

Running head: VERILY, THE UNKNOWABLE KNOWS

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Essay 3 - Final

Verily, the Unknowable Knows

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Western Civilization to 1650

Music sometimes succinctly delivers a difficult message most sweetly:

“There are some bad people on the rise. There are some bad, bad people on the rise. They are saving their own skins by ruining peoples’ lives—Bad, bad people on the rise... You wonder why we’re only half-ashamed because enough is too much... Look around... Can you blame us? Can you blame us? It’s a government scheme designed to kill your dream—oh, my mother died, and once poor, always poor—There are some bad, bad people on the rise (Feeny).”

Verily, verily, the *great unknown* holds untold authority. Its unspeakable enigma hovers over the little humans like a splotchy foreboding grey and white pregnant sky. This results in submission and permission to allow this most ominous patient power to tower above the helm of their boundless impatient imaginations—where fear is conjured some more and then goes about festering in an ungovernable frenzied persistent fashion.

When persistent powers of a *church universal* are teamed with the powers of a *state* and they, acting as one, claim and teach their people that all of the tenets, laws, and *their* absolute knowledge of this unknown are/were indeed *established by God and understood in unequivocal totality only by them*, then their peoples’ imaginations are prone to guilefully deliver them into an ultimate subservient state; they relinquish production of their own thoughts in order to follow the all-knowing bosses’ credo.

Fear is a corrosive thread that stitches together the frayed (mental) blanket of mankind. Its furtive seed holds within it a rapacious dominance over the more delicate hearts and minds. Throughout the ages, fear has proven to be an acquisitive fuel that breeds in the putrefied Petri dish that *is* the human imagination. There, it is allowed to perpetuate itself to kingdom-come.

The best way to successfully gather all of the lint from a clothes dryer filter is to use the

lint itself to attract more of itself as to amass itself some more; so it is with frightened humans.

“It’s a government scheme designed to kill your dream [...] Because enough is too much [...]

Look around—can you blame us? Can you blame us (Feeny)?”

The power/control recipe: To this momentous fear/lint snowballing procedure, please note and **do** the following: Add a generous dollop of human hope. This should be stirred in deeply and with much fortitude when the pot is hot after the boil in order to introduce a zestful trust. Next, add a large pinch of minced **conviction** that their beings remain forever sin-prone and so, in perpetual need of the bosses’ blessing, and bam: the boss is as poised as a lofty puppeteer to be most able to exercise control of the entire spectrum of the (imaginative) human psyche.

If any power-seeking entity wishes to establish a major movement, the elements of fear and hope must be strategically kept alive and kicking the shorts off of lurking doubt. Before these two elements are broiled into motion and served, it will be wise to attribute this enterprising all-knowing, all-powerful movement’s foundation as to being earnestly rooted solely in the peoples’ inherent trepidation of *the infinite unknown*.

Stellar are the strategic.

“*Heaven* is up there, *hell* is down there, and *purgatory* is in west Oklahoma (Pickett).”

Specificity of definition by extremes does stretch scope. These two extreme “good” and “bad” “locations” makes for dimensionally dizzying Earth to be more precisely determinable by human beings, thereby allowing the bosses to create any *control code* of their liking all throughout the roominess that was so intentionally created betwixt.

Up: Circa 1200, heaven was speculated to be a place, an idyllic lavish paradisiacal location, an ultimate golden abode of the just. Reward and punishment rule(d) the physiological

psyche and so, the behavior of Earth mammals. Down: Distress, retribution, noise, fire, brimstone, sulphur, zero indemnification, unceasing humiliation, hornets, fat rats, whiny cats, screechy women, savage men, and lawns and lawns of lush poison ivy on which to rest. Oh, and no water in sight. Purgatory: a tepid beer, ultimate silence, bland food, bleak people, and boring topography. Limbo: an interim place filled with unbaptized dead babies' innocent souls.

