

A Sermon on the Suspension of Disbelief

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for August 8th, 2021 (and beyond)

The “magic” of theater is a result of the choice of the audience to suspend disbelief while a play or show is performed. You may be or know someone who never suspends disbelief and that you or others see as totally unimaginative, perhaps even a bit soulless for being so uninspired. But in such a case, the doubters are most like Jesus whom also had moments of doubt exhibiting his capacity for honest reason. Thomas was a doubter too at times, but still a disciple (meaning disciplined in the way of practicing truth and virtue).

Oxford Reference defines “Suspension of Disbelief” as “The concept that to become emotionally involved in a narrative, audiences must react as if the characters are real and the events are happening now, even though they know it is ‘only a story’. ‘The willing suspension of disbelief for the moment’ was how the British poet Coleridge phrased it in 1817, with reference to the audiences for literary works. Schramm argues that this is a general expectation for all entertainment (see also entertainment function): we are ‘prepared to go along with a story or a spoof or a good joke, to identify and agonize with a character who never lived...to have a certain empathy with fictional characters, to go along with the conventions of films or broadcasts.’” Source: <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100544310>

Who has prepared us for such enriching entertainment and life experiences? God is the answer. “All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players; They have their exits and their entrances, And one man in his time plays many parts, His acts being seven ages.” From “As You Like It: Act II Scene VII” by William Shakespeare.

Those who with enthusiasm celebrate truth and virtue artfully are always welcome at COPE Ministries. In fact, if that last sentence is true for you, I consider you part of the COPE fellowship even if I wouldn't know you from Adam at the moment someone asked if I do.

If you liked this sermon and would like to participate in “You've Been Godsmacked! The Theater of COPE Ministries”, please see <https://www.cope.church/godsmacked.htm> and let's get the party started or keep it going depending on your perspective.

For those interested in starting #TaoFu Self-Defense Exercises, please see <https://www.cope.church/taofu.htm> and begin at any time.

There are opportunities to send messages, receive mystery bonus blessings, and more with or without donating available now on our "Pass the Basket" page at <https://www.cope.church/basket.htm> . Thank You.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32 KJV Willful blindness is an abomination.

COPE accepts Feedback, critical and complimentary. Learn more at <https://www.cope.church/feedback.htm> . For the sake of keeping myself and others humble, a sense of humor is welcome on all sides.

For More About COPE and the HEAL Mission, see:

<https://www.cope.church> and <https://www.heal-online.org>