

Secret Societies: A Brief Essay

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"Secret Societies" are conspiracies working covertly to achieve a hidden agenda. For members, secrecy is a sanctuary and a source of power.

Secret societies often claim to be ancient and they claim direct "initiatory descent" from a fabled founder or group of founders. By definition, no secret society can appear to be a novelty.

Thus, the Brotherhood of the Rose Cross claims direct descent from the mysterious Christian Rosenkreuz (1378 - 1484) and the Odin Brotherhood claims that it was established in 1421.

Critics view "Secret Societies" as malevolent organizations working against the general interests of mankind. They are sometimes outlawed, and the United Kingdom passed the Unlawful Societies Act of 1799 which was the first statute "for the more effectual suppression of societies established for seditious and treasonable purposes." This law was in effect until 1967.

PURPOSES OF SECRET SOCIETIES

Secret societies have various functions, usually esoteric, political, or charitable in nature. Secret societies may plot world domination, subvert legal or financial institutions, enlighten the world, distribute charity, protect a secret, or "attempt to rewrite history by circulating certain literature."

ON SECRECY

To keep anything completely secret is impossible. As the poet Ibn Qutayba (A.D. 828 - 889) lamented, not only does a man disappear after death; his secrets are spread abroad.

Colonel Wendell Fetig, commander of the Filipino-American forces behind Japanese lines in World War II, made this observation about secrecy: "It is almost impossible to maintain but often can be better achieved through the use of misleading rumors than through tight security."

To protect themselves, however, many secret societies use the "Double Blind." In the "double blind" the truth is revealed on the assumption the public will not believe it. When details of the Majestic-12 conspiracy (an alleged government UFO group established after the Roswell "incident") were revealed, conspirators claimed a double blind ruse had been implemented. The Priory of Zion, the Brotherhood of the Rose Cross, the Odin Brotherhood, and the Illuminati allegedly employ this deception.

If an does reveal their secret, most secret societies will discredit the informant. According to one interesting and diabolical theory, "the psychological classification of paranoia" has been INVENTED by conspirators (the hidden powers that control the world) for the purpose of discrediting anyone who attempts to expose them.

TYPES OF SECRET SOCIETIES

Generally speaking, there are six types of secret societies.

- 1) In the first type, the existence of the group is known and the membership is public knowledge, but the rituals and the meetings are secret. This describes the Freemasons.**
- 2) In the second type, the membership and the objectives are public knowledge, but all meetings are private. This describes the Bilderberg Group.**
- 3) In the third type, the existence of the group is known, but the membership and the objectives of the organization are secret. This describes the Hellfire Club.**
- 4) In the fourth type, the existence of the group is rumored, but few, if any, concrete facts are known about the group. This describes the Illuminati.**
- 5) In the fifth type, the existence of the group is rumored, the identities of the members are secret, but the rituals and the objectives are known. This describes the Odin Brotherhood.**
- 6) In the sixth type, the existence of the group is denied, but the identities of the members and the objectives of the group are known. This describes the Mafia.**

INITIATION

Admittance into a secret society begins with an initiation ritual. Often, this involves darkness, blindfolds, blood oaths, and symbolic icons such as skulls, daggers, and sacred texts. The candidate undergoes some kind of ordeal, often a symbolic death and resurrection.

According to historian Ronald Hutton, initiation in the Society of the Horseman's Word involves reading the Bible backwards three times over three years, indulging in a mock Eucharist (with bread, jam, and whiskey), and--at the climax of the initiation--"shaking the devil's hand." On the last point, the blindfolded initiate had to grasp a heated spade.

Initiation into the Odin Brotherhood--which only occurs at the solstices--involves a kind of vision quest cemented by a "ceremony of blood." The rite involves solitude, a diet of bread and ice, a white shroud, a dagger, and a fire.

The initiate –after proper purification– makes three incisions on his body. Done in the name of "holy violence, necessary violence," the male neophyte makes three incisions on his chest.

He then "devotes, hallows, and sanctifies" his soul to the "gods who live" by penetrating a fire three times with a dagger stained with his own blood.