Just before Lucifer took up the banjo and the steel guitar, after “he had usurped God (Pickett),” he had been granted a second chance to redeem himself, and so he decided to hang his then-modern hot horns in the flattest, straightest, most barren and lusterless of dirt piles. He was given the vapid privilege of residing for a spell in a *purging place* wherein he was made to refer to himself as an *Okie* as part of his purge while residing there with his disgruntled lesser demons: the imps, sprites, and other poltergeists (who knew of his “infernal will” all too well). After having badly bruised his wretched skinny tush by way of a great fall all of the dang way down from the heavenliest of heaven’s choirs—after being fired as director of course—an acceptance by the Earth humans that one *heaven* and one *hell* forever existed *elsewhere*—just simply anywhere but here—was soon to be forever set into motion.

Though the *purging place* may have somehow mercurially assumed varying splotchy places of residency from time to time, the highly feared, forever revered polar places—*heaven and hell*—were only to be found “up or down” by one’s soul when one died. Until that mysterious death day, while still on Earth and very much alive, the idea of a very real golden-paved heaven and unquashable flame-filled hell set a precedent that would contain within its extremes a decided architecture that would ensure almighty mental (and so, social) control. This archetype of power was to set up the meaning/value/importance/rank of absolutely every person,

place, or thing and all of the great many subsequent *colors* and *voids* found absolutely anywhere and everywhere in between them.

Bringing chaos to order is a laborious taking-on as the art of planning inherent in doing so is insidiously tactical. If one's goal is to control an entire people for a considerable amount of time, then that entity must become absolute master of this people's sense of what is right and wrong within themselves, so that s/he is able to move them like agile chess pieces as s/he wishes, when s/he wishes, for as long as s/he wishes.

“Ignorance was the standard operating procedure because if you keep people ignorant, you can control them (Pickett).” *Defining* to this people that which is simply unknown or unknowable is a sly start. The said schematic one then attained a monopoly on *the ether*—and hence the ownership of possession of their vulnerability: their fear. Next, it was wise to add some element of an enduring hope to the *mass control* equation. Introduction of the solid idea of a promise of an undying hope which lives, breathes, is watching their every move, and is truly there for and cares for the people—“someone” or “something” to which they would forever be required to report was essential. Equally vital was to seal the deal by convincing these people that *all of what has been told and taught to them was indeed established by God*. Today, a fair comparison might be much like the memory of when a certain Mr. Bush would open his mouth and simply allow words to seep out.

Uncoincidentally, it was necessary that heaven and hell were distinguishable “locations.” In the fourth century, the wealth of *the church* grew in accord with its power over its people. The church's hypnotizing proclamation that it essentially was the chosen to *secure and disseminate* God's word, was the only *vessel* that was found holy enough for the word to be emitted from, in addition to the fact that its programmed people were such because most of them

were not permitted or simply were not able to read the church's Holy Bible at all, all favored the securing of its power over its people. So it was. St. Peter's Basilica was built in Rome in 324.

“St. Peter's Basilica stands on the traditional site where Peter, the apostle who was considered the first pope, was crucified and buried. St. Peter's tomb is under the main altar and many other popes are buried in the basilica as well. Originally founded by Constantine in 324. According to ancient tradition, St. Peter was martyred and buried nearby. His simple grave was remembered and visited by the faithful, and in 324, Emperor Constantine began construction on this great basilica over the tomb. St. Peter's Basilica was rebuilt in the sixteenth century by Renaissance masters including Bramante, Michelangelo and Bernini. The shrine of St. Peter is still the central focus of the church today (Hayes).”

When *the great unknown* was defined and believed to exist at the very *top* and at the scary *bottom* of all of the *known* things in the middle, then man-made eschelons of *The Great Chain of Being* were primed and poised to rule everything in between. The church had its people believe that God had simply transferred his/her/its power of appointing and anointing capabilities to its little Earth's state, church, and lastly to its sweet nature. The indubitable *Great Chain of Being* effected every single person and part of European life in the Middle Ages in a meticulously cascading order.

