Representation of Secret Societies by Dan Brown in Angels and Demons and The Da Vinci Code

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Abstract
Secret societies have continually been attention-grabbing topics for novelists of adventure stories and conspiracy theories and Dan Brown is one among them. With the dawn of the 21st century, a new interest in secret societies spread through all venues of life and shaped this centuries’ culture, in literature, arts, movies, industry; it even reached politics and religion. Terms like Illuminati, Assassins, Freemasons and their symbols like the All Seeing - Eye, the Pyramids, Fleur-de-lis and the like, are used in popular culture like songs, novels, cartoons, and even in trademarks. Dan Brown’s novel Angels and Demons (2000) could be an excellent example of a conspiracy novel that is rich with the foremost outstanding secret societies within the world: The Illuminati.

In this research, secret societies like “The Illuminati” from Brown’s Angels and Demons (2000) and “Opus Dei” from The Da Vinci Code (2003) are examined and equated to facts, references and sources. Secret societies are analyzed and compared, and differences docketed as to how they exhibit themselves in their official websites vis-à-vis how they are presented in the novel. The analysis attempts to answer queries like what is a secret society? Why were they formed? Why were they required to operate in secrecy? What is the Opus Dei? What are the Illuminati? And if secret societies do exist.

The research comes up with the hypothetical fact that secret societies mask their identity to attain societal acceptance. The research takes a qualitative approach with content analysis.

KeyWords: Conspiracy theory, treachery, plot
Secret society, Illuminati, Assassins, Freemasons
Symbols, All-seeing eye, Pyramids, Fleur-de-lis
Dan Brown, Angels and Demons, Controversy, Da Vinci Code
Corporal Mortification, Opus Dei, Work of God, Josemaria Escriva
**Introduction**

A secret society, in reference to Wikipedia, is “a club or an organization whose activities, events, and inner functioning are concealed from non-members”. Most definitions agree that so as for a corporation to be called secret, it ought to “insist on secrecy,” higher members ought to either offer or withhold “secret knowledge” from alternative members, having bound binds among members, and “the use of secret rites or rituals that solidify members of the cluster.

Secret Societies coexisted with humankind, since there’s information there’s an urge to cover it from those that either wish to misuse it or destroy it. Some of the famous societies are The Knights Templar, the Assassins, the Freemasons, The Illuminati, the Skull and Bones and many more. Since these societies have secret agendas and history, they're related to conspiracy theories too.


**DAN BROWN**

Daniel Brown (1964 - ) is an American author renowned for his distinctive themes of symbols and codes that the protagonist should solve inside twenty-four-hour time-frame. Brown is taken into account the foremost renowned conspiracy author within the 20th and 21st centuries along with his novels revolving around historical and secret societies.


**Literature Review**

Ansam Yaroub Khyoon in his journal Secret Societies in Dan Brown’s Angels and Demons(2000) states that Mystery social orders or secret societies have dependably been fascinating points for authors of spine chiller and fear inspired notions and Dan Brown is one of them. With the beginning of the twenty first century another enthusiasm for mystery social orders spread through all settings of life and molded the method for this current hundreds of years' way of life, in writing, expressions, motion pictures, industry; it even achieved governmental issues and religion. Terms like Illuminati, Hassassins, Masons and also their images like the All Seeing - Eye, the pyramids, and numerous more are wherever in melodies, books, in kid's shows, even in numerous celebrated trademarks. Numerous criminal demonstrations, psychological oppressor assaults, wars and dubious political issues are faulted for one of these mystery social orders. Dan Brown's novel, *Angles and Demons* (2000) is an ideal case of a trick novel that is rich with the most noticeable mystery social orders on the planet: The Illuminati.
Mark Dice in his book The Illuminati: Facts and Fiction (2009) states that this affirmed association as far as anyone knows covers up and ensures a mystery bloodline of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. The bloodline myth is, in actuality, a main story for the bloodline of what will one day bring forth the antichrist so he can assert the Divine appropriate to govern as per the prediction of the Old Testament with respect to the bloodline of the savior.