The scars are called "The-Marks-of-Joy." They are based on the "marking with the spear ceremony described in the *Ynglinga Saga* by Snorri Sturluson.

The female neophyte, however, makes three small incisions on the tip of her right index finger. The Odin Brotherhood believes the female's breasts--"the last and most beautiful embellishment she receives in life"--must not be disfigured.

Mercia Eliade, in *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, notes that secret society initiations resemble shamanic initiations, and include seclusion (symbolizing the "beyond), some sort of prohibition (as in a diet), covering the face and body, usually with something that is white, and a difficult ordeal, which involves the infliction of "cruelties."

Many secret societies will have layers of membership, with a person entering first as a neophyte of some sort, and then advancing through the ranks as he participates more in the organization. These ranks are very often called "degrees". Some organizations have as few as one or three degrees, others as many as thirty-three.

As the applicant advances through the ranks, he will often learn new passwords, hand grips, or other modes of recognition during the rituals.

INITIATION RITUALS OF DANGEROUS SECRET SOCIETIES

In the most dangerous secret societies, the initiation ritual requires new members to commit an atrocity that will make them odious to society.

The crime binds participants more closely to the outlaw group, forcing them to share a hateful secret that puts them beyond the pale of humanity. Outcasts–pariahs--they can never rejoin the ordinary collective.

Thus, in magical conventicles, initiates are required to commit brother-sister, father-daughter, or mother-son incest.

To join the Leopard Men of Africa, initiates must provide a daughter or niece for a cannibal-murder feast.

To qualify as a "soldier" in the Mafia (a full member), the individual must have killed at least one man. To complete the initiation, the soldier-to-be pierces his finger--rubs blood on the paper image of a saint--burns the image--takes the ashes in his hand--and swears this oath:

I swear to be loyal to my brothers, never to betray them, always to aid them, and if I fail may I burn and be turned to ashes like the ashes of this image.

According to reports, to join some American outlaw groups the initiates must commit murder and--in front of members of the chapter--they must have sexual intercourse with an underage girl, an elderly woman, and a corpse.

In the Aryan Brotherhood (or Aryan Nation)--America's most dangerous prison organization--the rule is "blood in, blood out." Men become members by committing murder, and they may leave the group only with their own deaths.

The most famous outlaw initiation in history was described by Sallust, the Roman historian who left a written account of the "Catiline Conspiracy." These are Sallust's words:

There was a rumor current at the time that when Catiline, on the conclusion of his speech, called on the associates of his plot to swear an oath, he passed around bowls of human blood mixed with wine; and when all had tasted of it after invoking a curse upon themselves if they broke faith, in accordance with the usual practice at such solemn ceremonies, he revealed the details of his scheme. This he is said to have done in order that the consciousness of having jointly participated in such an abomination might make them more loyal to one another.

DEATH OATHS

Some secret societies, such as Propaganda Due, include death oaths in their initiation process.

Licio Gelli, a P2 founder, instructed members to commit suicide with the drug digitalis--provided by the organization--if they were pressured to reveal secrets.

In the absence of an autopsy, a fatal dose of the drug digitalis would be indistinguishable from a heart attack.

SOME REPRESENTATIVE SECRET SOCIETIES:

ORDER OF THE ASSASSINS

The Order of Assassins--known also as the Order of Devoted Masters of the Quiet Death--was organized by Hasan-bin-Sabbah, who was born in 1034 in Iran.

Hasan was one of the founders of asymmetric warfare. He discarded orthodox war--war, he believed, was wasteful--and he used assassination instead. Hasan's Order targeted leaders, either killing them or (more commonly) threatening them with death unless they complied.

According to one Assassin poem:

By one single warrior on foot a king may be stricken with terror, though he own more than a hundred thousand horsemen.

The elite killers of Hasan's Order were masters of disguise, treachery, and murder. Sent against kings, religious leaders, and military commanders, the killers were deployed alone or in pairs. They infiltrated the enemy's palace--usually as service staff.

The assassins used the "Doctrine of Intelligent Dissimulation." That is to say, they pretended to be something they were not. Lying allowed them to move close to their targets.

