

GRAMMAR – MASONIC AUTHORS

Rt Wor Bro R.J.Nairn PSGW KL

Note: The names of known Masons are shown bold.

Introduction

This paper concerns Grammar, which is the set of structural rules that govern the composition of clauses, phrases, and words. Correct grammar is useful so that written or oral presentations are clearly understood. Bad grammar, like a heavy foreign accent, distracts the reader or listener.

The rules of grammar have not emerged from some logical or philosophical process but have grown empirically over time. They are different for different languages and may differ in different locations. Despite this informal derivation, they have a powerful influence in determining lucidity and credibility. They include morphology, syntax, and phonology, often complemented by phonetics, semantics, and pragmatics. They do not formally include spelling and punctuation although some grammar texts may refer to them.

Syntax refers to linguistic structure above the word level (e.g. how sentences are formed) though without taking into account intonation, which is the domain of phonology. Morphology, by contrast, refers to structure at and below the word level (e.g. how compound words are formed), but above the level of individual sounds, which, like intonation, are in the domain of phonology.

They allow expressions for past, present and future, for positive or conditional, for gender and plurals and they add nuance to a language. Grammar defines classes of words and provides rules for each class as follows:-

- **Nouns** denote items;
- **Pronouns** such as these or my;
- **Verbs** denote action;
- **Adjectives** describe nouns;
- **Adverbs** modify verbs;
- **Prepositions** relate two events in time or two people or things in space, for example using “after” or “between”; and
- **Conjunctions** express a variety of logical relations between phrases, clauses and sentences, such as “either or”.

Grammatical rules also apply to define:-

- **Tense** describes time – past, present or future;
- **Aspect** might be progressive, perfect or habitual;
- **Voice** may be active or passive;
- **Mood** may be indicative or imperative; and
- **Clauses** may be dependant or independent.

The first systematic grammars originated in Iron Age India and, belonging to the *trivium* of the seven liberal arts, grammar was taught as a core discipline throughout the Middle Ages.

Grammar should not be confused with Rhetoric, which may well use repetitive phrases and verbal punctuation in defiance of grammatical rules in order to gain attention or give stress.

Some famous Masonic Authors

English



The 18th-century English satirist **Jonathan Swift**, (1667-1745) was born in Dublin and is believed to have been a member of Lodge No. 16, which met at the ‘Goat at the foot of the Haymarket’. He is most famous as the author of ‘Gulliver’s Travels’ (1726), the story of the adventures of Captain Gulliver in four voyages to fictional lands.

The book is a satire, frequently mordant, on human nature; yet so inventive are its whimsy and fantasy that it has often been given to children

Swift was ordained in 1694 and published his first works, the “*Tale of a Tub*”, a satire on corruption in religion and learning, and the mock-heroic “*Battle of the Books*”, which pilloried the thought and manners of literary critics. The dazzling irony of these works earned him notoriety. “*The Bickerstaff Papers*” (1707-09) demolished John Partridge, a popular astrologer.

In 1710 Tory Government recognized in Swift a potent voice for their cause and made him editor of their journal, the Examiner. He thus became an unofficial power in English politics as well as a leading writer. **Swift** was the master of understated irony, and his name has become practically synonymous with the type of satire in which the most outrageous statements are offered in a straight-faced manner. In old age, Swift suffered from deafness and frequent attacks of vertigo. He declined mentally and in 1742 was declared unfit to manage himself. He died three years later.

Alexander Pope, (1688-1744), is considered the most accomplished verse satirist in the English language. **Pope** was a friend of **Swift**, with whom (and others) he founded the Scriblerus Club, and he was a member of the same Lodge as **Swift**, No. 16 in London.



Pope's life, which he ironically described as "this long disease," was shaped by two great disadvantages: he was crippled from his earliest years by a deformity of the spine, and as a member of the Roman Catholic Church he was excluded from the public life of his time and denied a university education.

His early poems earned Pope the friendship of **Jonathan Swift** and **John Arbuthnot**. **Pope's** prose treatise “*The Art of Sinking in Poetry*” (1728) and “*The Dunciad*” (1728) was a mock epic that ironically celebrated the achievements of inept and morally corrupt writers. His first published works, the “*Pastorals*” (1709), was an imitation of Vergil; it was followed by “*An*

Essay on Criticism” (1711) and “*The Rape of the Lock*”, a Mock Epic poem, which relates a trivial incident in a courtship and is one of the most exquisite comic poems in English literature.

It employs all the formal devices of classical epic for its comic effect. At the height of his career **Pope** addressed questions of metaphysics and ethics and wrote the poem for which he was best known in his time, “*An Essay on Man*”, expressing 18th-century perceptions of the universe and humanity's place in God's scheme.

