corpse to life.

As king Solomon’s chief architect is declared missing, the ritual recounts how Hiram is accidentally discovered by masonic workers set out to search for him. Wishing to exhume the rotting corpse, the masons attempt to raise the body but discover that at each attempt Hiram’s “Skin came off.”¹¹³ Realizing that only a master’s secret grip can maintain the cadaver’s integrity, a master mason employs the master’s grip and lifts the candidate into an embrace called “the five points of fellowship.” As the ritual stipulates, this embrace must have five points of mirrored bodily contact (fig. 4). Some exposures list the five points of contact as foot-to-foot; knee-to-knee; breast-to-breast (or heart-to-

heart), hand-to-hand, and hand-to-back while others substitute ear-to-ear or cheek-to-cheek for contact between the hands and back.¹¹⁴ In contrast to these standard five points, the first exposure published in 1723 lists six points of fellowship, the additional being “Tongue to Tongue,”¹¹⁵ a point of contact that subsequent exposures will not repeat, possibly as a result of widespread sodomy rumors against the fraternity. With these points established and the two men locked in a symmetrical embrace, the ritual comes to a close as the master mason whispers in the candidate’s ear the master’s secret word, revitalizing the dead man, who is now reborn as a master mason.

According to the ritual exposures, each point of bodily contact symbolizes a different articulation of the virtues of solidarity and mutual aid: to put forth a hand to help a brother; “to go a *Foot* out of my Way to serve a Brother”; to pray for a brother “when I *kneel* down to Prayers”; to keep a “Brother’s secrets as my own [in my *breast*]”; “always be willing to support a Brother” as signified by the hand supporting the back.¹¹⁶ The emphasis on each point of contact as a site of masonic virtue suggests how these choreographies of bodily intimacy serve, as Panill Camp puts it, as “mnemonic techniques that transferred Masonic knowledge on to the bodies of participants” – a knowledge that was not abstractly intellectual so much as sensuously felt in the touch of bodily contact.¹¹⁷ Techniques of contiguous bodily contact thus aimed to spark new relations of feeling and attachment between men through the intimate touch and feel of the brother’s body.

Continuous with the ritual of the entered apprentice, the Hiram ritual showcases the centrality of the material body in the affective work of creating new chains of attachment between men. In forming these bonds under the sign of brotherhood and investing masons in symbolic relations of fraternity, the ritual takes up and transforms the politico-theological tradition of the king’s two bodies. Given that many masons served as magistrates during freemasonry’s formative years when the Hiram ritual was established, candidates must have been familiar with the king’s two bodies doctrine, and may have noticed the similarities between the political theology of the masonic lodge and that of the

royal court. Within the Hiram ritual, king Solomon's chief architect is identified with what the masons call the Grand Architect of the Universe, that is, god; the candidate's transformation into the biblical Hiram, his fidelity to and sacrifice for his fellow brothers, in addition to his subsequent resurrection, all entailed his own divine conversion.¹¹⁸ As with the divinity of the sacred body politic that makes the king's natural body divine, so too does the ritual transform the mason into a divine figure, and like the king's healing touch, so too does a mason's embrace express the power to heal and make live.

Insofar as the ritual invests the mason's organic body with a divinity resembling the sacred nature of the king's body, the masonic social contract does not align the mason's body with the metaphysical body of god-the-father, since masonic relations are not isomorphic to monarchical relations between father-kings and their children. Rather, the masonic contract incorporates the mason's natural body with the sacred body of the brother, instituting a novel articulation of the body politic based on a political theology of fraternity. In what might be the first public representation of the masonic embrace of fellowship (fig. 5), *The Grand Mystery of Free-Masons Discover'd* depicts the lower half of one man's body as indistinguishable from his brother's, as if both bodies are fusing in order to create a singular union out of their bodily communion. Indeed, that Hiram's flesh would slide off his body unless another brother held him tightly suggests how the masonic social contract originates in and through contiguous bodily proximity, without which the skein of fraternal unity would come undone. Whereas the symbolic unity of the royal body politic derived from the material unity of the king's natural body (recall Bacon's arguments on the unity of England and Scotland via the singularity of the king's body), the symbolic unity of the fraternal body politic emerges from the intimate association of men's plural bodies. The mutual embrace of many men's bodies manifests a new symbolic relation of fraternal unity, as brother incorporated into brother incarnates a new body politic.

In the class stratified societies of early modern Europe, it was highly unlikely for men to publicly share intimate bodily contact across class lines. If bodily contact were to occur, it often

operated within an axis of verticality: those of lower-rank must lower their bodies in order to phenomenologically display their subordinate status. In contrast, the masonic contract subverted these aristocratic relations of distance and verticality, attempting to create new bonds of attachment between men by literally attaching men's bodies together in egalitarian ways. The *Constitutions of the Free-Masons* symbolized masonic equality as a relation of masons meeting "upon the same *Level*,"¹¹⁹ and masonic rituals consistently exhibited this spatial logic of equality as a bodily relation of horizontality. As evidenced in the symmetry of clasped hands (fig. 6) and the mirrored embrace of fellowship (fig. 4, 5), the masonic ritual's choreography levels the court's hierarchical relations of top and bottom by reorganizing men's bodily relations on a horizontal plane. "There could not possibly have been devised a more significant Token of Love, Friendship, Integrity and Honesty, than the *Joining of the RIGHT HANDS*," *A Defence of Masonry* explains, "*Fidelity was a Deity Among the Antients ... [and] was thought to be in the Right Hand, and therefore this Deity sometimes was represented by Two Right Hands Joined together; ... so that the Right Hand was by the Antients esteemed as a Thing Sacred.*"¹²⁰ In uniting men together on the same level then, such horizontal bonds of the body not only display but also invest the candidate in new sacred bonds of equality. Holding and being held, men's interdependent bodily relations manifest the egalitarian relations of reciprocity signified by the symbolic figure of the brother. In rearranging men's bodies in new relations of horizontal intimacy therefore, masonic rituals consolidate new bonds of unity between men, and thus constitute new political relations based not on the hierarchy of the royal father but on the equality of brothers.

VI. Cruising the Symbolic

At the turn of the century, gentlemen, esquires, lawyers, merchants, sailors and fishmongers all occupied a distinct place in the hierarchical chain of the early modern world. At the royal courts of Western Europe, bodily relations of distance and verticality both manifested and maintained these hierarchical relations. *At the masonic lodge, however, a nobleman would find himself in close contact with*

other men, who, outside the lodge walls, he might otherwise feel himself compelled to assert his distance in order to maintain his public status. In lodge therefore, “Lords and Dukes, Lawyers and Shopkeepers, and other inferior Tradesmen” came together in new relations of bodily intimacy.¹²¹ By transgressing the normative bodily practices and relations that maintained aristocratic class rule, the lodge made possible what José Muñoz calls a utopian “moment of contact,” an affective relation of egalitarian homosociality between men who did not and ought not have intimate association.¹²²

The utopia of masonic fraternity was contained in the promise of a far-reaching network of relations between men rooted in a gendered equality that disregarded questions of ancestral descent. While these men sought attachment to other men *as men*, they did not pledge fidelity to any specific group of men in their lodge but rather a peculiar kind of symbolic figure that goes by the name of brother. “Who, or what I am to understand here by the Term or Appellation BROTHER?” asks Thomas Davenport to the brothers before him in 1764.