John Lawrence Reynolds in his book Secret Societies: Inside the freemasons, the Yakuza, Skull and Bones and the world’s most notorious secret organizations (2011) states that The Illuminati (Enlightenment) was made as a mystery society, the genuine goal of which would be uncovered to its individuals simply after they accomplished a "clerical" level of mindfulness and comprehension. The Priory of Sion is the attendants of the Holy Grail.

Edalfo Lanfranchi in his book Illuminati: Their History, Their Power and Future (2017) states that The illuminati are the association that is thought to be the most mystery of every single secret society.

Andres Vazquez de Prada in his book The Founder of Opus Dei: The Life of Josemaria Escriva, Volume III: The Divine Ways on Earth (2001) states that "October 2, 1928, had an exceptionally exact significance for the youthful cleric: it was the date of the establishment of Opus Dei. In all his record, he is extremely exact in the dialect he uses to depict what happened. To evade any uncertainty or plausibility of confusion, he purposely disconnects the powerful occasion from other, just individual conditions. For example: "And then came October 2, 1928. I was making a withdraw, on the grounds that I needed to, and it was then that Opus Dei appeared on the scene.""

Maggy Whitehouse in her book Opus Dei: the truth behind the myth (2008) states that "Opus Dei intends to be an overall family where individuals are focused on helping each other profoundly."

50Minutes.com in Opus Dei: The Secrets and Scandals of an Influential Organisation states that "Since its creation in 1928, Opus Dei (Latin for 'Work of God', otherwise called 'the Work') has consistently been the subject of debate and talk, especially because of its cryptic nature and the impact it is considered to have, regardless of whether this is right, finished the Catholic Church and the Pope himself. Also, in light of current circumstances: in the 1950s, as indicated by the controls of the foundation itself, its individuals were taboo from uncovering that they had a place with the Work without the approval of an unrivaled, while 10 years sooner they had been exhorted not to examine the association with non-individuals. More than once blamed for being an elitist and cryptic association, embroiled in different money related and political outrages, Opus Dei unquestionably invigorates interest."

John F. Coverdale in Putting Down Roots: Fr. Joseph Muzquiz and the Growth of Opus Dei states that "Escriva had established Opus Dei on October 2, 1928. On that day he had seen that God needed there to be in the congregation individuals who might react wholeheartedly to God's call to look for sacredness in standard life. They would devote their work and spreading the blissful message that God calls each Christian to the completion of blessedness."

Sharan Newman in his book The Real History behind the Da Vinci Code (2005) states that "In 1928, Escriva went to a withdraw for ministers. On October 2, the devour of the Guardian Angels, he obviously had a dream of Jesus, while ruminating, who revealed to
him that he should start the work that would progress toward becoming Opus Dei. The "work" of Opus Dei is a basic piece of its central goal. Escriva dependably demanded that Opus Dei had no enthusiasm for legislative issues, yet he was especially for a solid and Catholic Spain.”

Arthur Goldwag in his book Cults, Conspiracies, and Secret Societies: The Straight Scoop on Freemasons, The Illuminati, Skull and Bones, Black Helicopters, The New World Order and many, many more(2009) states that “Opus Dei individuals are dynamic on the world- they are not priests or nuns-but rather their otherworldly practice is key to all that they do”. “Opus Dei has been known as a 'mentally programming clique' due to its high-weight enlisting strategies, particularly on school grounds; it forces a serious train on individuals and an additional standard level of control over their everyday lives.”

Robert Howells in his book The Illuminati: The counter Culture Revolution from Secret Societies to Wiki-leaks and Anonymous states that "The center conviction of the Illuminati was that humankind ought to be upbeat, however when they assessed humanity's parcel they found the aphorism of Rousseau to be valid: Man is conceived free yet wherever he is in chains.