When reflecting upon the archetype of this *Great Chain of Being* and hence, the architecture of *The Church Universal* which crowned it, a certain magical children's Christmas tradition that still persists in representing the binding power of human belief in the unknown comes to mind as it rings a striking metaphoric bell. It may serve as a more innocent template of what the church and state were up to when placing themselves in such fixed power in Europe. In

the way that familiarity fosters the capability of control as well, children who hear and adopt belief in this story are already well on their way to being locked into place in *The Great Chain*.

Parable is most readily digestible by people when sweet and simple. Man-made candy is more palatable than is man-made politics. Though each run their empty course in *the great lie*, only *one* of these makes verbal false promises that it will help to ensure human health. In order to be able to swallow the politics of a structure as complex as *The Great Chain of Being*, it seems most pleasing to the mind's stomach—kid *or* big kid—if the placebo of parable is to taste sweet.

So, the candy cane version it shall be:

One might say that *heaven and hell* may be found at *extreme poles* in this traditional fable. They welcome nice or naughty dead humans only. Naughty ones experience a gift-less South Pole called hell (later, *southern* Oklahoma) where s/he is only given a single chunk of black coal. Nice ones are allowed to mail a personal wish list to a happiest North Pole called heaven in order to receive many a deserved gift on Christmas morning from an ominous jolly rotund man who somehow magically managed to descend his plumpness *and* his stuffed sack of toys in a bright red seam-bursting suit by way of his/her sooty narrow chimney where he partook of the sugar cookies, warm whisky, or apple cider that were left in exchange for his great mysterious gifts while Rudolph remained roof-bound, yoked to his subservient squad while giving his **guiding** nose **light** a wee break from house to house. This kind of (ethereal) **archetype** might more brightly mimic the way that things were set up for heirs who ran the church in surprisingly similar fashion—involving much more allegorical candy, of course:

The North Pole—**heaven**—was a happy, rich, clean, soft place where fun striped **bright lamps** made of candy canes flanked the **golden-paved** candy corn streets where sugarplums were known to dance in a happy one's restful head. Santa Claus—**God the Father**—ruled.

Long ago in and before the Middle Ages, Santa (God) was very busy and decided that he needed some help guiding His children, the Earth humans, so He decided to appoint His beloved Rudolph (**The Son of God**—or not—circa 1064, contingent upon which side of the Mediterranean one resided due to a great schism that occurred) to be his **only chosen Son** who would fly/descend down to Earth (and later, even *western* Oklahoma) while harnessing and then leading His forever yoked clergy of reindeer—**His high ecclesiastic Holy Orders**—which would be made to lead the **Center of Christendom’s further successors** in order to arrive safely on—**establish and control**—every single Earth human’s rooftop—**the church that mentally and physically housed the people**. Rudolph, **The Anointed One**, was given *the light to guide all*. He wanted to give toys to the naughty *and* to the nice and ended up paying a great price for his benevolence because the people were just not yet ready to understand Him.

Santa’s Sack of Toys and Goodies—**His Message/The Word of God**—was *sent down and delivered through* The Strong Chimney—**The Pope**—“the principal temporal leader of the church itself (Pickett).” This Great Chimney (**Pope**) sat atop the Great House (**Church**) and was the vessel that delivered the Great Message (**The Word**) to the people inside who were sleeping (**living in sin**), but who would **wake up to His gifts**.

Loyally surrounding The Strong Chimney in appointed hitched place, Dasher and Dancer would stand by as the **College of Cardinals**, Prancer, Vixen, and Comet would serve them as their **College of Bishops**. Then closely behind them, Cupid and Donner would serve the people as their **parish and canon priests**. Ah, but there is usually always *one* fallen apple in an otherwise unbruised bushel and this apple begs to be represented as well: Heretical little Blitzen was sadly exiled right out of thin air for thinking on his own because he decided that he “...didn’t give a flying squirrel’s left ass cheek (Pickett)” about, believe in, or wish to follow his appointed

place in “**The Holy Orders.**” Poor Blitzen.

