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Song of the Dark Ages – Brecht in Exile and "Chinese Role Model"

John Steinbeck's interest to Taoism is derived from his friend Ed Ricketts, the marine biologist, who was fascinated by Lao Tze and his Tao Teh Ching. Taoism is not only reflected in Steinbeck's depiction of characters and creation of plots but also incorporated in his philosophical thinking. The contradiction of the "detachment" of his characters and the "sentimentalism" of his plot criticized by scholars can be explained as a result of the impact of Taoism. The "detachment" implies "non – action" (Wu Wei) which does not literally mean to be aloof but to follow the natural laws and accept the reality. While the "sentimentalism" contains what Taoist scholars called as perspectivism which accentuates seeking the common ground and reserving the difference so as to achieve the goal of identification. Both the "detachment" and "sentimentalism" consist the two aspect of Taoism and guarantee the author's creative thinking as a whole.