This servitude came as the authorized obliviousness of religious reasoning, the debasement of self-serving lawmakers and the childish plushness of eminence ruling over the subjugated workers. Looked with such outrageous disparity in the lopsidedness of influence and riches, the organizers of the Illuminati chose to make a move.”

Larry Burkett in his book The Illuminati: a novel states that "From the Freemasons, a little gathering of world pioneers developed, committed to the foundation of an overall request, known as that 'Illuminati,' or 'the edified'; later they would be referred to just as the 'General public.'"

In the book The Illuminati: The World’s Most Dangerous Secret Society by My Ebook Publishing House, it is stated that "Like an onion skin, disregarding the way that trap researchers would slant toward the photo of a pyramid, the outside layers are the most insignificant levels of the New World Order movers and shakers and at the middle can be discovered the Illuminati.”

Giorgio Agamben in his book Opus Dei: An Archaeology of Duty states that "Opus Dei is a specialized term that, in the convention of the Latin Catholic Church that begins from the Rule of St.Benedict, assigns the formality, that is, 'the activity of the holy office of Jesus Christ... In the ritual the entire open love is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His individuals.'"

Scott Hahn in his book Ordinary Work, Extraordinary Grace: My Spiritual Journey in Opus Dei states that "Opus Dei Priests, similar to all individuals, are urged to do their work with the most extreme expert greatness, since they are putting forth that work to God." "The profound establishment of Opus Dei is quietude."

Manuel S. Marin in his book Opus Dei: A Templar’s Credo for the Advent of the City of God in the City of Manstates that 'Opus Dei signifies 'crafted by God,' and this work of God essentially demonstrates the path to the 'approach of the Kingdom of paradise on earth,' for which I composed a plan, philosophy or proclamation.'

Stephen Klimczuk and Gerald Warner in their book Secret Places, Hidden Sanctuaries: Uncovering Mysterious Sites, Symbols and Societies states that "Opus Dei (Work of God) is something of a contemporary Rorschach inkblot test, with individuals tending to see
whatever they are searching for, including each sort of evil, from "revealed excessive religious practices, affirmed defilement, and dictatorship" to worldwide scheme. Guests to the Villa Tevere, Opus Dei's currently acclaimed world home office in Rome, might be confounded by the regular, efficient air there, like that of a vast law or administration counseling firm."

Robert Hutchison in his book Their Kingdom Come: Inside the Secret World of Opus Dei states that "Opus Dei isn't just the most capable power in the Catholic Church today, it's a power that has accomplished its very own presence and becomes relentlessly more grounded."

THE NOVELS

1. ANGELS AND DEMONS

In 2000 Dan Brown published his novel *Angles and Demons*. The novel was an instant hit and soon became the bestselling mystery thriller that tackles New World Order Conspiracy and was adapted by film in 2009. It was published by Random House, Pocket Books and then by Corgi Books. It introduces the character Robert Langdon, the hero of all following sequels.

The novel is rich with the most famous secret societies known to Man; The Knights Templar, the Assassins, Freemasonry, Illuminati, Rothschild, Rosicrucian, and The Bilderberg Group. Only the Illuminati will be thoroughly examined as it is portrayed as main character in the novel. The Illuminati symbols are as follows.

ILLUMINATI SYMBOLS

Dan Brown portrays Vatican as an outsized labyrinth for the Illuminati. The whole scene is built in keeping with the illuminati belief systems and carries their symbols. All artists, painters and architects are illuminatus namely Bernini and Raphael. So as for illuminati members to fulfill secretly, a gathering place was dedicated for this reason. This secret place was referred to as the church of illumination and for members realize to seek it out, they must follow bound clues graven on outstanding art works and statues in plain sight. Only then could they find the path, the Church.