I am not to confine it to him that is born of the same Parents, nor to a *Fellow-Member* of any particular Society in which I may happen to be engaged; nor am I to bound it within the limits of my Fellow-Citizens, or those of my own Country or Nation, much less to any sect or Part: No, the Relation is far mor extensive, Stretching itself, like the Benevolence of our one God and common Father, even to the Ends of the Earth.¹²³

In entering the masonic contract, masons commit themselves to strangers, men they do not know but who they must nonetheless love and trust, since all particular brothers are contained within the general sign “BROTHER.”¹²⁴ Masonic utopianism gestured toward a seemingly open and inclusive fraternity, a partly-empty signifier whose primary content (manhood) made possible, though not without struggle, new chains of association across lines of class, country, religion, and even race.¹²⁵ Unlike the concrete and particular attachments that characterised classical relations of political obedience, masons constituted new kinds of relations of solidarity rooted in what appears to be something of a purely symbolic nature. As Benedict Anderson puts it, “[I]n world-historical terms bourgeoisies were the first classes to achieve solidarities on an essentially imagined basis.”¹²⁶

As a counter-hegemonic project dedicated to building new chains of equivalence between men, radical democrats would suggest that masonic politics are rooted in the symbolic power of discourse.¹²⁷ After all, are these new relations of equality not dependent on the discourse of fraternity, the linguistic sign of ‘brother’, and in particular, its metaphoric capacity to render unlike things alike? Bodily practices of proximity and intimacy may go some way to building new relations of equality, but in comparison to the transcendental quality of the sign, the body’s materiality can hardly serve as a basis for such wide-ranging relations. Yet, Freemasons did not privilege the linguistic signifier, and in fact they often pointed to its limitation. Turning to the myth of Babel, masons argued that “the Confusion of Tongues ... gave Origin to the MASONS antient Practice of conversing without speaking, by means of proper *Signals* expressive of their Ideas.”¹²⁸ Incapable of linguistic communication then, biblical masons claimed the body as the site for a new language. The imagined community of freemasons was thus rooted not in the circulating literary signifier but in the hieroglyphics of the body. More flexible, legible, and translatable beyond linguistic context, the body’s materiality presents a capacity for universalism that the linguistic sign lacked.

The politics of fraternity did not therefore abandon the logic of incorporation that defined the king’s two bodies. Though the political theology of fraternity disarticulated the relationship between the sacred body of the king and his organic body, such that the brother’s sacred body now appears to potentially envelop all men, the symbolic relations of brotherhood remain rooted in the materiality of the body as the site of and condition for new relations of equality. In a speech critiquing slavery, the black freemason Prince Hall argues that “the African traffick” contravened principles of “mutual love and friendship between [men]” by turning to a biblical account of an Ethiopian official asking the Apostle Philip to help him decipher the meaning of the book of Isaiah (Acts of Apostles VIII, 27-31): “This minister of Jesus Christ[, Hall explains,] did not think himself too good to receive the hand, and ride in a chariot with a black man in the face of day; neither did this great [Ethiopian] monarch (for

so he was) think it beneath him to take a poor servant of the Lord by the hand, and invite him into his carriage.”¹²⁹ Extending the masonic motif of equality regardless of class rank to the colour line, Hall describes this equality in terms of the public relations of men’s bodies. As the Chaplain of Prince Hall’s African Lodge, John Marrant, put it, “the truly great will never disdain to take an African Brother by the Hand.”¹³⁰ Such articulations are not (only) poetic illustrations of equality, as if they were simply metaphors for an otherwise hidden referent the analyst must uncover, but rather actual instances of egalitarian practices themselves.¹³¹ As these black freemasons understood, relations of fraternal equality were inseparable from material questions of bodily contact and touch.

If freemasons portrayed the body as the gateway to realizing the promise of fraternal equality, then how did masons establish these relations beyond any one specific lodge? How, in other words, did masons mobilize the body in order to develop commitments not to any particular brother but to the general and symbolic brother, who, in his very symbolism, seems to lack a body altogether? First, the utopian moment of contact contained in the initiation ritual was continuously repeated. Once the recipient of the ritual, the initiated brother now performs the masonic contract as an active participant for other men, stripping, beating, holding, and hugging other men’s bodies. These performances renew memories initially imprinted on the mason’s body during the course of his own initiation, and in this renewal, grow in strength as they accumulate an expanding circle of strangers with every iteration.

Second, masons did not stay confined to their own lodges. With the guide of masonic almanacs, men could learn the location and meeting times of different lodges, where they would have to verify their masonic credentials by providing the words and gestures set out in the initiation rituals.¹³² Authors of exposures commonly describe how they successfully proved their masonic worth by pointing to the reception of a handshake that affirmed their status as a brother.¹³³ According to these accounts, a bodily gesture of mutual contact transforms the stranger into a brother, a familiarity

marked not by the particular relationship of the men, who otherwise remain strangers to each other, but by their mutual participation in and incorporation of the symbolic relations of fraternity.

Third, masonic practices spilled out far beyond the confines of any specific lodge. Regardless of the specific context of social relations in which a mason may find himself, masons claimed that the furtive display of the body in public could alter men's relationships by activating a larger network of brotherhood spread across the world. In the popular masonic opera *The Generous Free-Mason*, a young couple flees Europe in order to escape a cruel father who refuses their love only to find themselves captured and separated by the Tunisian king.¹³⁴ In his woe, the imprisoned lover shows "a [masonic] Sign in dear Remembrance of my noble Friends," which is unexpectedly recognized by the prison guard, who exclaims, "Come to my Arms! Thou unexpected Joy! / And find in me, a Brother, and a Friend."¹³⁵ As a result of this *mason ex machina*, the guard helps the lovers escape because "Thou art my Brother by the strictest Laws. A Chain, unseen, fast binds thee to my Heart."¹³⁶ Stories such as these showcased how freemasons could trigger the semiotic power of the body and (re-)establish bonds of fraternal love between men who may not only be strangers but even antagonists. As such, exposures would commonly provide a "Dictionary Explaining the private Signs, or Signals" capable of activating the duties of brotherhood set out in the masonic contract.¹³⁷

Within the masonic imaginary therefore, subtle gestures of the body could institute relations of fraternity and thus overturn situations of subordination in which men may exist. In a series of published letters between a father and his son on the latter's desire to become a freemason, the son claims that if he were made a mason he would not only "be made an Equal with Men of the first Quality and highest Qualifications, ... but [also] have Access to the great Men in all Courts by the *Signs of Masonry*, who are obliged to receive you as a Brother."¹³⁸ Inside the masonic lodge, rituals of the body leveled distinctions of status and transformed the bodily habits constitutive of aristocratic hierarchies. In the public of the court, a certain movement of the body could signal the presence of a

fellow mason, activating the egalitarian forms of life learned in the masonic lodge. As the son indicates, the “*signs* of Masonry” are capable of overturning relations of hierarchy by obliging “great Men in all Courts” to receive you as a “Brother” and “Equal.” As if by the flick of a wrist, the body of the nobleman is transformed into the body of the brother, opening up new entry points to political power. It is no longer the servile adulation of the great but the egalitarian reciprocity of the brother that now organizes political relations. In the very heart of public power at court then, proximity to the brother’s rather than the king’s body promises to create different relations of sociality between strangers.