Just under the reins of the reigning reindeer, Santa had appointed a certain seven strong protective Tall Elves to serve to help special living people—**Archangels Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Chamuel, Jophiel, and Zadkiel** (Hope and Beaufort). The Tall Elves delivered the Earth peoples’ societies’ war woes and secret wish-lists—**peoples’ prayers**—*directly* to Santa. They held the sacred job of unfurling the long inked scrolled parchment and verbalizing the wishes to Santa *word for word*.

The great Tall Elves’ protégés were a plethora of plump, rosy-cheeked Petite Elves who were known as **angels—seraphims, charubims, and ophanims**—who devoutly busied themselves in bringing good will and cheer while fervently spinning their fuzzy threaded looms and bustling about tying long thick ribbons and string to wrapped paper packages that were to be given to the Earth people who needed them, while trying not to trip over their curled pointy slippers—**the Earth peoples’ doubts**—when doing their appointed jobs.

The North Pole was male dominated except for one entity: Mrs. Claus helped people in a very special way since she was a woman. She was the first in all of The North Pole to keep a small Quiet Prayer Room that she had devoted to her Husband. She called it her **Nunnery**. The Petite Elves had build it for her out back behind Santa’s Workshop—**The Kingdom of God**—where she would pray incessantly to her Husband for the wishes of the Earthbound ones that the Elves had been invited to whisper directly into her ear in the event that Santa was too busy. She wore a red and white smock versus those dismal black and white ones that Earth nuns would wear later. She believed that her Husband preferred color. She was a fun nun.

The magical sleigh that carried Santa’s big white, silver and gold-trimmed Sack Packed Full of Toys and Goodies—**The Word of God**—*flew through the air*, connecting The North

Pole to the Earth. This Sublime Magical Sleigh—**The Holy Spirit**—was perhaps the vehicle of God the Father and God the Son, but most of the Earth humans would decide that for themselves much later when the church had introduced its idea of The Holy Trinity.

“Martyrdom is a very powerful tool (Pickett).” There were known to be certain Earth humans who believed that instead of writing a wish list and mailing it directly to Santa, that they would please Him far more if they died in His Name for Him, martyring themselves, they called it. These Human Martyrs—holy dead Earth humans—were called **Saints** in the Holy Catholic Church. They were given the chance to help the strong Tall Elves and the plump Petite Elves while busy in the Workshop at The North Pole, but they were always a bit sadder than the Elves. They had been told (and so believed) that their sacrifice would attain Santa’s great approval and they would be given their own room in the Workshop at The North Pole.

Saint Bernard, Saint Francis, Saint Nicholas, and Joan of Arc “...each did something profound while living (Pickett).” For instance, “Joan of Arc, who was born on January 6, 1412 in the little village of Domremy on the border of eastern France (Williamson)” was sold to the English and burned alive at the stake for her loyalty. She was considered a prayerful woman while living with the Earth humans:

“Joan indicated that it was around 1424, when she was twelve, that she began to experience visions which she described as both verbal communication as well as visible figures of saints and angels which she could see and touch. Her own testimony as well as a royal document say that on at least two occasions, other persons could see the same figures. She identified these visions as St. Catherine [of Alexandria], St. Margaret [of Antioch], the Archangel Michael, occasionally Gabriel, and large groups of angels on other occasions (Williamson).”

Earth humans still pray to these saints: the dead martyrs.

Church and state were a tight tandem deal. The state's ranks were set up just under yet with the church. European Medieval Feudalism ensued in a pragmatic order. "The Feudal System was introduced to England following the invasion and conquest of the country by William I (The Conqueror)[...] The system had been used in France by the Normans from the time they first settled there in about 900AD [...] It was a simple, but effective system, where all land was owned by the King [...] One quarter was kept by the King as his personal property, some was given to the church and the rest was leased out under strict controls (MaXimus)."