The most renowned symbols of illuminati are explained particularly the all - Seeing Eye, the pyramid, and the Egyptian obelisk. Illuminati symbols are all connected to at least one renowned Egyptian legend or story. Legend has it that Osiris; the god king of ancient Egyptians was married to his sister, Isis, the god of fertility. Set, their brother, was jealous and wanted the kingdom for himself so he murdered his brother and dismembered him throwing his body parts all over the underworld. Isis looked for her husband's 14 body parts and managed to collect all of them except his penis that was eaten by fish in the river Nile. Isis by the use of magic placed the body parts together and replaced the penis with a golden one. After magical rituals and intercourse Isis claimed that she is pregnant and eventually gave birth to Horus, the god of sky, war and hunting. His right eye represented the sun while the left eye represented the moon. Horus started a war on Set to revenge this father and as a result he lost his eye. With the use of magic, the eye was replaced with the All Seeing Eye, the eye of deity that protects his worshipers and provides them with power. The All – Seeing Eye is the eye of a pagan god inside a triangle that represents the pagan trinity Osiris, Isis and Horus; the mother, father and holy son. This same pagan symbol was adapted by Christianity in which the eye stands for the Eye of the Christian God watching over mankind and enclosed in a triangle that is the symbol of the Christian trinity. The All
Seeing Eye symbol was and still is widely known throughout history and cultures and is famous for being the Eye of Horus. One can see this eye almost everywhere; it appears on coins, altar decorations, logos, clothes, modern currency like the one-dollar bill and many more. In 18th century, the Freemasons adapted this symbol and ever since then this symbol is always associated with the freemasons and Illuminati.

The Pyramid is another symbol frequently used by the illuminati. Pyramids are one of the wonders of the world with mysteries unsolved. It is widely known that these pyramids were built as tombs for pharos; however, the illuminati believe that they are schools for teaching mystery to secret societies. Man can become a god if he is provided with the right secret knowledge and with this knowledge he can rule the ignorant. The pyramid represents a social hierarchy in which very few elites on the top rule over many "masses of ignorant working bees on the bottom".

The last of illuminati symbols is the Egyptian obelisk. An obelisk, according to Wikipedia "is a tall, four-sided, narrow tapering monument which ends in a pyramid-like shape or pyramidion at the top. These were originally called "tekhenu" by the builders, the Ancient Egyptians." The origin of designing such a phallic architecture was that Isis ordered these obelisk monuments to be erected in temples to be worshiped in honor of her husband's lost penis. Of course if this obelisk is erected inside a circle which stands for a woman's vagina it refers to "the very act of copulation." The Obelisk in St. Peter's square is an Egyptian obelisk erected in the middle of the circular square.

The Illuminati is an old secret society that adapted ancient beliefs in their symbols yet the irony is that we are now surrounded with all these illuminati – Egyptian symbols more than ancient cultures ever was.


The Da Vinci Code is a 2003 mystery thriller novel by Dan Brown. It follows symbologist Robert Langdon and cryptologist Sophie Neveu after a murder in the Louvre Museum in Paris causes them to get involved during a battle between the Priory of Sion and Opus Dei over the chance of Jesus Christ having been a companion to Mary Magdalene.

The title of the novel refers to the finding of the primary murder victim within the Grand Gallery of the Louvre, naked and display similar to Leonardo Vinci’s renowned drawing, the Vitruvian Man, with a cryptic message written beside his body and a pentagram drawn on his chest in his own.

The novel explores an alternate non secular history, whose central plot purpose is that the Merovingian kings of France were descended from the bloodline of Jesus Christ and sinner, ideas derived from full general Prince's The Templar Revelation(1997) and books by Margaret Starbird. The book additionally refers to The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail (1982) although Dan Brown has expressed that it absolutely was not used as analysis material blood. The organization of Opus Dei is analyzed in this research.

Methodology

Here, in this research, the secret societies mentioned in Brown’s Angels and Demons and The Da Vinci Code, that is, The Illuminati and Opus Dei, respectively, are analyzed. The methodology used in this research is Content Analysis.
1. THE ILLUMINATI

According to Wikipedia "the illuminati is a name given to several groups, real and fictitious, historical, the name refers to the Bavarian illuminati." The Illuminati were a real organization. They were founded in 1776 in Bavaria, sworn to ideals of free-thinking and rationalism whereas the official website of illuminati claims that “the illuminati’s purpose is to secure the ongoing survival of the human species”.

