

A Sermon on Love

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for April 21st, 2024 (and beyond)

Dependents and providers often conflate dependence and providence with love, but such love is by nature subjective and many reject subjectivity and subjugation in ways that undermine or misrepresent love who solely define it in those terms, thereby in their view ultimately rejecting love or feeling as if they've never truly known or experienced it.

This is arguably where the arts often assist. For example, books of fiction or even nonfiction history can inspire the reader to love fictional characters or historic figures without any dependency or providential relationship with the individual characters or figures. I'm reading the Jane Hawk Series by Dean Koontz and love many of the characters and even things about the characters I find particularly unlovable. There's a rapist who says "I don't speak stupid and can't wait for an interpreter" and I thought that line was funny which was written by Dean Koontz of course who is awesome and not a rapist, but the line was a statement by a fictional character who is a rapist. I appreciate the art of Koontz' written works and through suspension of disbelief for the sake of fully appreciating the story as told found an additional way to relate to a character I otherwise find quite not relatable. I relate much more strongly with Jane Hawk and her allies in the series, but have two more books to read before having read the series in entirety.

A figure or character in a book can't provide for your physical needs of food, clothing, shelter, or security even if how to meet those needs for yourself are described in the work. And, while you may love the historical figures or fictional characters, you love them in the context of their lives or stories, not in the context of a personal relationship with you. So, it is literature that most lends to knowing a more objective kind of love which you may recognize or acknowledge as your ability to love that can transfer to interactions with everyone else to the extent you understand the progression of love for historical figures or fictional characters that took much time and effort in terms of knowing them through the written word to develop. And, knowing and understanding such depth of love requires patience, sincere interest, and attention as that given to any reading endeavor of the kind, you know the potential of developing loving relationships in the real world and that such depends on mutuality in seeing each at times as figurative books that left unread will remain at best something you leave on the shelf as a maybe or give away knowing it just can't hold your interest and you feel you have better things to do with your time. I have books still that are "maybes" on my shelves and others that I've given away without reading because they've never attracted my interest and I just don't believe they ever will so hope that someone else will appreciate them more. That's love too. I love the books I give away without reading enough to believe someone else may appreciate them more rather than just throw them away as if they don't even have any potential in another context. However, sometimes I've read books in entirety that I felt were total wastes of time and have recycled them if paperback or thrown away if hardcover and that offensive. That's a very rare event and I've only done it about half a dozen times in my life.

My father sent me a bunch of offensive books through a retailer and thankfully the retailer included how to return them where they covered the cost and I did so return at no cost to me. But, my father only got partial refund and so his harassment backfired at his loss and so I think that's funny. I didn't know they were from him until I opened the box and both who they were from and the books themselves were offensive. See, if he identified himself as the sender, I'd have returned to sender without opening and finding the offensive literature. I'm so thankful the retailer had a slip for return where I didn't have to pay return shipping after opening. I love the retailer for that and that's all the love this situation warranted in my view. That's still some love though.

I love both of my grandfathers and both strongly disliked my father, including his own father, and for good reasons. Both of my grandfathers are more fathers to me than my actual birth father will ever be. My maternal grandfather "PapaSam" threatened to kill him if he ever stepped foot on his property again and my paternal grandfather made sure I understood that my father wasn't a respectable person and that I owed him no respect nor deference. I always respected and loved my grandfathers while living and still do even though like literary figures and characters, they now live in memory and there is no dependent/provider relationship at this time to conflate with those feelings of objective and/or true love and respect. I still find comfort in their memory similar to a good book like those in the Jane Hawk series by Dean Koontz. "The Silent Corner" is the first one and I recommend it.

There are some books I'd never part with willingly and that will remain on my shelves being read periodically again over time because I do consider them keepers. That's not to say that other books I don't keep aren't appreciable as stated, but I feel others may find them keepers where I don't at this time and believe they deserve a chance to be loved as much as I love what I consider keepers. Even books are made of atoms and atoms communicate and remember even if otherwise lacking sentience having no central nervous system though at times making up central nervous systems. As such, I hope those I do throw away or recycle at times don't take it personally and are just waiting to take on a new shape as part of something new and that those I give away find a keeper to keep and love them 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.