The two assassins who killed Conrad of Montferrat--for example--let themselves be baptized as Christians. While praying, they were able to move close to Conrad and assassinate him.

Famous for their patience, members of the Order waited--sometimes for years--until the opportunity was right. Then they struck suddenly. Their favorite weapon was the poisoned dagger.

Always, members of the Order made no attempt to escape. Nor was any effort made to rescue them. They were effective because these pious assassins wanted to die in order to kill.

Little is known about the secrets of the Order. According to Christian accounts, the assassins had three grades of initiation. Interestingly, the teaching of each level negated anything that had been previously taught. The innermost secret--it was alleged--is that heaven and hell are the same, all actions are indifferent, and there is no good or evil.

The actual assassins--members who had attained the highest degree--were taught that there is no such thing as belief. All that matters is action.

"Nothing is true," taught Hasan, and "all is permitted."

BEATI PAOLI

A secret Sicilian group of black-robed and black-hooded vigilantes, the Beati Paoli defended ordinary citizens from the tyranny of the state and the church. Meeting in secret and plotting vengeance, members were silent killers who stabbed and strangled powerful people who oppressed ordinary people.

Today, the Mafia claims descent from the Beati Paoli.

The Beati Paoli operated at night from their refuge in the catacombs and tunnels under the city of Palermo. These tunnels, called the Grotto of Beati Paoli, may be entered through a house in Palermo. Another entrance is via the valley of the Orphans.

The Beati Paoli kept no records. Like the Druids, all important information was kept only in the human memory.

Described in fiction several times, the best known novel is by Luigi Natoli. Writing under the pen name William Galt, his novel *I Beati Paoli* was published in 1909. The book was later made into a film called *The Black Masked Knights*.

BLACK HAND

The Black Hand was a secret society of Serb assassins, formed in 1911 as the Order of Death. Its purpose was to use assassination to liberate Serbian lands held by other nations.

Organized by Colonel Dragutin Dmitrievich, a Serbian army officer who used the code name "Apis," the Black Hand recruited young people who were dying from terminal diseases.

Initiation involved a dark, candlelit room and a table holding a skull, a pistol, a bomb, and a vial of poison. Initiates were told to place a hand on the skull and to repeat the oath of the Black Hand:

By the sun that warms me, by the Earth that feeds me, by God, by the blood of my ancestors, by my honor and life, I swear fidelity to the cause of Serbian nationalism, and to sacrifice my life for it.

The most famous member of the Black Hand is Gavrilo Princip (1894-1918). The most influential assassin in history, Gavrilo Princip was nineteen years of age when he sparked World War I by firing two shots--with a pistol--and killed an heir to the Austrian throne.

Princep swallowed cyanide after the attack, but the poison was too old and it failed to kill him. Seized by military officers, their abuse caused Princep to lose an arm.

Too young for the death penalty (at that time reserved for people twenty-one years or older), Princip was sentenced to twenty years. He died in 1918 from tuberculosis.

Honored as a hero by the Serbs, the Gavrilo Princip Museum is dedicated to his memory. The museum preserves Princip's "Black Hand Oath" in his own handwriting:

BROEDERBOND

The Afrikaner Broederbond, a nationalist secret society, grew up among Afrikaners after their defeat in the Boer War in 1902.

Founded in 1918, after the "Century of Wrong," a 1964 study found it had 6,768 members in 473 local divisions. Membership was restricted to white, Afrikaans - speaking males, who were Protestants over the age of twenty-five. Freemasons were not permitted in the group.

In the initiation ceremony, the new member pledged not to divulge his membership or that of others. He promised not to disclose anything about the Bond's discussions, decisions, or activities. He also pledged to serve the Afrikaner nation.

In 1948 the Broederbond helped elevate a white-supremacy movement--the Nationalist Party--to a position of power.

ILLUMINATI

A fabled secret society, the Illuminati were established on May 1, 1776. Originally called the Order of Perfectibilists, the group was organized in Ingolstadt, Bavaria, the place where the fictional Frankenstein created his monster.

The founder of the Illuminati was Adam Weishaupt, a law professor at Ingolstadt University. He used the code name "Spartacus," in honor of the famous rebel slave.