They assert that “Like all organisms, the human species naturally strives against extinction. Though your countries have borders and your languages have barriers, all people in all places are members of the same biological family. All humans are pieces of a collective that keeps humanity in existence. Though you are merely a speck on the back of a grain of sand when compared to the vast number of humans born and decomposed for millennia, you are as important to your species’ survival as the greatest kings and queens”.

The illuminati still chose to remain as a secret society. The reasons they put forth are many. “Every human desires to be free of oppression, free of hardship, free of poverty, free of hunger, free of rules and laws — but as you understand, the nature of your species leaves true freedom impossible. Are you free to murder? Are you free to steal? Are others free to murder and steal from you? Or are there certain freedoms that must be given up for the benefit of all? For happiness, the human desires freedom; for prosperity, the human requires leadership. This is the reason behind our anonymity. To continue functioning throughout societal changes and generational differences, the Illuminati must remain behind the curtain - an outsider, belonging to none and loyal to all.”

On the contrary, American writer Dan Brown in his Author’s Note of Angels and Demons states that "The brotherhood of the Illuminati is also factual." But who are the Illuminati? Brown enriches the reader with a full detailed account of this secret society providing encyclopedic information and historical facts. Brown gives the date 1500s as the beginning date of this group thus he made many enlightened figures of this century members of this secret society like Galileo, Raphael, and Bernini. Most criticism was directed to Brown's Statement Galileo was an Illuminatus.

Brown continues stating that since this cluster challenged the church, the Christian church frightened them down ruthlessly therefore they became extraordinarily secret and met often in Rome within the Church of Illumination. The illuminati needed to fight back against the church nevertheless Galileo Galilei, the "most reverend member" refused; eventually Galileo was caught and "severely punished" for claiming that the sun is the center of universe that in keeping with the church that it is blasphemy to say that God created humankind and placed them far away from the middle of universe. The church became furious and commenced to become violent, it kept hold of four illuminati members, tortured them by branding them alive with the symbol of the cross and threw their bodies within the streets of Rome as a warning for joining this society. As a response, the Illuminati hid deeper and mixed with other groups that were hunted by the Catholic Church like Muslims, Jews, occultists, etc. and became "the single most dangerous anti – Christian force on earth" with mysterious rites and deadly secrecy whose sole aim to revenge on the Catholic Church. The group was doomed as “Shaitan” an Arabic Islamic word considered to be "the root of the English word …Satan". They fled Rome and were taken in by the freemasons in 1700, they fell a victim and the front for illuminati recruitment, a secret society within another secret society they grow stronger and wider, they took most of
Europe and moved with the masons to the United States “they took advantage of infiltration and helped found banks, universities, and industry to finance their ultimate quest...the creation of a single unified world state – a kind of secular New World Order.

One of the first and most popular books written about the Illuminati was published in 1798 by John Robison, a Professor of Natural Philosophy at Edinburgh University in Scotland. The full title of the book is *Proofs of a Conspiracy Against all the Religious and Governments of Europe carried on in the Secret Meetings of Free Masons, Illuminati, and Reading Societies*. It is often referred to by the shortened title *Proofs of a Conspiracy*. A copy of his work was sent to George Washington, where he responded with a letter saying that he was aware that the Illuminati had diabolical plans of separating people from their government.

Robison’s book is extremely important because it was written at the time the Illuminati was first exposed to the public. It is basically a firsthand account of what the Illuminati were doing and how they became known to the public. Robison writes, “The association of which I have been speaking is the order of Illuminati, founded in 1775, by Dr. Adam Weishaupt, professor of Canon law in the University of Ingolstadt, and abolished in 1786 by the Elector of Bavaria, but revived immediately after, under another name, and in a different form, all over Germany. It was again detected and seemingly broken up; but it had by this time taken so deep root that it still subsists without being detected, and has spread into all the countries of Europe. It took its first rise among the Freemasons, but is totally different from Freemasonry.”