Yet, the court’s structures of hierarchy do not exactly disappear so much as are spliced by a concealed network of brothers circulating within it. The public at court is doubled by the doubled body of the mason, who acts as if he were still part of the aristocratic world while covertly pledging allegiance to a clandestine counter-public of men. That the body establishes a public of strangers whose publicity relies on their very secrecy showcases a complicated political dynamic that requires unraveling. Returning then to the historiographical narrative of freemasonry’s role in development of the bourgeois public set out at the start of this paper, Habermas’s influential account of the public sphere presents publicity as dialectically emerging from secrecy’s immanent negation:

The secret promulgation of enlightenment typical of the [masonic] lodges ... had a dialectical character. Reason, which through public use of the rational faculty was to be realized in the rational communication of a public consisting of cultivated human beings, itself needed to be protected from becoming public because it was a threat to any and all relations of domination. As long as publicity had its seat in the secret chanceries of the prince, reason could not reveal itself directly. Its sphere of publicity had still to rely on secrecy; its public, even as a public, remained internal. The light of reason, thus veiled for self-protection, was revealed in stages.

According to Habermas, the secrecy of the masonic lodges protected a weak and fragile reason from state repression, enabling it to grow in critical force until it eventually burst forth from its sanctuary to subject not only court hierarchy but also the very secrecy on which it relied to critique.¹³⁹

This dialectical reading enables Habermas to provide a more complex account of secrecy’s relationship to publicity. However, in dislocating the world of bourgeois publicity outside the court,

Habermas indicates that the secrecy of bourgeois publicity only has a diachronic and not synchronic relationship to the aristocratic public. He maintains an oppositional relationship between the publicity of reason and the secrecy that initially shrouds and nurtures it, and thus occludes the possibility of thinking publicity *as* a form of secrecy. Yet, just as Marx stood Hegelian dialectics on its head, so too can we invert Habermas's idealist emphasis on reason in favour of a materialist analysis that begins with the materiality of the body. Dialectically considered, counter-hegemonic relations of equality established inside the masonic lodge did indeed spill out into the larger world, but they did so not from the growing metaphysical strength of reason so much as from the clandestine circulation of men's bodies in public and as a public. If it is the publicity of the body and not of reason that enables us to think publicity and secrecy together, then how should we understand these secret and yet public practices that establish relations of affinity and familiarity between strangers?

In contemporary queer culture, cruising names the disguised movements of the body that silently announce one's membership in a community organized around the erotic pleasures of the body. As Michael Warner argues, furtive glances and subtle touches link gays and lesbians together and constitute a clandestine sexual public among strangers:

When gay men or lesbians cruise, when they develop a love of strangers, they directly eroticize participation in the public world of their privacy. Contrary to myth, what one relishes in loving strangers is not mere anonymity, nor meaningless release. It is the pleasure of belonging to a sexual world, in which one's sexuality finds an answering resonance not just in one other, but in a world of others.¹⁴⁰

If we momentarily loosen the association of cruising with genital sex and consider cruising as a practice that signals allegiance to the homosocial pleasures of the gendered body more broadly, then cruising can help us make sense of how the stealthy gestures of the masonic body can incorporate men into a public network of brothers.¹⁴¹

Indeed, what may at first appear as an anachronistic importation of 20th century gay practices to conceptualize 18th century bodily relations may turn out to recover a queerness that has since been

hidden from history. Given the rich language of signs that both masons and sodomites used in order to identify one another in public, a shared phenomenon remarked on by 18th century contemporaries,¹⁴² it was in fact the name of freemasonry that was first used to make sense of the sexual practices we now call cruising.

[Sodomites form] a *freemasonry* far more extensive, more powerful and less suspected than that of the Lodges, for it rests upon an identity of tastes, needs, habits, dangers, apprenticeship, knowledge, traffic, glossary, and one in which *the members themselves, who intend not to know one another, recognise one another immediately by natural or conventional, involuntary or deliberate signs* which indicate one of his congeners to the beggar in the street, in the great nobleman whose carriage door he is shutting... all of them obliged to protect their own secret but having their part in a secret shared with the others, which the rest of humanity does not suspect... for in this romantic, anachronistic life the ambassador is a bosom friend of the felon.¹⁴³

Marcel Proust deploys the tropes of freemasonry to render intelligible the community of sodomites. Masonic secrecy, its utopian promise of equality, and the significations of the fraternal body all come together to illuminate the ways in which sodomites establish a sexual equality in and through the secret communion of their bodies.¹⁴⁴

Cruising provides a conceptual analytic to explain the secrecy of the public body, or alternatively the publicity of the secret body. Elusive gestures of the masonic body establish a familiarity among strangers whose only bond is their shared commitment to a world of fraternal unity that traffics in the affective intensities and pleasures of the male body. “Abstracting from the pure pleasures which arise from friendship so wisely constituted as that which subsists among Masons,” masonic reformer William Preston writes, “Masonry is a science confined to no particular country, but extends over the whole terrestrial globe.”¹⁴⁵ In cruising for other masons, men use their bodies to establish affinity with other men and activate abstract relations of fraternity spread out across the world. The mason does not cruise any particular man so much as the symbolic brother incorporated with every mason, as the biographical details of each man become secondary to the anonymous collective bound together in fraternal love. In cruising the masonic utopia then, the mason seeks out the symbolic brother who contains every concrete mason within its universal logic.

Cruising thus establishes a secret counter-public of brothers by re-activating relations of reciprocity set out in masonic contract. Yet, just as the gay cruiser may be ignored and left without sexual communion, so too can the masonic cruise fail to engender relations of fraternity between men. As black masons knew all too well, the refusal by white masons of the most basic relations of bodily intimacy cut short the possibility of establishing fraternal relations of equality. The pleasures of fraternal unity taught in the masonic lodge and sought in the masonic cruise thus remain bound up with the intimacies of men's bodies, as proximity to and relations with the material body mark the threshold for accessing the equality promised by the symbolic figure of the brother. An equality manifested in bodily relations thus set the conditions through which a more generalized equality between men becomes possible.

Though one of the largest and widespread fraternal organizations in the 18th century, freemasonry was by no means the only institution of the emergent public sphere that required its members to undergo bodily rituals of initiation in order to establish new gendered relations of fraternity.¹⁴⁶ While the bodily practices of these organizations deserve closer scrutiny, the influential example of the freemasons shows just how central the traffic in men's bodies was to the construction of the bourgeois public sphere. The emergent public sphere was not contingently or accidentally masculine but, as feminist theorists and historians have argued, constitutively so; gender shaped not only the grammar of publicity, rendering certain topics and styles of speaking inadmissible for public debate, but also the material relations between bodies in public. Rituals of the body reorganized men's political relations and reconstituted men *as men*, crafting the conditions of possibility for certain forms of democratic discourse. As such, the bourgeois public took shape as a gendered public of men's bodies that made possible their participation in the public voice of reason.

Appendix of Images



Fig. 1. Malcolm Duncan, *Duncan's Masonic Ritual and Monitor* (New York: Crown, 1866/2013), 29.



Fig. 2. *Mutus Liber Latomorum*, ~1760, Paris, bibliothèque du GODF, AR, coll. RM pièce 13



Fig. 3. Malcolm Duncan, *Duncan's Masonic Ritual and Monitor* (New York: Crown, 1866/2013), 32.



Fig. 4. Malcolm Duncan, *Duncan's Masonic Ritual and Monitor* (New York: Crown, 1866/2013), XX.



Fig. 5 *The Grand Mystery of Free-Masons Discover'd* (1724), 11.



Fig. 6 Malcolm Duncan, *Duncan's Masonic Ritual and Monitor* (New York: Crown, 1866/2013), 97.

