

A canticle for
leibowitz analysis
philosophy essay



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Walter H. Miller Jr. published the book *A Canticle for Leibowitz*. *A Canticle for Leibowitz* is, first off, a good read. Secondly, it provides an obvious analogue to our own society. It provides a warning which must have struck a triad when it was first published, during the Cold War. Leibowitz deals with religion, science, faith, and humanity and all of these features interlock to structure our insight of society. It deals with the embezzlement of scientific knowledge and superstitious ways of religion. However, it never implores a tone of scepticism towards these points of view. There is without a doubt a message hidden within the written prose, Miller does not come off being preachy, attacks, and does not disregard the scientists. He purely presents his elevated ideas in a highly comprehensible and approachable behaviour and allows the story to give details of with a clue of manipulation or pulpit-pounding. This book permits the characters to replicate errors, and know more of how life has to offer. Miller's book does not end very happily, the ending of the book is displeasing, but readers like me have experienced a mixture of emotions with heartbreak and irritation. The novel is divided into three sections with diverse themes separated by centuries. Leibowitz is an Augustinian novel because it conveys a sense of change in religion. All three sections show how technology affects human existence and how they made an impact throughout history.

The first, "Fiat Homo" (There be man), the setting was in a dark age that survived centuries after the war; the continent is colonized with military wanderer tribes, and the monks were busy copying and preserving their library for future making, strongly believing that someday mankind will desire and benefit from the old knowledge. The main character and a monk

named Francis who happens to be the remainder of a fallout shelter. He discovered blueprints of an engineer, who his churches hold in the highest regard as a saint. They don't recognize the blueprint, and regard it as a holy relic. I found this attention-grabbing with the way a society without technology construe the fall of a society by technology. Nuclear fallout was an "evil spirit", unfamiliar leaders were "princes" and their scientists were "magi." Because of the egotism of a prince that strong-minded, to use the "fire" bestowed him by god, the demon was let loose, and consequences were leading the world and caused total destruction. These are themes that deal with responsibility. Miller is suggesting that the "language of science and religion must coexist to construct the important ethical framework that will allow both bodies to thrive in a productive way". I feel that this erratic section involves a conflict of language rather than a complete terminology of science and religion. It is mentioned that "Scientists are the psychic and respected priests who function as the mouthpieces of God. Without them, the masses would be ignorant, unaware of their errors, and damned to a life of brutish". Tietge also mentions "esteem the knowledge of the scientist, and if we treat science and the scientist as a liaison between heavenly knowledge and earthly activity, we distort the function of both religion and science, giving science sanction to commit great acts of hubris".

In "Fiat Lux" (There be light), the world is a new rebirth of culture and science. The first light of the next enlightenment, people are slowly beginning to recover from the damage of the fallout. While there are a lot of people who bear a grudge for the damage caused, a number of people are also fascinated by the ruins being hidden. They want to study them further,

perhaps utilize them since science is making reappearance. An interesting quote I found in the book is “ The answer was near at hand; there was still the serpent whispering” . This declares that the serpent is useful, but not interesting. The same serpent inducements, is a reference to Adam & Eve in Eden. The world is starting to wake up and appreciate science and technology once again. Now, the knowledge secured by the monks of the abbey is desired by scholars who are trying to re-invent some of the science that was acknowledged before the deadly war. An interesting quote Miller mentions “ If you try to save wisdom until the world is wise, Father, the world will never have it”. This means that people have to practice being wise, then they, and the world; will never achieve it.

In *Fiat Voluntas Tua*” (Thy will be done), mankind has reached hi-tech development, were clever to produce missiles, machines, and nuclear bombs. It takes place in an ultramodern humanity with ships, robots, and grenades, a society that has reached the tip of its dominance and at the present on the edge of an unexpected refusal. This is the saddest chapter, and really gives you a feel for the caution miller is issuing.

Power must come with responsibility, and we have to view it the right way. It is too thin, and we don't take the long term effects of our actions into explanation. Not only it is broad, we go past our interpretations and completely misunderstand the real lesson. This section sees an age of technology outshining and on the edge of nuclear war. In this section, Tietge mentions that “ We must always temper in a mutual valuing of the reality of physical living and the emotional and moral needs of the human condition” . Miller mentions “ Pain's the only evil I know about [...] and that society is the

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only thing which determines whether an act is strong or not" [...] " How did those heresies get back into the world after all this time, Hell has limited imaginations down there" . He's interpreting that physical pain is only evil, public sense of right and wrong determines which action is good or bad. As well, the mistaken doctrine comes from the incomplete imagination of the Devil in Hell. Science has re-emerged from the dark ages, to add on cars, planes, and spaceships exist once again. However, nuclear weapons have been re-discovered, built, and deployed. Some have blow up in " tests" and " accidents." Another eye catching quote Miller mentions " To minimize suffering and to maximize security were natural and proper ends of society and Cesar. But then they became the only ends, somehow, and then only basis of law-. [...] Inevitably, [...] we found only their opposites: maximum suffering and minimum security" . I suppose that he is announcing how Cesar warped the law by emphasizing security over suffering. Once again, the world is threatened with destruction, and the church must decide how to respond to the possibility of another nuclear holocaust.

Overall, the book is thoughtful, dark, and classic, and some times witty. There are main themes of faith against politics and likewise, the church against state, as well, humanity's annoying lack of preparation, and the significance of agony. In these elements, the story is soaked with Miller's viewpoint. But there are some very inhospitable points to the story. In actual fact, it's about monks that work for a millennium to save, re-establish, shield and contribute to the knowledge of mankind. Though no more than to have humankind utilize that knowledge, again, will demolish itself. The satire of the monks' devotion a Jewish male to change simply since he saw the

monasteries possibly as a stronghold of learning in the centre of a world turned into ignorance. This book changed my perceptions, it made me stop and think about faith, rituals, and the books being absolute truth. Humans did the copying, that created their own formulas, made mistakes and filled in the blanks. There is no 'absolute truth'. It made me stop and re-evaluate us as a society, we look back at the pyramids and the Greeks and we either worship them or mock at 'what did they know' since they were obviously lacking in 'classy knowledge'. Finally, it made me stop and look at the world that we create, our society, and question the ignorance and the judgments and the power hungry struggles and shake my head at what we as human beings do in the name of our self and our gods.

Miller was to aim that given a option to perform things another way, and given that the technology was to make the world a healthier place was in the strength of the church, we would perhaps screw up and fail. The idea was that in saving the technology where the passage of knowledge was interrupted, like a nuclear war would make survival prime. The knowledge would be found gradually and rescued through individuals who didn't truly recognize it. Because of that, they had to put aside it in a memorization and strict style, and not thinking regarding to what the technology composed of or did. It is nowhere to be found why the meaning of the first nuclear battle was fought, in addition to the amount of uncalled for deaths were caused; it is intended to happen again. This book has an extremely encouraging, optimistic vision of religion, despite the fact that it is gloomy about mankind in general. This book presents a physically powerful word of warning to our world of what may possibly come about, if we do not take into account from

the errors of our ancestor in each of the three given sections. The author provided a caution to humankind is accurately what science fiction is entirely in relation to.