Educated by the Roman Catholic Jesuits, Weishaupt was accepted into Freemasonry in 1774. He would recruit the Illuminati from the Freemasons. The Illuminati members took an oath vowing perpetual silence, unshakable loyalty, and submission to the order.

The Illuminati established the model of a secret society run by leaders who hide the true purposes from the general membership. Known as "double doctrine," the rank and file learn "anodyne" goals, while "unknown superiors" know the organization's true, and quite different, inner secrets.

According to their enemies, the alleged goal of the Illuminati is to destroy Christianity and all world governments. They will then unite everyone under one world government whose ruler is Lucifer.

Others allege that the Illuminati want a utopian "super state" and the abolition of private property, social authority, and nationality. They allegedly favor free love, universal brotherhood, peace, equality, and feminism. They are anti-king and anti-church.

According to Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson, however, the Illuminati are "too sophisticated, ruthless, and decadent to want to take over the world." Instead, "it amuses them to play with the world."

KNIGHTS OF THE APOCALYPSE

The Knights of the Apocalypse--a secret society which is only rumored to exist--is an outlaw group. Composed of fiercely pious Roman Catholics, the group was allegedly established in 1693.

Members of the group are assassins. Their mission is to save mankind. Whenever the Anti-Christ is born, they hunt Satan's child and murder him in the cradle. Allegedly, they have killed several children already.

KU KLUX KLAN

Called America's "most persistent terrorist organization," the Ku Klux Klan was established in 1865 by six confederate veterans in Pulaski, Tennessee.

The original Klan was an underground resistance movement to restore white supremacy. Members had to swear an oath of secrecy about Klan activities and the identities of other Klansmen.

Nathan Bedford Forrest, a confederate cavalry leader, was elected "Grand Wizard" of the Klan in 1867. The phrase "Invisible Empire," which referred to the territories where the Klan existed, was coined at the same time.

The original Klan was dormant for a time, but in 1905 Thomas Dixon, Jr. published a novel called *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*. Dixon's novel depicted the Klan as an order of chivalry devoted to saving "the South."

The novel inspired D.W. Griffith's film, *The Birth of a Nation*, and the film and book led to the revival of the Klan in 1915.

President Woodrow Wilson, after viewing the film, claimed that the K.K.K. had saved civilization on the North American continent.

President Warren Harding, Wilson's successor, was initiated into the Klan in the Green Room of White House. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black joined the Klan in the 1920's.

Also, a young Harry Truman paid a ten-dollar initiation fee to the Missouri K.K.K.

At the end of the twentieth century, however, the Ku Klux Klan changed.

In 1983, Robert Miles, a Ku Klux Klan leader, claimed that the organization had to revert to its original form as a military underground operating in "enemy-controlled territory."

According to Miles, the Klan could no longer support the police or the American Constitution because hostile forces control both.

Also in 1983, Louis Beam, in his "Essays of a Klansman," said that for the third time in the history of the United States the government is the enemy of the people. The other two times, he claimed, were 1776 and 1861.

Beam said that resistance should come from decentralized cadres, like the Minutemen in 1776 and the original Klan. He claimed that 1776 was not a popular uprising--it was an "unpopular rebellion of a politically radical minority."

SOCIETY OF THE LEOPARD

Centered in West Africa, in Sierra Leone, the Society of the Leopard is an ancient secret society of men who hunt humans.

To join the Society of the Leopard, initiates must provide a young girl for sacrifice. The victim, who has to be the initiate's own sister or daughter, is murdered with a claw knife.

Members of the society always kill at night, wearing leopard skins over the body and pronged, claw-like weapons with double-edged blades over the hands. The leopard is their totem, and they practice rites involving cannibalism and blood drinking to gain magic power.

When not hunting, the Leopard Society members live an otherwise normal existence. Like the Thuggee of India, they are sworn to secrecy.

On August 5, 1895, the British executed three Leopard men for murdering travelers. One of the Leopard men had been a Christian Sunday School teacher.

LUDDITES

Established in 1811, the Luddites were a secret society (with oaths and passwords) dedicated to destroying the machines of the industrial age that were causing human unemployment.