¹ The Royal Society Club dined at the Mitre Tavern every Thursday from 1743 to 1750. T. E. Allibone, “The Thursday’s Club Called the Club of the Royal Philosophers, and Its Relation to the Royal Society Club,” *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, 26, 1 (1971): 73-8

² According to the masonic author Yasha Beresiner, lodges belonging to both the Premier or ‘Moderns’ Grand Lodge of 1717 and those of the ‘Antients’ of 1751 met at the Mitre Tavern. See, Bruno Gazzo, “The Interview: The Masonic ‘Square Mile,’ *Petre-Stones Review of Freemasonry* (2008) [accessed November 23 2020: http://www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/masonic_london_guide.html].

³ Masons recite the 133rd psalm from the Book of Psalms/ See Malcom Duncan, *Duncan’s Masonic Ritual and Monitor* (1866), 32.

⁴ We must keep in mind that not only did the practice of shaking hands only gradually became a standard form of greeting in the eighteenth century, but it was also a practice the upper classes avoided doing with the ‘great unwashed’ masses. Penelope Corfield, “From Hat Honour to the Handshake: Changing Styles of Communication in the Eighteenth Century,” in *Hats Off, Gentlemen! Changing Arts of Communication in the Eighteenth Century*, (eds.) P.J. Corfield and L. Hannan (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2017), pp. 11-30.

⁵ The membership list for Lodge No. 1 on the first page of the *England, United Grand Lodge of England Freemason Membership Registers, 1751-1921* from the collection of the United Grand Lodge of England held by the Museum of Freemasonry lists 42 members for the initiation dates ranging from 1739 to 1768. For these members, the column “Titles, Mysteries, or Trade” records: gentlemen (9), attorney at law (4), merchant (3), sailor (3), fishmonger (2), surgeon (2), broker, banker, publican, tobacconist, printer, cabinetmaker, haberdasher, pipe maker, vintner, coach maker, actor, upholster, hosier, linen draper, stationer, woolen draper.

⁶ Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, 49-50. By 1740, there were over 180 masonic lodges in cities such as London, Paris, Hamburg, the Hague, and Philadelphia. Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, 76. For the development of freemasonry in Britain and France, see Clark, *British Clubs*, ch. 9, and Loiselle, *Brotherly Love*, respectively.

⁷ In addition to the texts quoted in the previous footnote, see also James Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe*, ch. 8; Jacob, *Origins of Freemasonry*.

⁸ Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 35.

⁹ Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 36. See also Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man: On the Social Psychology of Capitalism* (New York, 1978), 81.

¹⁰ The problem of equality presupposed by deliberation is, as Jacques Rancière demonstrates, a problem of “knowing whether the subjects who count in the interlocution ‘are’ or ‘are not,’ whether they are speaking or just making a noise.... It is knowing whether the common language in which they are exposing a wrong is indeed a common language.” Rancière, *Disagreement*, 50.

¹¹ On the gendered construction of public speech in the 18th century, see Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere*. On the masculine sociability of the English coffeehouse, Brian Cowan, “English Coffeehouses and French Salons”; Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” *Social Text* 25/26 (1990), 63; Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 164-6.

¹² In focusing only on the question of exclusion, critics risk taking for granted Habermas’s overall argument that the bourgeois public sphere emerges in opposition to the corporeality of the royal court and, as such, traffics primarily in linguistic signification. Joan Landes’s account, for instance, is quite explicit in this regard, when she writes that “the bourgeois public sphere of the cities, unlike the visually absorbed absolutist public sphere [revolving around the king’s body], was oriented around language – its textual production, discussion, and proclamation” (40).

¹³ Archives located at the Freemason Museum and Library in England were opened to non-masons only in the 1980s, while archives previously located in Moscow were relocated to Paris, Brussels, and the Hague in 2000. The subsequent growth of scholarship has meant that freemasonry has become, in the words of historian Andrew Prescott, “a new academic discipline.” Andrew Prescott, “The Study of Freemasonry as a New Academic Discipline” in A. Kroon (ed.), *Vrijmetselarij in Nederland: Een kennismaking met de wetenschappelijke studie van een ‘geheim’ genootschap* (Leiden: OVN, 2003), pp. 5-31.

¹⁴ Berman, *The Architects of Eighteenth Century Freemasonry*, 68. Berman estimates that in London, up to 20% of the city’s adult male population of the political and financial elite (aristocrats, gentry, successful bankers) and upper middling sort (lawyers, physicians, apothecaries, military officers, traders, etc.) were members of freemasonry (Berman, *The Architects of Eighteenth Century Freemasonry*, 232).

¹⁵ On the relationship between freemasonry and guilds and confraternities, see Marry Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, and Fraternalism* (Princeton, 1989); Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood*, 13-14.

¹⁶ Freemasons established more than 100 lodges by 1730 and around 500 (that acknowledged the authority of London’s Grand Lodge) by end of century. On the transformation and regularization of freemasonry in the early 18th century, see Richard Berman, *The Architects of Eighteenth Century English Freemasonry, 1720-1740*; Alfred Robbins, “The Earliest Years of English Organized Freemasonry,” *Arts Quatuor Coronatorum* 22 (1909).

¹⁷ On the relationship between republicanism and free-masonry, see Loiselle, *Brotherly Love*, 211-220, 251-3; Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood*, 238; Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*, 80; Eric Hobsbawm, “Fraternity,” 471. Michael Roberts, “Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité: Sources and Development of a Slogan.” Margaret Jacob argues that masonic politics were divided between radical republican elements on the one side and the Whig oligarchs on the other. See, Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment*.

¹⁸ She goes on to write that “On the Continent, in every European country, even the Dutch Republic, the practice of this sort of governance was unique.” Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, 20. In her more recent text, *The Origins of Freemasonry*, Jacob argues that “Where we find the word ‘constitutions’ being used in French for the first time to denote the rules or statutes of an organization (in 1710) the context is masonic.” Jacob, *Origin of Freemasonry*, 14.

¹⁹ Masonic meetings were outlawed or restricted in the following states: the States of Holland (1735), Sweden (1736), France (1738), the pope issues a Papal Bull forbidding catholic involvement (1738), Austrian Netherlands (1738), Poland (1739), Spain (1740), in the 1740s, French and Portuguese police arrested and interrogated freemasons, and during the 1747 revolution in the Republic of Holland, the main lodge in Amsterdam was closed down; in 1786-87, the Austrian government closed various lodges.