While probably not a Freemason, William Shakespeare (1564-1616), an English playwright and poet, was recognised in much of the world as the greatest of all dramatists. His use of poetry within his plays to express his deep understanding of human nature and behaviour, is considered one of the greatest accomplishments in literary history.



The mystery of William Shakespeare extends beyond the theories that someone more educated must have written at least some of his plays. There has also been a theory that he was a Freemason. There is no evidence that this is true and the theory is best discounted.

However, I have a copy of a paper by the late **W Bro Rex Boundy**, a Grand Lecturer, GL of SA (and once my immediate predecessor in craft office) in which he discusses Masonic references in Shakespeare's plays and poetry.

There can be no doubt that Shakespeare at least witnessed a street procession of Freemasons, which he describes in ‘King Henry VIII’, Act 2, Scene 4 in these words. *‘Trumpets, sennet, and cornets. Enter two Vergers with short silver wands; next them two Scribes in the habit of Doctors;.. .., then a Gentleman Usher bare-headed, accompanied with a Sergeant-at-arms, bearing a Silver Mace; then two Gentlemen bearing two great silver pillars;’*

A Shakespearean Tribune of Rome (in ‘Julius Caesar’, Act 1, Scene 1) scolds a constituent - *‘Where is thy leather apron and rule’*. In ‘King Henry V’, Act 1, Scene1, he describes a hive full of bees as *‘the singing masons building roofs of gold’* or in ‘King Henry VI, Part2, Act 2, Scene 4 an English apprentice, about to fight with his Master, *‘Here, Robin, and if I die, I give thee my apron; and, Will, thou shalt have my hammer’*. In ‘Alls Well That Ends Well’, Act 4, Scene 2 we read *‘Betake thee to thy faith, for seventeen poniards are at the bosoms’* and in ‘As You Like It’, Act 3, Scene 2 *‘I answer you right painted cloth, from whence you have studied your questions’*.

There are many more in **W Bro Rex Boundy's** entertaining paper, which concludes with a quote from ‘Hamlet’, Act 2, Scene 2, *‘I will find where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed within the centre’*. While **Boundy** made no claim other than to entertain, the possibility of Shakespeare's Masonic membership is still a question.

The English dramatist and journalist **Douglas William Jerrold**, (1803-1857), was the author of numerous melodramas and farces, as well as the founder and editor of several periodicals and a contributor to Punch. His first play, ‘*The Duellist*’, (1818) was followed by such works as ‘*Fifteen Years of a Drunkard's Life*’ and ‘*Black-eyed Susan*’. He was initiated into Bank of England Lodge No. 329 in 1831.



Known above all for his aphoristic wit, the Irish writer **Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde**, (1854-1900), was born in Dublin and became the most scandalous personality of his time. He was initiated in Apollo Lodge No. 357, Oxford, in 1875.

He wrote one of the English stage's finest comedies, '*The importance of being earnest*'; one sparkling novel, '*The Picture of Dorian Gray*'; and several splendid literary essays, notably "*The Critic as Artist*" (1890). It is said of him that, excluding Samuel Johnson, he may have been the greatest conversationalist in British literary history.

Oscar Wilde showed early promise as a classical scholar and poet. At Trinity College, Dublin (1871-74), he won the Berkeley Gold Medal for Greek, and at Magdalen College, Oxford (1874-78), he was awarded (1878) the prestigious Newdigate Prize for his poem "*Ravenna*".

Wilde was thought by many to be the target of **Gilbert** and **Sullivan's** satire on aesthetes in the light opera "*Patience*" (1881). In the 1890s, **Wilde** became one of London's most prominent playwrights with such successes as "*Lady Windermere's Fan*" (1892) "*A Woman of No Importance*" (1893) and "*Salome*" (1893), which was banned from the English stage.

Wilde was at the height of his career when the marquess of Queensberry, provoked by **Wilde's** affair with his son, Lord Douglas, accused him of "posing as" a sodomite. **Wilde** sued Queensberry for libel and lost; then the government prosecuted **Wilde** for indecent acts and won. He was sentenced to 2 years (1895-97) at hard labour.

One of the foremost literary figures of the romantic period, **Sir Walter Scott**, (1771-1832) achieved unprecedented popularity during his lifetime with his narrative poems and historical romances. He was initiated, passed and raised at an emergency meeting of Saint David Lodge No. 36, Edinburgh, on March 2nd, 1801. He succeeded in re-creating periods of history through accurate description and skilful characterisation and was among the first writers who stressed the relationship of characters to their environment. His works such as '*Ivanhoe*' and '*Waverley*' remain widely read, and he is regarded as an important figure in the development of the novel.