The Luddite attackers operated at night, wore masks, and used hand tools to smash the machinery destroying jobs. The group took its name from a semi-mythical worker in Leicester who destroyed machinery.

In 1812, the British government introduced the death penalty for breaking machines. Note that the governing class valued a machine over a human life!

MAFIA

A form of organized crime, the Mafia is the most secret and most powerful of all secret societies. First referred to in a play from 1862, only members can be certain of its existence.

The fact that a man is a member can never be admitted. At most, the member allows himself to be called a "man of respect" or a "friend of friends."

The Mafia has no secret handshakes or passwords, but a member can be recognized because he will have spectacular success in all of his endeavors. The Mafia lawyer will win all of his cases--the Mafia physician will draw all of the patients--the mafia businessman will never lose money.

The defining feature of the classic Sicilian Mafia is the concept of *Omerta*. The word literally means "manliness," and *Omerta* obliges a man to be strong, to be potent, and to dominate.

More precisely, *omerta* means silence and self-restraint. If wronged, the "man of respect" will not show anger, he will not tell the police, and he will not act rashly. He will wait--for years if necessary--and avenge in the coldest way possible, often striking when he seems to be the victim's friend.

ODIN BROTHERHOOD

A mysterious "Odinist" organization (one dedicated to preserving the lore and virtues of the gods and goddesses of the Norse pantheon, as described in the *Eddaic Verses*), the Odin Brotherhood to have been established in 1421, after a necromantic ceremony.

Initiation, which involves bread and ice, a dagger, a fire, and markings on the flesh, is conducted only during the solstices. Women as well as men are found in the movement.

Unlike most secret societies, the Odin Brotherhood is non-hierarchical. Members, who initiate themselves after receive a calling in a dream-vision, belong to a "conspiracy of equals."

In terms of eschatology, the Odin Brotherhood teaches that "nothing dies forever." Death is inevitable, but from death comes new life.

ORDER OF SKULL AND BONES

"The Order," which is also called Chapter 322, and was once known as the "Brotherhood of Death," is called "Skull and Bones" by those who make light of it. A mysterious secret society, it was founded in 1833 at Yale University by

Huntington Russell (an opium trader) and Alphonso Taft (an ancestor of the president).

The emblem of the Order is the Death's Head, or two crossed bones and a skull. Its headquarters, called the "tomb," is a dark, windowless building. There are claims that the Order possesses the skulls of Geronimo, Pancho Villa, and Martin Van Buren--all stolen.

According to Anthony C. Sutton, the author of *America's Secret Establishment*, no one can ask to join Skull and Bones, which admits only fifteen new members each year. Membership is by invitation only.

Allegedly, the Order does not want loners, iconoclasts, or individualists in the organization. They want amoral team players--people who will sacrifice themselves for the group.

According to Sutton, the initiation of new members involves some nudity. The initiate is placed in a coffin--he is carried to the center of the building--he is chanted over--and his name is inscribed in a bone.

New members are called knights. After one year, they are then called patriarchs. They will be called patriarchs the rest of their lives. The Order refers to all outsiders as vandals.

The patriarchs of the Order meet annually, on the oddly spelled "Deer Iland," in the St. Lawrence River, in New York.

Members are sworn to silence. They are forbidden to discuss the organization, its procedures, or its objectives. Words spoken within the Order may not be written--even in letters to fellow members.

Members must always deny membership to outsiders. If the Order is under discussion, members may not remain in the room.

The function of the Order is to bring about certain mysterious objectives. Honors and financial awards are guaranteed, and initiates are assured career advancement--success--even wealth.

THUGGEE

The Thuggee--an ancient cult of murder and terror--have been called "the most successful terror organization in history" and "the most remarkable example of organized crime on record." Allegedly extinct, there are reports that they still exist today.

The Thuggee are devotees of Kali, the Hindu goddess of death. Kali is depicted as black-skinned, with four arms. In her first hand she carries a sword, in her second hand she carries a severed head, her third hand is raised in a gesture of peace, and her remaining hand is grasping for power. The city of Calcutta is named in her honor.