Mark Dice in his *Illuminati: Facts and Fiction* states that “this alleged organization supposedly hides and protects a secret bloodline of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. The bloodline myth is, in reality, a cover story for the bloodline of what will one day give birth to the antichrist so he can claim the Divine right to rule according to the prophecy of the Old Testament with regards to the bloodline of the Messiah.”

The words of Robison prove the fact that the Illuminati did exist and had masked their identity to attain societal acceptance.

2. OPUS DEI

Opus Dei proposes to people to give their lives to God, following a special path of service within the Catholic Church. One’s life can only be given freely, through a decision coming from the heart, not from external pressure: pressure is both wrong and ineffective. Opus Dei always respects the freedom of conscience of its members, prospective members, and everyone else it deals with. Opus Dei spreads the message that work, family life, and the ordinary events of each day are opportunities for drawing close to Christ, and making Him known to others.

The main features of the spirit of Opus Dei are Divine filiation, Ordinary Life, Sanctifying Work, Prayer and Sacrifice, Unity of Life, Freedom, Charity. The official website of Opus Dei claims the following.

“Throughout *The Da Vinci Code*, Opus Dei members are presented as monks (or, rather, caricatures of monks). Like all Catholics, Opus Dei members have great appreciation for monks, but in fact there are no monks in Opus Dei. Opus Dei is a Catholic institution for lay people and diocesan priests, not a monastic order.
In *The Da Vinci Code*, Opus Dei members are falsely depicted murdering, lying, drugging people, and otherwise acting unethically, thinking that it is justified for the sake of God, the Church, or Opus Dei. *The Da Vinci Code* makes it appear that Opus Dei members practice bloody mortifications. In fact, though history indicates that some Catholic saints have done so, Opus Dei members do not do this.”

Opus Dei claims that *The Da Vinci Code* is a work of fiction, and it is not a reliable source of information. They point out that *The Da Vinci Code*’s depiction of Opus Dei is inaccurate, both in the overall impression and in many details, and it would be irresponsible to form any opinion of Opus Dei based on *The Da Vinci Code*.

To prove the fact that the secret organization of Opus Dei masks their identity, words of Frances Kissling, scholar and activist in the fields of religion, reproduction and women's rights, are cited. “It has had unprecedented power under Pope John Paul II, and there is no way it wants to lose that power in another papacy,” says Frances Kissling of the group Catholics for a Free Choice. With more than 80,000 members worldwide - wealthy and influential in politics and business - Opus Dei has been described by its critics as sinister. “It is a secretive organization that is not subject to any accountability or control, and organizations like that always have the potential for danger,” says Kissling.

In the pot boiling bestseller “The Da Vinci Code,” there's no doubt Opus Dei's implicated in crime, conspiracy and corporal punishment meant to mimic the suffering of Christ. Even its followers admit there's some fact in the fiction.

“Anyone who is familiar with Catholic traditions of penance would not at all be surprised by members of Opus Dei using what are known as the cilice and the discipline, a spiked chain and a small whip,” says Father John Wauck of Opus Dei. Wauck insists there's nothing menacing in the group's mission. “It is about lay people living very human lives and at the same time seeking heroic holiness,” says Wauck. But, as one follower put it, it's not “Catholic-lite.” It could be that's contributed to Opus Dei's image problem. An unremarkable-looking building on a Rome street, for instance, could easily inspire the imagination of a writer of fiction. What word except "hidden" could describe the ornate chapel, built like a vault deep inside. Asked if the building is the holiest place to Opus Dei, says Opus Dei member Peter Bancroft says: “Oh, no, but this place is certainly special for us because here we have St. Jose Maria under the alter.” That's Opus Dei's founder, preserved in a silver coffin. It is a group with deep interest in who'll be chosen to steer the church at a rare time when influence can count.”.

**DO SECRET SOCIETIES REALLY EXIST?**

The existence of secret societies has always been questioned constantly. Although controversial, few articles can be cited which proves the existence of secret societies.

