A Canticle For Leibowitz Essay, Research Paper

Nicholas Sine

Period 4

5/11/98

A Canticle for Leibowitz

Throughout the history of mankind, man has wanted to learn. It was the

knowledge that has been kept with him for generations that has also kept the human race

from not progressing. More and more generations of man have evolved and yet one

element of life has lived on through the roughness of nature, plagues and even world wars.

Knowledge proves to be indestructible and unstoppable.

In the first section of A Canticle for Leibowitz, Fiat Homo, knowledge makes an

introduction by demonstrating its capability of surviving the first nuclear fallout via books

stored by the saint, Issaic Leibowitz. Now monks are memorizing and copying texts and

pictures that held the knowledge to the reproduction of society. The monks contributed

tremendously in the process of keeping knowledge indestructible. All of the surviving

people in the world have dedicated themselves to knowledge by turning into doctors,

scientists and any sort of men of study. Once again, knowledge proves unstoppable. In

Fiat Lux, knowledge is progressing at an incredible rate. The church realizes that

everything it needs to enhance civilization has been passed down from the generations, and

they just need to interpret it.

“For twelve centuries, a small flame of knowledge had been kept smoldering in

the monasteries; only during the last age of reason, certain proud thinkers had

claimed that valid knowledge was indestructible–that ideas were deathless and

truth immortal.”

The church members keep learning more and more as they study the old texts that they

can now understand. Brother Kornhoer developed a dynamo that was capable of

producing an electrical current strong enough to power a light bulb. This point in the

book seemed to really show that knowledge was indestructible and unstoppable because

civilization had gone from ruins where there was nothing, to the recreation of electricity.

Now in Fiat Voluntas Tua, another holocaust was in effect and a small team of teachers

were gathered together onto a space ship. They planned to leave when the second nuclear

holocaust began, thus ensuring the existence of knowledge.

In A Canticle for Leibowitz, three time zones of civilization that were hundreds of

years apart were able to keep the same knowledge and documents that the last had used.

Wars and mass destruction were not a problem for the battle between knowledge and its

destruction, knowledge is unstoppable.