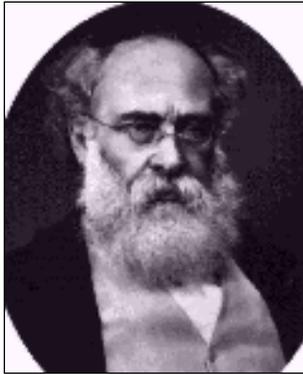


He was an avid reader of literature of all kinds and had a particular fondness for the heroic ballads and legends of Scotland. One of his first major works, "*Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*" (1802, 1803), is a three-volume collection of ballads from Scottish oral tradition.

His literary career began as a result of the success of his first works. "*Minstrelsy*" was followed by several similar and equally popular romantic ballads, among them "*Lay of the Last Minstrel*" (1805) and "*Lady of the Lake*" (1810). In a slightly later poem, "*Rokeby*" (1813), Scott focused less on poetic lyric and more on character, giving evidence of his growing interest in prose.

Money earned from the *Waverley* novels enabled **Scott** to build a large country home, Abbotsford, where he lived luxuriously for at least a decade. In 1826 the financial collapse of

the bookselling and printing business in which he was a partner put him into debt and severely affected his health. Thereafter, he wrote incessantly, producing an immense body of writing. The novels of this period were not always his best, but they did succeed in earning him enough money to clear his name. In 1831, exhausted from overwork, Scott left on a cruise to Italy. He returned more ill than ever and died on Sept. 21, 1832.



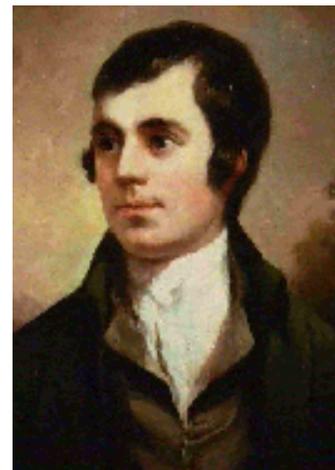
Anthony Trollope, (1815-1882), English novelist, who presented a sharply observed picture of the upper layers of Victorian society in his two monumental series of chronicle novels, the Barchester series about English clerical life and those about the political life of the Palliser family. He is known as the first author to write serial novels and both sets (*“The Warden”* and *“the Pallisters”*) were made into TV series.

He worked in the postal service and is credited with inventing the post box. He also ran unsuccessfully for parliament at one stage. He was initiated in Banagher Lodge No. 306, Banagher, Ireland in 1841.

Trollope visited New Zealand, South Africa and Australia, where a son had a property near Parkes, NSW. The Australian outback inspired his novel about the squatters and settlers and their battles with each other and bushfires. His 60 works include novels, travel books and short stories. In addition, he frequently contributed to the major periodicals of his day. **Trollope** is also famed for *“The Way We Live Now”* (1875), a satirical novel commenting on the decline of ethical values. His travel books include *“The West Indies and the Spanish Main”* (1859), *“North America”* (1862), *“Australia and New Zealand”* (1873), and *“South Africa”* (1878).

He died on December 6, 1882, in London. Although the posthumous publication of **Trollope's** Autobiography (1883), which records his journeyman writing of a quota of words each day while working as a civil servant, temporarily dimmed his reputation, modern readers find satisfaction in his portrayal of a satisfied, prosperous society that has long since disappeared. He remains one of my favourite authors.

The best known of the Freemason-Poets and Balladiers is, of course, **Robert Burns**, (1759-1796), whose birthday is celebrated in many Lodges around the world and whose *‘Auld Lang Syne’* is normally sung at the close of supper after our Lodge meetings. Burns was initiated in St. David’s Lodge No. 174 in Tarbolten, Scotland on July 4th 1781 and had his 2nd and 3rd degrees conferred on Oct 1st the same year. He helped form St. James Lodge No. 178 in the same town and was later appointed Deputy Master, a post which he held until 1788. He was elected an Honorary Member of St. John’s Lodge No. 22 in Kilmarnock and became Poet Laureate of Lodge Canongate Kilwinning No. 2 at Edinburgh. He was also a Royal Arch Mason and wrote several Masonic poems - *‘Farewell to the Brethren of St. James Lodge, Tarbolten’* and *‘The Freemasons Apron’*



Robert Burns is also the best known of all Scottish poets. He is most admired for having voiced the attitudes of the common person and for his innate lyrical sense. His poems celebrate the

simple, and often earthy, love between man and woman, the pleasures of convivial drinking, and the fierce pride of the independent individual.