According to legend, the first Thuggee were created (from the brow of the goddess) to help Kali destroy a horde of demons. The demons had to be strangled, for their

blood--once shed--turned into more demons. So Kali gave the Thuggee the noose to kill demons.

In return for helping Kali, the Thuggee believe that they received the right to kill in perpetuity and to keep the loot from their victims. They are obliged to strangle at least one person per year. The victim must never be a woman or a wandering holy man.

The Thuggee believe that their victims go straight to paradise. By serving Kali, the Thuggee also go to paradise.

The word Thug (pronounced t'ug) is derived from the Sanskrit word which means deceiver or swindler. Members of this secret cult lead double lives. For most of the year, the Thuggee have regular employment and live openly in the community as respected and orderly citizens.

In autumn, however, when the roads are crowded with pilgrims, the Thuggee hunt humans. They attack in November and December--always at least one hundred miles from their homes. When the killing season ends, they melt back into ordinary life.

The Thuggee work in units of ten to fifty men. Divided into small groups, some serve as scouts, some as killers, and some as grave diggers.

The Thuggee strangle their selected victims, using garrotes fashioned from white or yellow silk. (White and yellow are sacred to Kali.) The agony of the victim is prolonged because Kali enjoys terror.

Usually, there are three Thuggee killers per victim. While one strangles, one holds the dying man's feet, and one holds the arms or sits on the chest of the victim.

After the killings, the victims are buried in small, deep graves, with their backs and thigh bones broken. To hide the activity, the graves are dug inside tents.

The graves are dug with shovels and at least one symbolic strike from a silver pick axe. The site is strewn with pungent herbs to mislead dogs.

The Thuggee always conduct an ancient ceremony on the graves. They place "goor," a kind of coarse sugar, on a cloth. After pouring some sugar and "holy water," those that had killed that day (in order of seniority) eat the "sugar of Kali" as a sacrament. It is said that once a man tastes goor, he will always serve the goddess of death.

To perpetuate the movement, men recruit their sons and nephews. The training of the boys begins in childhood, but only at the age of eighteen are the boys allowed to kill and taste the sacred sugar for the first time.

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A secret society is a type of subculture. According to Alan Axelrod, the author of the International Encyclopedia of Secret Societies and Fraternal Orders, a secret society has three characteristics: it is exclusive, it claims to own special secrets, and it shows a strong inclination to favor its own. According to David V. Barrett, the author of *Secret Societies: From the Ancient and Arcane to the Modern and Clandestine*, a secret society features these characteristics: it has "carefully graded and... From the Illuminati to the Freemasons, secret societies are everywhere. From murder to control of the world's banks, some think their hand is in everything. For as long as there have been conspiracy theories, there have been secret societies. Groups like The Illuminati or Yale's Skull and Bones groups, as well as the loud and proud Freemasons, were all once underground cabals of powerful people who excluded non-members and sought to retain money and power while they pulled the strings of the world. Like large corporations who hide themselves behind subsidiaries and offshoots, the exact size of any given covert coterie who hides in the shadows is unknown, often excluding its own members from having too much information, lest they disclose it to the wrong people. Secret societies have captured the imagination of the public for centuries. Many of these groups are thought to be ancient, mysterious gatherings of powerful men who get together and tip the balance of world power in their favor. These organizations, which have developed their own rituals and require membership oaths, exist for numerous reasons and have popped up over the centuries. Whatever their purpose, these organizations are thought to have significant influence on the outside world, largely because of the powerful people known to be members. 24/7 Wall St. reviewed historical records and media sources to determine the most powerful secret societies still in existence today. [Click here to see the most powerful secret societies still in existence today.](#) By a secret society was formerly meant a society which was known to exist, but whose members and places of meetings were not publicly known. Today, we understand by a secret society, a society with secrets, having a ritual demanding an oath of allegiance and secrecy, prescribing ceremonies of a religious character, such as the use of the Bible, either by extracts therefrom, or by its being placed an altar within a lodge-room, by the use of prayers, of hymns, of religious signs and symbols, special funeral services. These secret societies for women have also their rituals, their oaths, and their degrees. Even were these purposes aimed at in real truth, yet they are by no means the whole of their object.