- ²⁰ On the relationship between the ancient constitution and the social contract, see Jacob Levy, *Rationalism, Pluralism, and Freedom* (Oxford University Press, 2015), ch. 5. On the ancient constitution more generally, see J. G. A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: a study of English historical thought in the seventeenth century* (Cambridge University Press, 1987).
- ²¹ On the relationship between freemasonry and the 1688 revolution, see Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, 27, 34, 151; *Radical Enlightenment*, 36, 97; Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*, 64; Harrison, *Genesis of Freemasonry*, 157.
- ²² Focusing on intellectual debates between philosophical thinkers, political theorists have largely overlooked this widespread political movement. On the political philosophy of republicanism, see Philip Pettit. 1988. "The Freedom of 'The City, A Republican Ideal", in *The Good Polity, Normative Analysis of the State*, eds. Alan Hamlin and Philip Petit, Oxford, Blackwell; Philip Pettit. 1997. *Republicanism, A Theory of Freedom and Government*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- ²³ On the 18th century club as a site of feeling, and in particular pleasure, see Roy Porter, "Enlightenment and Pleasure"; Marie Mulvey Roberts, "Pleasures Engendered by Gender: Homosociality and the Club."
- ²⁴ Robert Solomon, *A Passion for Justice: Emotions and the Origins of the Social Contract* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995)
- ²⁵ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 26.
- ²⁶ Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World*, 2.
- ²⁷ Even prototypical institutions of the public sphere, such as the salon, often served as an entry into rather than subversion of the court's hierarchical structures. Accordingly, Antoine Lilti argues that the salon should not even be considered part of the public sphere. Lilti, *The World of the Salons: Sociability and Worldliness in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (2005).
- ²⁸ For England, see Gordon Schochet, *Patriarchalism in Political Thought: The Authoritarian Family and Political Speculation and Attitudes, Especially in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1875). For France, see Merrick, "Patriarchalism and Constitutionalism in Eighteenth-Century Parliamentary Discourse"; "Fathers and Kings".
- ²⁹ *Journals of the House of Commons*, 13:647
- ³⁰ I, §135. Contrary to liberal interpretations that view Locke as dissociating the family from political rule, Laura Janara persuasively argues not only that Locke's account of political equality is thoroughly imbued with the familial language of brotherhood but that Locke proposes a logic of fraternity in order to provide an alternative origin story to Filmer's patriarchal narrative. Laura Janara, "John Locke's Kindred Politics: Phantom Fatherhood, Viscious Brothers and Friendly Equal Brethren," *History of Political Thought* 33 (2012): 455-489.
- ³¹ Richard Hooker, *The Works of that Learned and Judicious Divine, Mr. Richard Hooker*, vol II. (Clarendon Press, 1865), 575.
- ³² On the historiography of the argument that the patriarchal and thus familial models of the state disappeared in the 18th century, see Pateman, *Sexual Contract*, ch. 1. In addition to Pateman, early feminist accounts include Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Teresa Brennan and Carole Pateman, "Mere Auxiliaries to the Commonwealth: Women and the Origins of Liberalism," *Political Studies* 27 (1979): 183-200.
- ³³ Carole Pateman, *Sexual Contract*, 78, 109.
- ³⁴ Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment; Radical Enlightenment; Origins of Freemasonry*. Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood*.
- ³⁵ On the notion of the masonic nation, see Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, 85; *Origins of Freemasonry*, 22, 57.
- ³⁶ A. C. F. Jackson, *English Masonic Exposures 1760-1769* (1986), 69.
- ³⁷ New members could not be admitted against the will of any current members, and some lodge bylaws even stipulated that singing was allowed "only when the lodge included no brother 'to whom Singing is disagreeable.'" Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood*, 31, 64.
- ³⁸ The dedication serves as the preface of Samber's English translation of Harcouet de Longeville's *Long Livers: A Curious History of Such Persons of Both Sexes Who Have Liv'd Several Ages, and Grown Young Again*.
- ³⁹ Similarly, just as Locke turns to Cain's fratricide of Abel in order to provide evidence for the right of every man to execute the law of nature (*Second Treatise*, §11), so too does Samber claim that Cain's murder of "his Brother founded... his Dominion in Blood, and despising the holy Law of Nature, and confiding in his own Strength, first usurped sovereign Sway; [and thus] was the first who constituted arbitrary government" (xviii). On the theological basis of Lockean equality, see Waldron, *God, Locke, and Equality*. In 1753, the *Gentleman's Magazine* published a (possibly forged) 1696 letter from John Locke regarding his investigations into the fraternity, in which he expressed his determination to join the masons. See Claude E. Jones, "John Locke and Masonry: A Document."
- ⁴⁰ *The Grand Mystery of Free-Masons Discover'd* (London: Printed for T. Payne near Stationer's-Hall, 1724), 8.
- ⁴¹ *Shibboleth; Or, Every Man a Free-Mason* (London: Printed for J. Cooke, 1765), 6.
- ⁴² James Anderson, *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons* (London, Re-printed in Philadelphia: 1734), 55.
- ⁴³ Contrary to the common association of elections with democracy, elections are much more common to republican institutions, since, unlike a lottery system, they aim to distinguish between candidates and select the best among them to rule. Bernard Manin, *The Principles of Representative Government* (Cambridge, 1997).
- ⁴⁴ Quoted in Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood*, 149.
- ⁴⁵ Some masons sought to answer this problem by figuring equality as a question of opportunity rather than outcome. As one mason argues, "for as our philosophic countryman, Locke, very just observes, (speaking of this *Society*) 'though *all* have a right and opportunity (*if they be worthy and able to learn*) to know *all* the *arts* and *mysteries* belonging to it, yet that is not the case, as some want capacity and others industry to acquire them.'" *Dissertation on Free-Masonry*, 74. All men have an equal – that is, the same – right and opportunity to learn the virtues hidden behind masonry's secrets, even if not all men have the capacity to do so. However, this solution still begs the question of why such differences of merit do not prevent the cultivation of relations of fraternal equality.
- ⁴⁶ Zerilli, *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom*, 111.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 112. On the political-legal logic of the *terium comparationis*, see Ute Gerhard, *Debating Women's Equality: Toward a Feminist Theory of Law from a European Perspective* (Rutgers University Press, 2001), 7-11.
- ⁴⁸ Anderson, *The New Book of Constitutions of the Antient and Honourable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons*, 203. Even as the organization became increasingly conservative by the century's end, masons did not waver from this primary claim of fraternal equality. On the event of George Prince of Wales becoming Grand Master in 1790, the speaker addresses the prince as follows: "Sir,

IT would ill become a *Brother* to belie the principles of the *Art* he professes, as to descend to the courtly strains of servile adulation. Accept, therefore, the simple congratulations of a *Free* and *Accepted-Mason*.” *A Dissertation on Free-Masonry*, 80.

⁴⁹ *The Constitutions* stipulated that masons “are resolv’d against all Politicks, as what never yet conduc’d to the Welfare of the *Lodge*, nor ever will.” James Anderson, *Constitutions of the Free-Masons*, 54.

⁵⁰ “The bourgeois Masons were not inclined to do without the secret of the moral interior, for it was precisely there that they found their guarantee of an existence independent of the State. The intellectual fact ‘to be in secret free’ received its social concretion in the lodges. What the burghers, seeming not even to touch the State, created in their lodges ... was a space in which, protected by secrecy, civil freedom was already being realised.” Consequently, he argues, “political absence in the name of morality turned out to be an indirect political presence.” Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*, 75, 83. For similar arguments that masonic claims of anti-politics aimed to prevent state repression, see Jacob, *Origins of Freemasonry*, 55-56; Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 68.

⁵¹ *The Constitutions* stipulated that if a brother should “Rebel against the State, ... [so long as he is] convicted of no other Crime, ... [the fraternity] cannot expel him from the Lodge, and his Relation to it remains indefeasible.” James Anderson, *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons* (London, 1723), 50. Moreover, unlike the oath of allegiance sworn to the crown that operative masons traditionally undertook, the new charges laid out in the 1723 *Constitutions* stated that a mason must simply be “a peaceable Subject to the Civil Powers.” For a comparison of the new to the old charges, see Berman, *The Architects of Eighteenth Century English Freemasonry*, 312-334.

⁵² Such dramatization of political differences not only led to charges of uttering seditious words but also the withdrawal from the coffeehouse into the more restricted world of the conversation club. John Barrell, “Coffee-House Politicians,” *Journal of British Studies*, 43, 2 (2004): 206-232. See also the cautionary remarks on the proto-democratic character of the coffeehouse in Brian Cowan, “English Coffeehouses and French Salons,” 47.

⁵³ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, ed. R. D. Masters & tr. J. D. Masters (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), 69.