Most of **Burns's** poems are short, lyrical pieces. "*Holy Willie's Prayer*" is an exquisite satire revealing the hypocrisy of a sour, self-righteous man; it uses the dramatic monologue form to create a masterpiece of irony. **Burns's** single narrative poem, "*Tam o'Shanter*," uses Gothic conventions for comic effect and is remarkable for its complex narrative voice, skillful meter and pacing, and successful fusion of English and Scots diction. His many songs, such as "*Auld Lang Syne*" and "*A Red, Red Rose*," are concise expressions of emotion ranging from the tender to the bawdy. In providing vivid details of pastoral life and in delicately fitting the words to music, **Burns** proved himself a master of this genre. The hard labour of his early farming years, along with the heavy drinking, ruined his health, and he died on July 21, 1796.

Burns has become a national hero in Scotland in the last two centuries. Many of his admirers have chosen to sentimentalize him, disregarding his true gifts and status as a poet, but more astute scholars and critics rank **Burns** as a major Scottish poet and one of the finest lyricists of the 18th century.

The Scottish poet **James Thomson**, (1700-1748), is best known as author of the immensely popular blank-verse poem 'The Seasons', also wrote tragedies and the Spenserian epic 'The Castle of Indolence'. He travelled to London in 1725 and a year later published 'Winter', the first of his four season poems. He was initiated in 1737 in the Lodge that met at the Old Man's Coffee House, London. As the initiator of a new descriptive mode in poetry, Thomson anticipated a key feature of 19th-century romanticism.

James Hogg(1770-1835), Scottish poet, born in Etrick, Selkirk County. He had no formal education and worked as a shepherd. In 1801 his first collection of verse, *Scottish Pastorals*, appeared. In 1802 he met the Scottish poet and novelist **Sir Walter Scott**, who encouraged Hogg to publish another volume of poems, *The Mountain Bard* (1807).

Hogg, called the 'Etrick Shepherd', established a reputation for his poems in the Scottish folk tradition, with such works as '*The Queen's Wake*' (1813) and '*The Shepherd's Calendar*' (1829). He was also the author of prose works, among them '*The Domestic Manners and Private Life of Sir Walter Scott*' (1834). '*The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*' (1824), a tale of supernatural and psychological terror, is now considered his most important work. He was made a Mason in 1831, in Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, Edinburgh.



Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was initiated in Hope and Perseverance Lodge No 782 in Lahore, Punjab in 1886 by dispensation as he was then only aged 20. He recorded his own raising in the minutes of the Lodge as he immediately became Secretary. He was advanced to a Mark Master Mason in 1887 and joined the Royal Ark Mariners the next year. Later he affiliated with Lodge Independence and Philanthropy in Allahabad, Bengal and, like **Burns**, was also appointed Poet Laureate of Lodge Canongate Kilwinning No. 2 in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Kipling won a Nobel Prize for literature in 1907 and visited Australia, writing a book of poems about each capital city of which I have a copy illustrated by Heath Robinson. Many of Kipling's works derived from his experience of India among them the "Jungle Books," "*Kim*" (1901), and the "*Just So Stories*" (1902). **Kipling** gained a reputation as a humorist with "*The Village That Voted the Earth Was Flat*" (1913). "*In Puck of Pook's Hill*" (1906) and "*Rewards and Fairies*" (1910), he expressed his love of England's past. His collections of verse, including "*Barrack-Room Ballads*" (1892), "*The Seven Seas*" (1896), and "*The Five Nations*" (1903), display a great range of technical achievement and a variety of subject matter.

Possibly one of the most popular forms of popular novel today is the mystery novel and, given the fate of Hiram Abif, it should be no surprise to find Freemasons to be amongst those writing murder mystery stories.



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, (1859-1930), was an English novelist who is widely known as the creator of the detective Sherlock Holmes. **Doyle** was also a medical doctor. His first story featuring Holmes, 'A Study in Scarlet', appeared in Beeton's Christmas Annual in 1887.

He lost a son in the 1st World War and turned to spiritualism. He was raised in Phoenix Lodge No 257 Portsmouth, and his works contain several Masonic references.

The 4 books and 56 stories involving Holmes included "*The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*" (1894), "*The Hound of the Baskervilles*" (1902), and "*The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes*" (1927). When **Doyle** tired of the detective in 1893 and attempted to kill him off, public outcry necessitated "*The Return of Sherlock Holmes*" (1904). The character has frequently been the subject of books, plays, and films, not all of them based on **Doyle's** novels. Ironically, **Doyle** did not want to be remembered for his detective stories but for what he viewed as his more notable work, the historical novels, "*Sir Nigel*" (1906), "*Micah Clarke*" (1889), and "*The White Company*" (1890); yet these works are less known today. **Doyle** also wrote other tales of mystery and adventure, including the science-fiction novels "*The Lost World*" (1911) and "*The Poison Belt*" (1912). Knighted in 1902, **Doyle** wrote two pamphlets condoning England's role in the Boer War.