The king provided money and knights and granted land to the barons who provided protection and military service and who could grant land to the knights who provided food services and who could grant land to the serfs who were made to remain on such designated land, keeping it productive. The lands belonged to various families but when a family's descendants were dead, the King got all of its land automatically. That is stating it rather jejunely.

Contrastingly, the Harvard Classics *Chronicle and Romance, Volume 35* shares, "Near the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, Reginald Wolfe, the Queen's Printer, with the splendid audacity characteristic of that age, planned to publish a *Universal Cosmography* of the whole world, and therewith also certain particular histories of every known nation." In this amazing work, it quotes chapter 1: *Of Degrees of People In The Commonwealth of Elizabethan England*, as it begins with the following striking introduction:

"We in England, divide our people commonly into four sorts, as gentlemen, citizens or burgesses, yeomen, and artificers or labourers. Of gentlemen the first and chief (next the king) be the prince, dukes, marquesses, earls, viscounts, and barons; and these are called gentlemen of the greater sort, or (as our common usage of speech is) lords and

noblemen: and next unto them be knights, esquires, and, last of all, they that are simply called gentlemen. So that in effect our gentlemen are divided into their conditions, whereof in this chapter I will make particular rehearsal. The title of prince doth peculiarly belong with us to the king's eldest son, who is called Prince of Wales, and is the heir-apparent to the crown; as in France the king's eldest son hath the title of Dauphin, and is named peculiarly Monsieur. So that the prince is so termed of the Latin word Princeps, since he is (as I may call him) the chief or principal next the king. The king's younger sons be but gentlemen by birth (till they have received creation or donation from their father of higher estate, as to be either viscounts, earls, or dukes) and called after their names, as Lord Henry, or Lord Edward, with the addition of the word Grace, properly assigned to the king and prince, and now also by custom conveyed to dukes, archbishops, and (as some say) to marquesses and their wives (Froissart, Mallory, and Holinshed 1).”

At the bottom of *The Great Chain of Being* were Earth’s animals and food—**The Natural World**. It was believed that it ranked beneath all of the important living and dead people. Horses, cows, oxen, sheep and goats were cherished for what they yielded for the Earth people. Fruits and nuts were revered as ethereal. Barley, wheat, and flax to make linen were known as noble and only the serfs and the lowly ate the things that grew from the dirt such as onions, potatoes, and other root vegetables.

Along came **a little noxious bacteria** which made its *most enduring* futile splash in the middle of the thirteen hundreds. The fourteenth century seemed to be its **pitch black bull’s-eye**. Things were all set up in *The Great Chain* of things, but a spirit of mass merciless death had other forsaken plans. What kind of *God* would wipe out one to two thirds of Europe’s

population? *Was* this unknown quiet germ from *God*, in fact? This little nuisance would severely effect the entire *man-made-God-placed-chain* set up. Size irony. What was the point of all of the vehement blood baths that were the previous man-made wars if a single seething quiet little *germ* could claim all? They were about to find out. Maybe some of them would begin to think for themselves after such ungodly “natural” terror struck everything they cared about.

During the medieval period of the history of the world, a whole third of the world population died. Several deadly plagues would unsparingly comb their relentless virulent way through Europe. The people were told it was because of their sins, of course. No one seemed to know why or from what such vengeance came. Typhoid had hit the Athenians in the third century. In the Middle Ages, three significant epidemics would be culprit of the mass destruction of populations. They would come to ultimately devastate and wipe out cities.

Like the many fickle faces of the churning mercurial nature of evil, this invisible evil was a fearsome *great unknown* indeed. In its several permutations over time, this murderous quicksilver was a pandemic known to bring quite immediate death: **The Bubonic Plague**. Its three *major* permutations were known as The Plague of Justinian, The Black Death, and The Third Pandemic.

Where had hope retreated? The Bubonic Plague proffered no hiding place.

Everyone knew it.