⁵⁴ John Brewer, *The Birth of a Consumer Society*, 200, 199

⁵⁵ On the 18th century club as a site of commercial relations, see John Brewer, *The Birth of a Consumer Society*, 197-265; Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, 230. In cases of sickness or injury, a mason could not only appeal to the organization for financial relief, but even receive medical care from a lodge physician. On mutual aid, charitability and masonic insurance schemes, see Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood*, 194; Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood*, 215. Jacob, *Origins of Freemasonry*, 72-3. Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 59. Paul Lawrence Dunbar, “Hidden in Plain Sight: African American Secret Societies and Black Freemasonry,” *Journal of African American Studies* volume 16 (2012): 622-637.

⁵⁶ Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood*, 15. As part of their attempt to undermine differences of class, masons implemented a graduate entry fee according to one’s rank, with nobility paying higher fees for admission. Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, 221-222. Though, as Jacob notes, the fees were often beyond the means of working class artisans, hand-workers and peasants. Jacob, *Origins of Freemasonry*, 76. On the mixed-class makeup and lower-class composition of the masonic lodges, see Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, 321-28.

⁵⁷ Karl Marx, “On the Jewish Question” (1843) in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. R. Tucker (New York: Norton & Company, 1978), 45

⁵⁸ Marx, “On the Jewish Question,” 46

⁵⁹ Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere,” *Social Text* 25/26 (1990).

⁶⁰ A Free and Accepted Mason, “A Dissertation on Free-Masonry,” *The Attic Miscellany* II, XV (1790), 78.

⁶¹ In early modern England, ‘brother’ could designate close non-kin friends, and thus serve as a symbolic resource to name a familial mode of relation beyond blood-based kinship. Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England*. Cambridge, 2001.

⁶² As freemasons often used the terms friend and brother interchangeably, the language of friendship helped solidify the meaning of fraternity as a relation of equality. See Loiselle, *Brotherly Love*. On the egalitarian logic of friendship more generally, see Laurie Shannon. *Sovereignty Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts* (University of Chicago Press, 2002).

⁶³ *Dissertation Upon Masonry*, 69. On the pervasive discourse of brotherly love in freemasonry, see Godbeer, *The Overflowing of Friendship* (2009), 182-189; Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood*, 39, 56-57. Marry Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood*, 42, 176. Hobsbawm, *Fraternity* (1975). On the lingering discourse of paternalism inside the lodges, see Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, 59, 100, 117.

⁶⁴ Trumbach, *Rise of Egalitarian Family*, 3.

⁶⁵ “The brothers make a sexual contract. They establish a law which confirms masculine sex-right and ensures that there is an orderly access by each man to a woman. Patriarchal sex-right ceases to be the right of one man, the father, and becomes a ‘universal’ right. The law of male sex-right extends to all men, to all members of the fraternity.” Pateman, *Sexual Contract*, 109-110.

⁶⁶ Pateman, *Sexual Contract*, 56.

⁶⁷ Thomas King, *The Gendering of Men*, 4

⁶⁸ *A Dissertation Upon Freemasonry*, 65

⁶⁹ “As a masonic orator in Amsterdam said in 1752, ‘A Man who does not love another man like himself can hardly be recognizable as a man.’” Jacob, *Origins of Freemasonry*, 67.

⁷⁰ Monique Wittig, “On the Social Contract,” *Feminist Issues* 9 (1989): 3-12. While Pateman does not deny the heterosexuality of the contract, writing that “story of the sexual contract is about (hetero)sexual relations,” her parenthetical suggests that heteronormativity does not play such an explicit role in her account in comparison to Wittig’s. Pateman, *Sexual Contract*, 17.

⁷¹ “[T]he boundaries that separate one individual [i.e. man] from another [in the social contract tradition] are so tightly drawn that an individual is pictured as existing without any relationships with others.” Pateman, *Sexual Contract*, 55.

⁷² Loiselle, *Brotherly Love*, 153. For instance, in one correspondence between two French masons in 1748, Jean-Philippe de Béla wrote to his masonic brother, Philippe-Valentin Bertin Du Rocheret, that in the near future he hopes “to see and embrace you, to swear to you that I love you, that I adore you, to swear to you an eternal steadfastness.... What I feel for you is what a passionate lover feels for his mistress in her absence.” Loiselle, *Brotherly Love*, 7.

⁷³ Given the “the presence of so many key figures from the magistrates’ bench,” Bergman argues, “the magistracy can be argued to have exerted a quasi-dominant influence on the Grand Lodge from shortly after its inception until at least the mid- to late 1730s.” Berman, *The Architects of Eighteenth Century English Freemasonry*, 163. Even if they did not attend court, the bourgeoisie were quite generally

familiar with the conduct literature of the aristocratic classes. See Elias, *Civilizing Process*, 93-94; Armstrong and Tennenhouse, "The Literature of Conduct", 11-12. Masons that served in royal bedchambers include: the Marquis of Carnarvon, Edward Bligh, 2nd Earl of Darnley, Sir Adolphus Oughton, Sir Robert Rich.

⁷⁴ Samber, *Long Livers*, preface, xiii, xiv.

⁷⁵ Samber also translated into English the famous conduct manual by Balthasar, Count Castiglione, *The Courtier: Or, The Complete Gentleman and Gentlewoman* (London: Printed for E. Curll in the Strand, 1729).

⁷⁶ Samber, *Long Livers*, preface, vi.

⁷⁷ *Flying Post or Post-Master*, Thursday April 11, 1723 – Saturday April 13, 1723, Issue 4712.

⁷⁸ Locke, *Essay Concerning Humane Understanding*, II.i.23. Locke's arguments were pitted against the claim that ideas are always already present in the soul: "I see no reason therefore to believe, that the soul thinks before the senses have furnished it with ideas to think on" (II.I.§20).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, II.I.§24.

⁸⁰ On the influence of Locke's empiricist theory of sensation on the new science of sensibility, See George Rousseau, "Nerves, Spirits and Fibres: Toward the Origins of Sensibility" in *Nervous Acts: Essays on Literature, Culture and Sensibility*. (London: Palgrave, 2004), ch. 5; On the philosophy of sensibility more generally, see Stephen Gaukroger, *The Collapse of Mechanism and the Rise of Sensibility*.

⁸¹ "Sensibility is the spot where body and mind mingle. It is now the nervous system rather than the soul which mediates between material and immaterial realms." Terry Eagleton, *Trouble with Strangers: A Study of Ethics* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 13.

⁸² Harrison, *Genesis of Freemasonry*, 150-160; Berman, *The Architects of Eighteenth Century English Freemasonry*, 257-296. On Freemasonry's role in promoting scientific education, see Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood*, 139-145; Jacob, *Radical Enlightenment*.

⁸³ On Desagulier's influential role as a masonic reformer and scientific lecturer, see Berman, *Architects*, 70-109.

⁸⁴ John Clark, "Masonic Address," *American Masonic Record*, and *Albany Saturday Magazine*, 1, no. 33 (1827), pp. 257-8.

⁸⁵ Locke, *Essay Concerning Humane Understanding*, II.i.23; Clark, "Masonic Address."

⁸⁶ While the anthropological literature on rituals is far too large to cite, the idea of rituals as making use of the body for symbolic communication is well established. See, for instance, Robert Bock, *Ritual in industrial society: a Social Analysis of Ritualism in Modern England*. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1974), 37; Stanley Tambiah, "A Performative Approach to Ritual," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 65 (1979), 119; David Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power* (Yale University Press, 1988), 9.