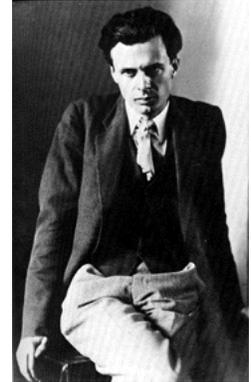
Raphael Sabatini (1875-1950) was born in Iesi, Italy, to an English mother and Italian father. Rafael was exposed to many languages, lived with his grandfather in England, attending school in Portugal and, as a teenager, in Switzerland.

He is best known for his worldwide best-sellers "*The Sea Hawk*" (1915), a tale of the Spanish Armada and the pirates of the Barbary Coast, "*Scaramouche*" (1921), a tale of the French Revolution, "*Captain Blood*" (1922), in which the title character is admiral of a fleet of pirate ships and "*Bellarion the Fortunate*" (1926), about a cunning young man who finds himself immersed in the politics of 15th century Italy.



Several of his novels were adapted into films during the silent era, and the first three of these books were made into notable films in the sound era, in 1940, 1952, and 1935 respectively. In all, **Sabatini** produced thirty-one novels, eight short story collections, six non-fiction books, numerous uncollected short stories, and a play. He died on 13 February 1950 in Switzerland. He is buried at Adelboden, Switzerland. On his headstone his wife had written, "He was born with a gift of laughter and a sense that the world was mad", the first line of "*Scaramouche*".

Aldous Leonard Huxley (1894–1963) was an English writer and best known for his novel "*Brave New World*" and a wide-ranging output of essays. **Huxley** also edited the magazine "*Oxford Poetry*", and published short stories, poetry, travel writing, and film stories and scripts. **Huxley** spent the later part of his life in the United States, living in Los Angeles from 1937 until his death. He was a humanist and pacifist, and he was latterly interested in spiritual subjects such as parapsychology and philosophical mysticism. He is also well known for advocating and taking psychedelics. By the end of his life **Huxley** was considered, in some academic circles, a leader of modern thought and an intellectual of the highest rank, and highly regarded as one of the most prominent explorers of visual communication and sight-related theories as well.



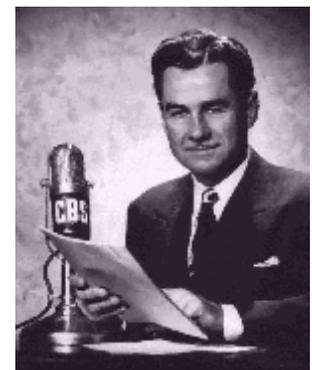
Herbert George Wells (1866–1946) was an English author, now best known for his work of science fiction. He also wrote novels, history, politics and social commentary, even writing text books and rules for war games. **Wells** has been referred to as "*The Father of Science Fiction*".

Wells was an outspoken socialist and sympathetic to pacifist views, although he supported the First World War once it was under way, and his later works became increasingly political. His middle-period novels (1900–1920) were less science-fictional; they covered lower-middle class life "*The History of Mr Polly*" and the "*New Woman*" and the Suffragettes "*Ann Veronica*"

American

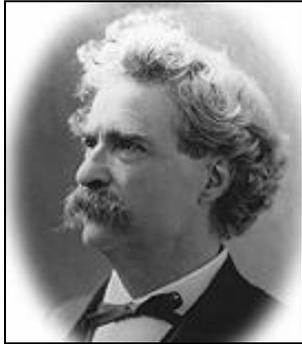
A news broadcaster for almost half a century, **Lowell Thomas**, born in the United States of America in 1892, also wrote more than 50 books, many on his extensive travels and adventures.

He began his career as a newspaper writer and his reporting did much to popularise the exploits of **Bro. T. E. Lawrence** (of Arabia) during World War I. His nightly radio news broadcasts over CBS began in 1930 and concluded in 1976. He has also produced movies and television programs. He was raised at St. John's Lodge, Boston in 1927.



Presidential tributes from **Bro Harry S. Truman**, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and Lyndon B.

Johnson are among his many honours. His more recent books include the autobiographical volumes ‘*Good Evening Everybody*’ (1976) and ‘*So Long until Tomorrow*’ (1977).