The Plague of Justinian was deadly and widespread in the sixth century, but did not *quite* steal the spotlight as profoundly as did the second pandemic that was to come, *The Black Death*. From 541 to 750, the Justinian Plague was the first recorded outbreak of the bubonic plague (Drancourt and Raoult 105-109). It started in Egypt and when it reached Constantinople, ten thousand per day were dying at its height, and forty percent of the city's inhabitants (Valdellon).

The plague went on to eliminate a quarter to a half of the human population that it struck throughout the known world (Random History).

The Black Death finely combed its dark lethal way throughout all of Europe in the fourteenth century. *Gotham City* would have seemed like *Disneyland*. This was the second pandemic during the Middle Ages and its mass effect was unprecedented. The people referred to it as “The Great Mortality” or “The Pestilence” (Random History). It followed a period of population growth in Europe which, combined with two years of cold weather and torrential rains that wiped out grain crops, resulted in a shortage of food for humans and rats; this caused people and animals to crowd in cities, providing an optimal environment for disease (Kelly).

Most experts agreed that the plague was caused by *Yersinia pestis*, a bacillus carried by fleas that lived primarily on rats and other rodents that were common in medieval dwellings (Kelly). This bacteria effected its flea by blocking its stomach. The flea tried repeatedly to feed, but the blockage caused it to regurgitate bacilli into its host. When the host died, the flea and its offspring sought a new host, infesting humans when necessary (Valdellon).

Small round black sores would harden on the skin very quickly and would kill a person within a matter of days—sometimes hours. Bodies were piled up inside and outside city walls where they lay until mass graves could be dug; this contributed to the bad air and helped to spread the disease (Kelly). Closed communities, such as monasteries and nunneries, were especially vulnerable. If one person became infected, the whole community might die. And because friars and nuns tended to the sick, infection among them was common (Bishop).

This pervasive pestilential *Yersinia pestis* was a gloom-doom beast. It caused three varieties of plague: bubonic plague, caused by bites from infected fleas, in which the bacteria moves to lymph nodes and quickly multiplies, forming growths—or *buboes*; the pneumonic

plague was a lung infection that caused its victims to cough blood and spread the bacteria from person to person; the septicemic plague was a blood infection that was almost always fatal (Byrne). On May 17, 2000, six microbiologists from the *Faculty of Medicine at the National Center of Scientific Research Unit (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique Unite)* in Strasbourg, France, submitted updated findings regarding “*Molecular identification by ‘suicide PCR’ of Yersinia pestis as the agent of Medieval Black Death.*” People still yearn to be convinced about it being responsible.

The fascinating study’s findings were confirmed by having had recovered DNA from the ancient dental pulp of exactly “Twenty-three teeth [that] were collected from Black Death skeletons and, as a negative control, four unerupted teeth were collected from ancient skeletons excavated from a medieval grave in Toulon, France [...] One of these graves exhibited a multiple burial containing the skeletons of a man, a woman, and a child estimated to be 8–10 years old when he died [...] For molecular investigation, 4 teeth were collected from the child’s skull, 9 from the female’s skull, and 10 from the male’s skull (Centre National De La Recherche Scientifique Unite, Strasbourg, France et al. 12800-12803).”

Hundreds of years later, it addresses confirmation in a far more modern day:

“The medieval pandemic that later came to be called the ‘Black Death’ killed an estimated 17–28 million Europeans (from 30 to 40% of the total population) between the years 1347 and 1351. Black Death was first reported in Central Asia between 1339 and 1340, then in the Genoese city of Caffa, where Black Death Mongol cadavers were hurled as bacteriological weapons over the city walls in 1346. Epidemics reached Europe when Genoese vessels docked in Messina, Genoa, and Marseilles in November 1347. Yersinia pestis is considered to be the most likely agent of Black Death, based