1. In an article, “Five Secret Societies that still exist today”, published by Annie Tieu, News Editor of"utdailybeacon.com”, it is claimed that secret societies do really exist. The existence of Illuminati is put forth as: While this one may not still exist, the Illuminati is a prime example of secret societies, and in the words of Beyoncé, “Y’all haters corny with that Illuminati mess.”

Historically, the name “Illuminati” usually refers to the Bavarian Illuminati, which was an Enlightenment-era secret society founded on May 1, 1776. Its members were advocates of secularism, liberalism, republicanism and gender equality, among other
ideologies. The Illuminati also opposed superstition, religious influence over public life, abuses of state power and the deliberate obscuring of subject matters.

Because of these values, the group is often front-and-center in several conspiracy theories that involve them playing puppet-master, controlling world affairs and influencing the government and major corporations in order to eventually establish a New World Order. A variety of historical events have been said to be orchestrated by the Illuminati, like the French Revolution and the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Throughout popular culture in outlets like novels, films, television shows and video games, the Illuminati has been depicted as lurking in the shadows, pulling the strings of power.

2. Another article “Does the Illuminati still exist?” published by goop.com too claims that the secret society of Illuminati had existed in the past. Robert Howells, author of *The Illuminati: The counter Culture Revolution from Secret Societies to Wiki-leaks and Anonymous*, became interested in secret societies and he encountered alleged members of various underground societies: their stories fueled his interest in looking deeper.

Howells states that “Illuminati was created as a Masonic group in 1776 by German philosopher Adam Weishaupt, with the intention of liberating humanity from all forms of political, mental, and physical bondage. As the name implies, they were intent on guiding individuals towards enlightenment, but found society was restricted by those in power who wished to maintain control and did not care about individuals’ well-being. Having recognized the corruption of politicians and nobility and how organized religion held back science and spiritual development, they set out to rid the world of these institutions.”

He also says that “Members were initially recruited from within Masonic lodges but later expanded to include anyone whose ideals were aligned with the Illuminati’s goals of equality and social justice. At their peak, they controlled Masonic lodges and many other groups across Europe, Asia, and America.

If the Illuminati existed today, their beliefs would be aligned with the online communities of hacktivists, pranksters, political petition websites, and social networks to expose and challenge authority. The online collective Anonymous is an example of a modern Illuminati that was formed in the discussion forums frequented by hackers. Even today some of the most powerful men in the world meet in secret to perform rituals at Bohemian Grove. As they enact a mystery play beneath a giant stone statue of an owl that was once the symbol of the Illuminati, it’s easy to see why so many people believe the Illuminati still exist.”

**Conclusion**

Dan Brown in *Angels and Demons* gracefully incorporated one of the strong secret societies as antagonists- The Illuminati. The Illuminati is a secret society that is believed by many to exist nowadays much stronger than they ever did in history. The rich encyclopedic information and the deliberate inaccuracies that Brown provides for this society left conspiracy theorist investigating about Dan Brown himself.

One can admire Brown’s manipulation of facts and inaccuracies to serve his literary elements. Dates, places and members are changed to create perfect setting, plot, theme and characterization. Dates were changed to incorporate prominent figures in all fields of life. Places were changed to include the Vatican City, the core of Christian religion as well as
the perfect scene for incarnating the clash of religions. Members were changed to show the enormous size of the Illuminati web.

On the contrary, what the official websites of “The Illuminati” and “Opus Dei” proposes is totally diverse. This in turn substantiates the fact that the secret societies do mask themselves as charitable organizations and religious groups to attain societal favors.

It is undoubtedly a matter of controversy if secret societies do really exist or not. Some historians claim that they are real while some rejects the concept of secret societies and asserts that they are added just to enthrall the readers. A possible conclusion cannot be found as secret societies are linked with history, myths and legendary stories. The controversies associated with the existence of secret societies are undeniably a matter of faith too.

References