Mark Twain was the pseudonym of **Samuel Langhorne Clemens**, (1835-1910), who achieved worldwide fame during his lifetime as an author, lecturer, satirist, and humorist. Since his death his literary stature has further increased, with such writers as Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner declaring his works, particularly ‘*Huckleberry Finn*’, a major influence on 20th-century American fiction. “*Tom Sawyer*” is probably his best known work. He was a member of Polar Star Lodge No. 79, St. Louis.

In New Orleans in 1857, he learned the difficult art of steamboat piloting, an occupation that he followed until the Civil War closed the river, and that furnished the background for “*Old Times on the Mississippi*” (1875), later included in the expanded “*Life on the Mississippi*” (1883). After unsuccessful attempts at silver and gold mining, he returned to writing and adopted the now-famous name **Mark Twain**, borrowed from the Mississippi leadsmen's call meaning "two fathoms" deep - safe water for a steamboat.

Twain achieved a measure of national fame with his story “*The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*” (1865) and enjoyed a long and successful career as a public speaker. He travelled to the Mediterranean and the Holy Land and wrote “*The Innocents Abroad*” (1869), which won immediate international attention. A European sojourn in 1878-79 inspired “*A Tramp Abroad*” (1880), soon followed by “*The Prince and the Pauper*” (1882). He later turned to history again in the allegorical satire “*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*” (1889), a powerful fictional indictment of political and social injustice. Meanwhile, he completed “*Life on the Mississippi*” (1883) and his masterpiece, “*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*”, in 1884.

Increasingly involved financial problems forced **Twain** to declare bankruptcy. Although his financial situation rapidly improved, additional stress and sorrow came with the deaths of **Twain's** daughter Susy in 1896 and of his wife in 1904.

A popular writer of fiction, **Sir Horatio Gilbert Parker**, (1862-1932) was born in Ontario, Canada. He immigrated (1885) to Australia and later to England, where he became a Member of Parliament and was highly honoured. His best works deal with his native Canada. These include ‘*Pierre and His People*’, short stories set in the Northwest, and ‘*The Seats of the Mighty*’, a novel about 18th-century Quebec. He was a member of Author's Lodge No. 3456, London, England, the Lodge which **Kipling** helped to found.

Russian

Reading his account of a Masonic initiation in ‘*War and Peace*’, it may be thought that Tolstoy was a Freemason, but that is not so as this scene was probably taken from a French Exposé of the period.

Aleksandr Sergeyevich Pushkin (1799-1837), was a Russian poet and author, who is said to have founded the literature of his language with epic and lyric poems, plays, novels, and short stories. His greatest works, ‘*Eugene Onegin*’ and ‘*Boris Godunov*’, have been widely translated and also presented as both Opera and Ballet. He was initiated in Lodge Ovid, at Kischinev in 1821 only one year before Freemasonry was proscribed in Russia by the Czar.



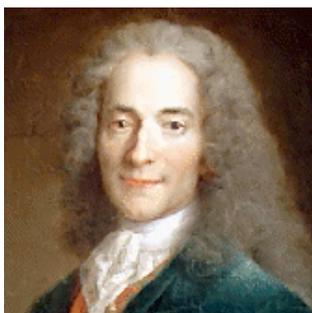
Pushkin took particular pride in his great-grandfather Hannibal, a black general who served Peter the Great. **Pushkin** belonged to an underground revolutionary group in St Petersburg and, in 1820 his “*Ode to Liberty*” came to the attention of the authorities, and the young poet was exiled to the Caucasus.

That same year **Pushkin** published his “*Ruslan and Ludmila*”, a long romantic poem based on folklore, which earned him a reputation as one of Russia's most promising poetic talents. He began his most famous work, “*Eugene Onegin*”, in 1823; a Byronic love story with a realistic contemporary setting that has been described as the first of the great Russian novels. He wrote (1824-25) “*Boris Godunov*”, a Russian historical tragedy in the Shakespearean tradition, published six years later. In 1826 Czar Nicholas I, recognizing his enormous popularity, pardoned him.

Pushkin continued to draw upon Russian history in two long poems, “*Poltava*” (1828) and “*The Bronze Horseman*” (1833), and in his novel of the Pugachev rebellion, “*The Captain's Daughter*” (1836). He also wrote short stories, the best known of which is “*The Queen of Spades*.” **Pushkin** died February 10, 1837, from wounds that he suffered in a duel which he had fought in St. Petersburg.

Pushkin provided a literary heritage for Russians, whose native language had hitherto been considered unfit for literature. He was also a versatile writer of great vigor and optimism who understood the many facets of the Russian character. His use of the vernacular as the language of poetry freed Russian writing from the constraints of tradition and set new literary standards for Russian novelists and poets, and his preference for subjects from history and folklore brought fresh vitality to Russian literature.