*mainly on historical clinical records of bubonic and pulmonary forms of the disease. However, as the high levels of mortality and transmissibility associated with the Black Death were not observed during the third plague pandemic, alternative etiologies have been proposed. Moreover, the spread of transmission of the disease as well as the supposed densities of rats and fleas made unlikely for several authors the role of *Y. pestis*. The alternatives have included the anthrax agent *Bacillus anthracis*, the typhus agent *Rickettsia prowazekii*, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, and hemorrhagic fever. Confirmation of *Y. pestis* as the agent of the Black Death would end this controversy and improve our understanding of *Y.pestis* epidemics in light of the current reemergence of this infectious disease (Centre National De La Recherche Scientifique Unite, Strasbourg, France et al. 12800-12803).”*

The mortality rate for humans who caught the bubonic plague was thirty to seventy-five percent; the pneumonic plague killed ninety to ninety-five of its victims; the septicemic plague killed nearly *all* of the people it infected and still has no cure to this day (Random History). The exact death toll is difficult to measure from medieval sources because the number of deaths varied considerably by area and depending upon the source—current estimates are that between seventy-five and two hundred million people died from this plague (Byrne). Many believed that the plague was a divine scourge to punish the people for their sins and medieval doctors believed the plague had at least one of several causes (Kelly).

The Black Death plague’s effects were swift and ubiquitous. It simply effected everyone and everything... everywhere. It seems as if an impetuous angry *God* dropped a gigantic black vitriolic boulder into the fervent fine waters of life on Earth and the ripples of horror that ensued encroached upon people like a thick patient stretched-out liquid, slowly taking over, enveloping

and suffocating its prey. It was a quiet invisible evil. No wonder people were superstitious.

People were not in strumming singing moods. Life was far too dramatic for a song to effervesce up to the lips. Prior to this plague, music was plentiful and cheerful but during the plague, it was rare and grim and other art forms, including visual arts and literature, also reflected the misery of the time (Random History). Many businesses, including theatres, closed, in part to keep people from congregating and spreading the disease and in part because of the labor shortage that resulted from such widespread illness and death (Malvasi). William Shakespeare's theatre had to shut down often due to this life-threatening plague and as a result, he found himself out of work with a lot of time on his hands. He made the most of his idleness, however, penning most of his sonnets, which would not be published until many years later (Malvasi). It is interesting how the darkest of dark can birth much lasting light.

As the population dwindled and society crumbled, the old rules of the great chain were ignored. The Catholic Church lost its influence, which created the seeds that led to Protestantism (Byrne). After *The Black Death*, epidemics continued to ravage Europe; London was struck by the Great Plague of 1665 with thousands of deaths, followed almost immediately by the Great Fire, leaving London devastated (Kelly). Because this plague killed so many of Europe's working people, it was bound to result in a dramatic turning point in Europe's economic status and development. It did just that.

The Third Pandemic (one might suppose they grew superstitious of naming them after having called the prior one the likes of a jinxed "black death") is said to have started in 1855 in the Chinese province of Yünnan where troop movements during the war in that area caused a rapid spread of the disease to the southern coast of China and was also prevalent in India in the seventeenth century and eventually reached the United States, with infections being especially

dangerous in the San Francisco Bay area (Drancourt and Raoult 105-109):

“It reached Hong Kong and Canton in 1894, Bombay in 1898, and by 1899–1900 steamships had disseminated the disease to Africa, Europe, Hawaii, India, Japan, the Middle East, the Philippines and North and South America. The etiological agent of plague was discovered at the beginning of this pandemic, opening the door to the modern study of the disease (Drancourt and Raoult 105-109).”

The microbiology of the plague was discovered during this time period.

“During this Hong Kong epidemic in June 1894, Alexandre Yersin and Shibasaburo Kitasato independently announced within a few days of one another the isolation of the plague organism, which was then named Yersinia pestis in 1944. Yersin gave a clear description of the bubonic plague in Hong Kong and noted that buboes occurred in seventy-five percent of cases, but while he described a connection between rats and plague, it was Paul Louis Simon who discovered the role of the rat flea in the transmission of the disease during the Indian epidemics in 1897 (Drancourt and Raoult 105-109).”