⁸⁷ Quoted in Loiselle, *Brotherly Love*, 184.

⁸⁸ Quoted in Loiselle, *Brotherly Love*, 72.

⁸⁹ Harrison, *Genesis of Freemasonry*, 44. In the 1720s, masonic ritual was reconstructed and its degree structure developed. The split between Ancient and Modern Freemasonry in the mid-18th century involved deep disagreements over ritual practice, and as part of the 1813 reconciliation of the ancients and the moderns, the newly established United Grand Lodge set up the Emulation Lodge of Improvement to ensure uniformity of practice and the Lodge of Reconciliation to deal with ritual disputes. Snoek, "On the Creation of Masonic Degrees"; Harrison, *Genesis of Freemasonry*, 45-61.

⁹⁰ Loiselle, *Brotherly Love*, 53, 50. Masonic rituals, he argues, "'Christianized' the classical model of friendship," and as such, represent "a privileged enclave through which persisted an older, more formalized form of friendship." Loiselle, *Brotherly Love*, 245, 79.

⁹¹ Camp, "Stageart of Brotherhood", 118, 119.

⁹² Commenting on the 1730 exposure *Masonry Dissected*, Snoek writes that it "was used extensively as a ritual by many lodges. This would not have happened if it had been seriously deviant from actual practice. So, in general, it must have been sufficiently accurate to be useful as a ritual book." Snoek, "On the Creation of Masonic Degrees," 176. Often plagiarized or republished in an abridged form with a different name, *Three Distinct Knocks* (1760) and *Jachin and Boaz* (1762) "ran into many editions over the next forty years" and were used "as rituals – or at least as *ades-mémoires*" by masons. A. C. F. Jackson, *English Masonic Exposures 1760-1769* (1986), 23, 5.

⁹³ For instance, the French exposure *La Réception Mystérieuse* (1738) was "essentially a translation of *Masonry Dissected*." Snoek, "On the Creation of Masonic Degrees," 152. Inversely, the English exposure *A Master Key to Free-Masonry* (1762) was a translation of *L'Ordre des Francs-Maçons Trahi* (1745), extracts of which were republished that same year in the influential *Jachin and Boaz*. On the similarity between lodges in England and on the continent, see Jacob, *The Origins of Freemasonry*, 32; *Living the Enlightenment*, 4.

⁹⁴ Accordingly, the following analysis places less emphasis on questions of ritual variations of interest to masonic specialists.

⁹⁵ Given that MPs historically opposed 17th century Acts of Apparel for attempting to remove swords from gentry attire, the removing of metals showcases the imbrication of economic capital with aesthetic significations of rank. Harte, "State Control of Dress and Social Change in Pre-Industrial England", 149. A lodge in Scarborough in the 1730s asked a visiting gentleman not to wear his sword, since "all distinctions ought to be lost in a general complaisance." Quoted in Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood*, 34.

⁹⁶ Alexander Slade, *The Free Mason Examined; Or, the World brought out of Darkness into LIGHT* (London, 1754) 11. See also, *JACHIN and BOAZ; or, an AUTHENTIC KEY To the DOOR of FREE-Masonry* (1762) in Jackson, *English Masonic Exposures*, 132.

⁹⁷ *The Three Distinct Knocks, Or the door of the most Antient Free-Masonry* (1760) and *JACHIN and BOAZ; or, an AUTHENTIC KEY To the DOOR of FREE-Masonry* (1762), quoted in Jackson, *English Masonic Exposures*, 66, 135, respectively.

⁹⁸ It is unclear whether this psalm was read in the early 18th century, but on making disorienting sounds during the initiation, see *JACHIN and BOAZ* in Jackson, *English Masonic Exposures 1760-1769* (1986), 130.

⁹⁹ *The Grand Mystery of Free-Masons Discover'd*, 11.

¹⁰⁰ *The Three Distinct Knocks, Or the door of the most Antient Free-Masonry* (1760), quoted in Jackson, *English Masonic Exposures* (1986), 68.

¹⁰¹ *The Three Distinct Knocks, Or the door of the most Antient Free-Masonry* (1760), quoted in Jackson, *English Masonic Exposures* (1986), 71.

¹⁰² *Flying Post or Post-Master*, Thursday April 11, 1723 – Saturday April 13, 1723, Issue: 4712.

¹⁰³ Anderson, *The New Book of Constitutions*, 223.

¹⁰⁴ During the 18th century, there also developed what is known as the Scottish Rite, an additional 30 degrees that a master mason may obtain. Since these are appendant degrees, they are not considered higher but lateral in rank to the degree of master mason.

¹⁰⁵ Snoek, "On the Creation of Masonic Degrees"; Harrison, *Genesis of Freemasonry*, 45, 58, 117.

¹⁰⁶ *The Three Distinct Knocks, Or the door of the most Antient Free-Masonry* (1760), quoted in Jackson, *English Masonic Exposures* (1986), 100.

¹⁰⁷ *The Three Distinct Knocks, Or the door of the most Antient Free-Masonry* (1760) quoted in Jackson, *English Masonic Exposures* (1986), 101.

¹⁰⁸ JACHIN and BOAZ, quoted in Jackson, *English Masonic Exposures 1760-1769*, 163. In 1728, *The Flying-Post* reports a story of an initiation ceremony where a candidate “was so surpris’d when they pull’d of his Hat and Perriwig, unbotton’d his Collar and Sleeves, took out his Shoe-Buckles, and stripp’d him to his Shirt, that he thought they were going to castrate or circumcise him, and fearing to be made either an Eunuch or a Jew, he watch’d his Opportunity, upon seeing the Door of the Room half open, and ran out into the Street.” *Flying-Post or The Weekly Medley*, Saturday Dec. 28, 1728 Issue: 13.

¹⁰⁹ The carpet may be a 19th century American invention. French masons seem to have laid the brother down “with his face all besmear’d with Blood.” Jackson, *English Masonic Exposures 1760-1769* (1986), 102.

¹¹⁰ In the French rituals, the candidate was “led and jerked about; stones or other objects were sometimes placed in his path and doors were opened and shut to disorient him.... Other forms of physical intimidation to which the candidate was subjected while blindfolded included pretending to cut his skin or forcing him to drink a beverage that was supposed to be poison or blood.” Loiselle, *Brotherly Love*, 59-60.

¹¹¹ Locke, *Essay Concerning Humane Understanding*, I.III.9.

¹¹² Locke, *Essay Concerning Humane Understanding*, II.I.§21.

¹¹³ Prichard, *Masonry Dissected*, 2nd edition (London, 1730), 29; *The Three Distinct Knocks, Or the door of the most Antient Free-Masonry* (1760), quoted in Jackson, *English Masonic Exposures 1760-1769* (1986), 105.

¹¹⁴ *The Grand Mystery of Free-Masons Discover’d* (London 1724), 9; *The Whole Institutions of Free-Masons Opened* (London, 1725); *British Journal*, Saturday, Aug. 22, 1730, Issue: 138; Prichard, *Masonry Dissected*, 2nd edition (London, 1730), 28.

¹¹⁵ *Flying Post or Post-Master*, Thursday April 11, 1723 – Saturday April 13, 1723, Issue: 4712.

¹¹⁶ *The Three Distinct Knocks* (1760) and JACHIN and BOAZ (1762) quoted in Jackson, *English Masonic Exposures*, 105, 166, respectively. While the 1723 exposure in the *Flying Post* does not explicitly note the significance of the tongue, it may signify one’s access to masonic support, as the exposure states that a “A well hung Tongue” is the “Key to your Lodge.”