French



Voltaire, was the pen name of **Francois Marie Arouet**, (1694-1778), who was the most influential figure of the French Enlightenment. Considered by his contemporaries as the greatest poet and dramatist of the century, he is now better known for his essays and tales. His precocious wit, his upbringing among a group of libertines, or freethinkers, and his predilection for aristocratic circles were to mark his life, as his classical education by the Jesuits was to form his taste. He was initiated in Lodge Les Neuf Soeurs, at Paris, in 1778 where he was escorted by **Bro Benjamin Franklin**.

Voltaire was the honoured guest of **Frederick the Great** at Potsdam, but increasing acrimony led to their abrupt separation in 1753. **Voltaire** was pre-eminent in almost every genre. He catapulted to fame in 1718 with “*Oedipe*”, but his best tragedies were “*Zaire*” (1732), “*Alzire*” (1736), “*Mahomet*” (1741) and “*Merope*” (1743). His long burlesque poem, “*The Maid of Orleans*” (1755) long condemned by both Catholics and patriots, was unsurpassed. **Voltaire** was the most prolific correspondent of the century. His thousands of letters portray his life and personality, reflect his wit and ideas, and describe his times.



Stendhal was the pen name of the French novelist **Henri Marie Beyle**, (1783-1842). Largely ignored during his lifetime by readers and critics alike, he has long since been recognised as a great master among psychological novelists. An extraordinary mixture of historical settings, autobiographical analyses, and psychological subtlety, his novels depict the intellectual and moral climate of France during the period of disillusionment following the battle of Waterloo. He was a member of the French Lodge Sainte Caroline.

He had a commission in Napoleon's army in Italy, where his administrative career under Napoleon provided him with firsthand knowledge of the occupation of Italy, the Prussian campaigns, and the burning of Moscow. Stendhal's return to Paris had been preceded by three works that established him as a man of letters: “*The Lives of **Haydn, Mozart, and Metastasio***” (1814), “*Histoire de la peinture en Italie*” (1817), and “*Rome, Naples, and Florence*” (1817). His “*Life of Rossini*” (1823), remains the most perceptive to date.

He is best known for two novels. The individual against society is the major theme of “*The Red and the Black*”, whose title refers to the choices open to the hero: army or church, Jacobinism or reaction, courage or hypocrisy. “*The Charterhouse of Parma*” explores this theme again, but in the more exuberant atmosphere of fanciful history borrowed from the Italian Renaissance and the Napoleonic era, which confers upon the characters the dynamism of epic heroes. I like to compare him with **Trollope**, whose English characters are usually in harmony – a dispute triggering a change in direction of the plot. But with **Stendahl** the French characters are usually in turmoil – a brief harmony marking a change in the plot. He died in Paris following an apoplectic seizure.

German



Generally recognised as one of the greatest and most versatile European writers and thinkers of modern times, **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**, (1749-1832), profoundly influenced the growth of literary romanticism. Best known for his lyric poetry, for the far-reaching influence of his novels, and particularly for his dramatic poem ‘*Faust*’, **Goethe** also made substantial contributions to biology and to the history and philosophy of science.

He was initiated in Amalia Lodge at Weimar on 23rd June 1780 and remained an active Mason for many years.

Goethe's major significance, however, is as an extremely sensitive and vulnerable individual who struggled through a wide range of human crises and left a critical record of this experience. At 16, **Goethe** began his studies at the university in Leipzig, then a leading cultural center. Here he wrote his earliest poems and plays. In 1770 at the university in Strasbourg he came under the influence of **Johann Gottfried von Herder**, who introduced him to the works of Shakespeare.

While living in Weimar, **Goethe** became famous throughout Europe with a sentimental and individualistic novel in the style of Jean Jacques Rousseau, "*The Sorrows of young Werther*" (1774). Later he developed an intense collaboration with **Friedrich Schiller**, a union that many regard as a high point in German letters. **Goethe's** creative powers persisted through his sixties and seventies, and he died in Weimar at the age of 82.

Goethe was probably greatest as a lyric poet, and his other works often take their strength from lyricism. In the history of German literature he is credited with setting the tone for entire movements, for introducing new forms, such as the novella, and for profoundly influencing other forms, such as the novel. To him, poetry and science were one. Wide-eyed, astonished, but intensely participative, he surveyed the larger context of every human experience. His account of his journeys through Italy are full of his intense interest in everything about him and his constant questions as to why things occurred – even to the formation of clouds over Tuscany.

The poet, dramatist, philosopher, and historian **Friedrich Schiller** stands with **Goethe** at the forefront of German literature. Although his Masonic membership has not been definitely established, he is believed to have been a member of Rudolstadt Lodge in Berlin.