Collaborators finally showed that *Y. pestis* survives in the litter and the soil in the burrows of infected animals for years and this leads to infection of any subsequent occupiers of the burrows [...] although the mortality rates and dissemination of the sporadic plague outbreaks that still occur today are greatly reduced, stable enzootic foci are still to be found on every continent except Australia (Drancourt and Raoult 105-109). No wonder Aussies are so bubbly.

How's it goin, ' mate?

“Mohammed/Muhammad was an orphan born in Mecca, Arabia in 570 and lived to 632 who married fourteen or fifteen twelve year-old widows who said that he had revelations from

God (Pickett).” One may scratch his/her head and be quite decent at math and visualization in order to calculate and digest this loaded scenario. He was proclaimed to be the founder of the Islamic religion and was considered the “restorer of the original monotheistic faith (Ibrahim).” The Muslims believed him to be a divine prophet—a messenger of **God/Allah**.

The Five Pillars of Islam: 1) Confession: of their testimony of faith in Allah and Muhammad being Allah’s messenger. 2) Prayer: “They are to pray five prayers per day facing Mecca (Pickett).” 3) Alms: (*zakat*) to be charitable, supportive to/of the needy. “One fifth to one seventh of one’s annual income is ideally given to orphans and widows (Pickett).”

“The original meaning of the word zakat is both ‘purification’ and ‘growth.’ Giving zakat means ‘giving a specified percentage on certain properties to certain classes of needy people.’ The percentage which is due on gold, silver, and cash funds that have reached the amount of about 85 grams of gold and held in possession for one lunar year is two and a half percent. Our possessions are purified by setting aside a small portion for those in need, and, like the pruning of plants, this cutting back balances and encourages new growth (Ibrahim).”

4) Fasting: The Muslim calendar is lunar—a month lasts 28 days, so their *Ramadan* is a full 28 days of fasting during daylight hours. They also refrain from sexual encounters during this time. The ritual of Ramadan had “a binding effect on the Islamic community (Pickett).”

5) Holy Pilgrimage: *The Hajj* is an annual long spiritual journey to the Makka in Saudi Arabia for those who are able to make the trip. They pay homage to their beloved Muhammad. “If you are Muslim and you are well-off financially, it is incumbent upon you to make a contribution to Makka, the holiest city in Islam—followed by Medina then Jerusalem (Pickett).” All wear white cloaks to show equality. *The Grand Mosque* displays a third century meteorite

called *the black stone*. “Everyone dresses alike; there is no ostentatiousness at *The Grand Mosque* (Pickett).”

“The teachings of Islam were the last admonition of how to behave (Pickett).” These tenets and traditions greatly effected the building, binding, and bonding at work in the early community of Muslims—most especially Ramadan. The Muslims attest that God is One and they must chant or recite that there is no God but Allah and that they believe that their Muhammad was a “messenger of Allah (Ibrahim).” The Five Pillars of Islam are very simple concepts that are easy for people to understand and follow.

One name, one people, one God, One: Great **power** is usually founded on such **simplicity**. People like their *truth* to be simple, safe. The truth *is* simple if humans do not embellish to complicate. Truth is truth, no matter what man or God may conjure—be it a charted chain that commits to a paradigm of some semblance of decided rank for human order and understanding (or confusion), a mundane vast Oklahoman purgatory, a gratifying clarity that comes from going about defining a *heaven* and a *hell* to a tee, a freakish series of lethal plagues, or five simple tenets that help people to feel like their lives are meaningful and worthwhile.

The Great Unknown is called by many names on this Earth. The palindromes, *dog* and *god* are very simple “names”. One may call her “dog” by many names because she loves him and he represents many affectionate projections of her heart’s fullness. She may do the same when she prays or mentions her forever changing “God.” When touching on the question of the relevance or value of **attaching a name to a known or unknown** entity, verily, verily, the forever adored Elizabethan English poet, William Shakespeare, simply knew what he was talking about:

“A rose... by any other name... will smell as sweet.”

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