

A Sermon on Intoxication

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for December 5th, 2021 (and beyond)

Ergot poisoning (ergot is a fungus that grows on grains which is why they recommend you not eat raw grains, it is a hallucinogenic) was likely behind the Salem Witch Trials. Source: <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/secrets/witches-curse-clues-evidence/1501/> Poisoning and drugging victims to kill them, disable them, or subdue and subjugate has been a common practice in many cultures, both in the private and public sectors. Source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2376985/> So, it is reasonable to see introduction of mind-altering substances to the citizenry as a potential national security threat. Use of all sorts of mind-altering substances have been used in religious practices and is continued by some drug cults even today. "R. Gordon Wasson has suggested that the religious impulse itself may have had its origin in the amazement felt by primitives on accidentally finding and ingesting plants with hallucinogenic properties while foraging for food; this view is not held by most scholars of religion." Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/drug-cult> It is for this reason that I believe the STARZ Original Series "American Gods" shows drugs and pills during the opening credits without making drug abuse a theme. The "opiate" is the show itself because entertainment is the opiate of the masses. It is fiction based on the graphic novel by Neil Gaiman of the same name.

Having studied literature and theater, I understand I'm expected to suspend disbelief to get the most out of any story told. "American Gods" is what I call Totally TaoFu. It is right on the line between #TaoFu Positive and #TaoFu Negative. #TaoFu Positive is honest and virtuous (at least honest) and #TaoFu Negative is dishonest and vicious (at least vicious). I try to both suspend disbelief and critically observe at the same time sometimes and this show has that as a built-in component. It is possible I'm not relaxed enough while I watch it, but if I were more relaxed then I'd be getting that "opiate" effect from it and I don't watch it for that purpose.

I didn't begin watching it at all until this year. And, the only reason I watched in the first place was because Crispin Glover is in it. I was so irritated that his character Mr. World was minimally featured in the first season and apparently killed (#SpoilerAlert) at the end of season 1. I didn't watch Seasons 2 or 3 for months because I didn't see the point. I noticed Glover had continued to promote the later seasons of the show, so I went ahead and started season 2 to find his character survives which is one of the reasons I have watched Seasons 2 and 3 now. One of the scenes that offended me most was actually in the graphic novel and not something added by the producers. That was a sex scene between Queen Bilquis/Queen of Sheba and Bill Murray's brother. I was angry that he was killed by it and seemingly consumed by Queen Bilquis. I initially thought Queen Bilquis was Nefertiti (haven't read the graphic novel) and believe Nefertiti to be loving, nurturing, and majestic. Queen Bilquis has these qualities as well, but also a Praying Mantis side. I did become curious if the Praying Mantis is an animal totem for Queen Bilquis. The death or apparent death of Mr. World is not what offended me first.

What offended me first was that Wednesday was Odin and not Loki because Odin is associated with Saturn and Loki is associated with Mercury. But, Odin is also known as Wodan/Woden in other regions and that's the basis of where we get the word Wednesday today. So, what first offended me was a result of my own ignorance. And, you could say that explains everything that initially offended me that first season.

Have you ever laid in a field of tall grass and sucked or chewed on a blade of grass? If you have, did you begin to see cool shapes in the clouds that really amazed you where you lost track of time? If you were invited to a reception or party at Lord Byron's house where opium and Absinthe were served to all, would that explain Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" to you? How about Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde? So, people have a point when they show concern for loved ones who are seemingly "not themselves" and freaking everyone out. And, fact-check yourself. John Wycliffe Day is December 31st and COPE holidays are perpetual so fact-check yourself before you wreck yourself. Feel free to fact-check me too.

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>