His writings, particularly his tragedies, represent the full flowering of the classic tradition in 18th-century Germany

The overriding theme in **Schiller's** work is liberty and dignity for all, and the skill of his rhetoric--its vigour and power to inspire an audience with these lofty ideals--has rarely been surpassed in dramatic literature. Among his masterpieces are '*William Tell*', a drama that epitomizes the struggle of the oppressed for freedom, and the '*Ode to Joy*', later immortalised by **Beethoven**.



In 1785, **Schiller** was rescued from financial difficulties and a hopeless love affair by generous friends who for 2 years maintained him in Leipzig and Dresden, where he completed the bulk of "*Don Carlos*" (1787).

Schiller's lasting friendship with **Goethe** began in 1794 and led to the publication (1795-97) of "*Die Horen*" a journal in which the works of both men appeared. Many of **Schiller's** powerful dramatic ballads were also produced during this period, among them "*Der Taucher*" (1797), "*Der Ring des Polykrates*" (1797), "*Die Kraniche des Ibykus*" (1797), and the celebrated "*The Song of the Bell*" (1799). **Schiller** was at work on a fifth tragedy, "*Demetrius*", about Dmitri and Boris Godunov, when he died on May 9, 1805. Although Schiller was a writer of tragedies, he held that comedy represented a higher form. Both as a man and as a dramatist, Schiller was said to be the embodiment of willpower.



Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) was one of the greatest and most controversial German writers of the 19th century. That he was born a Jew exacerbated the many conflicts that he precipitated both by his conduct and pen. He gained lasting fame for his lyric poems and ballads, which are noted for the variety of moods and emotions they express. In his own time, he was also well known for his liberal political opinions and for his satirical attacks on German **nationalism**. His writings and controversial activities brought him into disfavour in Germany but made him famous throughout Europe. He was initiated in Paris in 1844 in Lodge Les Trinosophes.

In 1822 Heine's first volume of verse, "*Gedichte*" (1824), was published. The book attracted attention because of the delicacy and lyrical beauty of the poems. In 1826 "*Die Harzreise*" (1827), a prose account of a trip he had taken to the **Harz**, a mountain range in central Germany, was published. This work, with its wit and grace of style, won success immediately and established Heine's literary reputation.

In the 1830s Heine became a prominent member of a literary group known as *Junges Deutschland* (Young Germany), which attacked the German school of **Romanticism** for having come under the domination of the monarchy and the church.

In 1845 he contracted a spinal disease that confined him to his "mattress grave," as he called his bed, from 1848 to his death in 1856.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, (1729-81), was a German dramatist and critic and was one of the leaders of the Enlightenment. He was initiated in Lodge Zu den Drei Goldenen Rosen at Hamburg in 1771 and wrote several Masonic pieces, the poem 'Nathan the Wise' and the dialogue 'Ernst und Falk'.



Lessing contributed a notable series of essays, contending that Shakespeare would be a better model for German dramatists than the classical French dramatists. The essays were instrumental in ridding German literature of French influence.

Lessing's dramatic and critical work established new standards in German literature and profoundly influenced the work of later German writers. His play "*Miss Sara Sampson*" (1755) is notable as the first tragedy of middle-class life in German drama. The comedy "*The Disbanded Officer*" (1767) and the blank-verse drama "*Nathan the Wise*" (1779) are major classics of the German stage. The latter, based on the concept that nobility of character is not confined to any particular religious creed, is a moving plea for religious tolerance.

Johann Paul Friedrich Richter (1763-1825), German writer and humorist, was born in Wunsiedel, and educated in theology at the University of Leipzig. He was a member of Lodge Pforte zum Tempel des Lichts at Hof.

Richter produced bitter prose satires in his youth; his later writing is more imaginative and sentimental. He achieved his first major success with the sentimental novel “*Hesperus*” (1795). “*Titan*” (1800), a novel containing elements of autobiography and discussing contemporary revolutionary ideas, is considered his best work. His unfinished autobiography is considered his best romantic work. Although his works have since declined in popularity, his importance as a precursor of romanticism and as a pioneer in developing the psychological novel ensure him a lasting place in literature.

Conclusions

These Masonic authors sought to inform and entertain their readers and, by doing so effectively, not only found their place in history but they set new directions and modes for others to follow.

They were not inhibited by the complex rules of the specific grammar of their country and time, but often sought the vernacular as a means of more effective communication. By doing so, they gave new dimensions for the communication of entertainment and knowledge. Our task in Lodge is to interpret the ritual with the same spirit, uninhibited by the archaic grammar but inspired by the will to communicate its spirit.