¹¹⁷ Camp, “Stageart of Brotherhood”, 123.

¹¹⁸ According to masonic historians, Hiram Abiff represents God, and so in re-enacting his murder and resurrection, the initiate becomes godlike. Snock, “On the Creation of Masonic Degrees,” 151. On the resurrection ceremony more generally, see Harrison, *Genesis of Freemasonry*, 50-59.

¹¹⁹ James Anderson, *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons* (London, Re-printed in Philadelphia: 1734), 55.

¹²⁰ Anderson, *The New Book of Constitutions* (1738), 223.

¹²¹ Samuel Prichard, *Masonry Dissected: Being a Universal and Genuine Description of all its Branches from the Original to this Present Time*. 2nd edition. (London, 1730), 6-7.

¹²² Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia* (2019), 14.

¹²³ Thomas Davenport, *Love to God and man inseparable. A sermon preached before a respectable ancient and honourable Society of free and accepted masons, on the 27th day of December, 1764, (being the Feast of St. John the Evangelist) At St. John's Chapel Birmingham: And publish'd at the Request of the Brotherhood. By the Rev. Tho. Davenport. To which is added a charge delivered at the constitution of the lodge No130, at the Swan in Wolverhampton, an Tuesday the 30th of October, 1764. By the Right Worshipful Grand Master, pro tempore* (Birmingham: printed for the author, by J. Sketchley, 1765), 6. Such cosmopolitan statements could be seen of the fraternity’s early promotion, as Masons publicly declared before the audiences of the Theatre-Royal in Drury Lane, “no Man can be a foreigner who is a Brother.” See the declaration to Charles Johnson, *Love in a forest* (London, 1723), viii.

¹²⁴ On masonic universalism, see Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 65; Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood*, 191; Jacob, *Origins of Freemasonry*, 22, 30, 37; Loiselle, *Brotherly Love*, 209.

¹²⁵ On the political logic of the empty signifier, see Ernesto Laclau. *Emancipation(s)*. Verso, 1996, ch. 3. Struggles around fraternal equality lead not only to the inclusion of native American men, black men, and increasingly working-class men into the fraternity but also the creation of women’s lodges.

¹²⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 77.

¹²⁷ On the political construction of chains of equivalence via discourse, see Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*.

¹²⁸ William Smith, *The Book M: Or, Masonry Triumphant* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Leonard Umfreville & Co., 1736), 1:19.

¹²⁹ Prince Hall, *A Charge, delivered to the African Lodge, June 24, 1797, at Menotomy* (Boston: Printed by Benjamin Edes, 1797), 4, 9.

¹³⁰ Quoted in Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood*, 160.

¹³¹ Masons inverted this critique when they objected to the inclusion of Indians in the fraternity: “How could [the Hindu] claim the right hand of fellowship with men whom he openly professes to scorn, and whose very touch is regarded by him as so contaminating, as to require ceremonies of ablution to obliterate.” Similarly, the Grand Lodge of England asked: “How can a man think of another as his brother, made like himself, after God’s image, when to touch him is pollution?” Quoted in Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 229, 238. The possibility of bodily intimacy between men thus served as the condition of possibility of fellowship and thus justified the exclusion of Indians. Though, it is difficult to read such justification without thinking that it was white masons’ own refusal to touch brown bodies that was really at stake here.

¹³² On Masonic almanacs, see Jacob, *Origin of Freemasonry*, 29-38. For an example of a list of lodges and times of meeting, see the exposure *The Secrets of the Free-Masons Revealed by a Disgusted Brother* (London: Printed for the Author, and sold by J. Scott, 1759).

¹³³ For instance, in the preface to *The Free Mason Examin’d*, Alexander Slade explains how he learned the secrets of the craft from a note hidden in his dead father’s bureau. Upon discovering that an eminent attorney in the city is a mason, Slade proceeds to give this man the secret masonic signal, and having answered his questions “so much to his [the mason’s] Satisfaction, that he took me by the Hand, and said, ‘Brother Slade, I am so far convinced that you are a Mason, that you shall go with me [to my lodge].’” Slade, *The Free Mason Examin’d*, vi-viii. Similarly, the author of *The Three Distinct Knocks* (1760) explains how he travelled to Paris and met a mason

who, having examined the author on his masonic credentials and being satisfied with his responses, “shook me by the Hand and call’d me Brother, and took me to his Lodge, which I became a member of.” A. C. F. Jackson, *English Masonic Exposures 1760-1769*, 58

¹³⁴ W. R. Chetwood, *The generous Free-Mason* (1731). If newspaper advertisements are any indication as to the popularity of the play, performances of *The Generous Free-Mason* continued into the early 1740s.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹³⁷ Such signs included shaking the foot, touching the calf, tapping the shin, scratching the cheek, holding the ear, rubbing the eye, among other gestures. *The Secret History of the Free-Masons. Being an Accidental Discovery, of the Ceremonies Made use of in the several Lodges, upon the Admittance of a Brother as a Free and Accepted MASON* (London: Printed for Sam Briscoe, 1724), 40-47. For other varieties of public signs, see *Flying Post or Post-Master*, Thursday April 11, 1723 – Saturday April 13, 1723, Issue: 4712.

¹³⁸ *The Free-masons Accusation and Defence. In six Genuine Letters. Between a Gentleman in the Country, and his son, a Student in the Temple* (London: Printed for A. Dodd, ND [1726]), 22-23.

¹³⁹ Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 35.

¹⁴⁰ Warner, *The Trouble with Normal*, 179.

¹⁴¹ As historian Tim Hitchcock suggestively notes, “One need only look very briefly at the literature on clubs and societies in the eighteenth century to see that many developed the characteristics which go to define a subculture. If unique handshakes, jargon, dress and ritual are the hallmarks of such a culture, then the Masonic order fits as well as the molly houses, and no artificial intellectual barrier should necessarily suggest that we need understand the two phenomena in different ways.” Hitchcock, *English Sexualities, 1700-1800*, 75.

¹⁴² See Loiselle, *Brotherly Love*, 95.

¹⁴³ Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past, Volume 2*, (London: Worthworth Editions, 2006) 24, emphasis added.

¹⁴⁴ Sodomites themselves seemed to use the language of freemasonry to describe their gatherings, as suggested by a 1749 gathering of men documented in the Parisian police archives when a newcomer was asked “if he would like to be a freemason.” See Michael Rey, “Parisian Homosexuals Create a Lifestyle, 1700-1750, The Police Archives,” 188. For other examples of the use of “freemasonry” to make sense of homosexual communities and practices, see “Freemasonry,” in *Encyclopedia of Homosexuality: Volume I*, (ed.) Wayne R. Dynes (New York: Routledge, 1990), 429-420.

¹⁴⁵ William Preston, *Illustrations of Freemasonry* (1812), book I, 6-7.

¹⁴⁶ For instance, the fraternal organization known as the Odd Fellows, which appears to have been founded around mid-century and included masons, would go on to surpass freemasonry and become the largest fraternal by the late nineteenth century. Alongside lodge degrees entitled ‘Friendship’ and ‘Brotherly Love’, the ritual for achieving the Patriarchal Degree of Odd-Fellowship has the initiate playing the role of Isaac who is threatened to be sacrificed by his father Abraham but ultimately saved by God. According to the ritual, God saves Issac so that he can become an equal member of the family: “Father and son were now brothers.” See Carnes, “Middle-Class Men and the Fraternal Ritual,” quotation is from page 49.