

Tao of pooh and taoism essay



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In The Tao of Pooh, Benjamin Hoff uses the characters from Winnie the Pooh to

explain the fundamentals of Taoism. By observing the actions of Eeyore, Piglet,

Rabbit, Owl, Tigger, and Pooh, he decides that the action of the character Pooh

best describes Taoism. The most important principle of Taoism is the Uncarved

Block. Hoff uses Pooh to best explain the Uncarved Block. The principle of the

Uncarved Block is that things in their original simplicity contain their own natural power, power that is easily spoiled and lost when that simplicity is changed. He uses these characters to show how things can be spoiled and lost and

also how things can just work out. Hoff uses Rabbit to show that when you always

have to be on the run doing something and being busy, usually you miss things

and you do not enjoy life. It can often screw up things to always have to figure

things out and always feel like you are important. He uses Owl to show that when

you are always looking for a reason for something then it often makes things too

complicated. Hoff uses Piglet in the sense that Piglet is always scared and hesitating things, if Piglet would not hesitate, he would get things done in a much more efficient way. He should just do, not think. Hoff explains the character of Eeyore by showing how he is always worried about things; he frets a

lot. If he would not do that, then life would be much easier for Eeyore. And finally, there is Pooh. Hoff shows how Pooh does not think or ponder about things; he just does them. Things always work out for Pooh because of this. Pooh

works along with nature and he does not try to interfere. Pooh leads a simple life. This can also be explained as the life and actions of a Taoist. Hoff's purpose of this book is a didactic purpose. He wrote the book to inform people

of Taoism. He wanted to teach the ways and beliefs of a Taoist. He wanted to

teach in a way that everyone could understand or relate too, that is why he used

Winnie the Pooh. Everybody understands Pooh. He thought that it would be an easy

and simple way to get the point across to not just the scholarly, but the normal

public. For example, Hoff states: “ we won’t try too hard or explain too

much, because that would only Confuse things, and because it would leave the

impression that it was all only an intellectual idea that could be left on the

intellectual level and ignored.” (p. 10) He uses each chapter of the book

to teach a new principle of the Uncarved Block of Taoism. In each chapter he

tells a Winnie the Pooh story and then explains how it relates to Taoism. Hoff

writes a chapter teaching how cleverness does not always help, but it sometimes

destroys things and is the reason that things do not work out. Hoff teaches that

the Taoist believe that if you understand Inner Nature it is far more effective

than knowledge or cleverness. He uses a poem “ Cottleston Pie”. The

poem explains how things just are as they are and how people try to violate these principles with their everyday lives. He also uses a story of Tigger and Roo. Tigger tries to be something he is not and he ends up just screwing things

up and getting stuck in a tree. Hoff also explains that working with Nature is best in the sense that you do not screw things up with a story about Eeyore getting stuck in the river. Everybody had been trying to think of clever ways to

get Eeyore out of the river when Pooh said that if they just dropped a big stone

into it, then it would just wash Eeyore ashore. He did it without even thinking,

because thinking would complicate things, and of course it worked. Pooh worked

with Nature and things worked out for him. As you can see, Hoff uses many different Winnie the Pooh stories to teach the uncomplicated ways of the Taoist.

The only arguments that Hoff really presents is whether or not the Taoist way is

the best way and whether or not it really works. When you look at it from the

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point of Pooh and the stories from The House at Pooh Corner you really believe

that what the Taoist believe is the best way. Obviously if you do not believe that cleverness and knowledge are not important, then you will not agree with

anything Hoff is saying, but he makes you believe in showing you how it always

works out with Pooh. He argues whether or not cleverness and knowledge really

are important. For example, it can be explained in the story when Eeyore gets

stuck in the river. Clever ways do not work, but Pooh's simple way works very

nice. Hoff also argues how the Taoist believes that always being busy is not a

good thing. He uses Rabbit to explain this theory of the Taoist. Rabbit is

always in a hurry, being a Busy Backson as they call it, and these Backsons are

always finding things to do to kill their time. Hoff explains these so called

creatures like a shadow. Shadows are always rushing along. Backsons are also

always trying to lose their shadows. They try to run from them not realizing that they cannot. Hoff argues that by just sitting down and enjoying a nice sunny day, like Pooh would do, you can complicate things. You do not get the full fulfillment of your life. Hoff proposes numerous arguments about the ways

of life, whether or not the Taoist way is right, or the other way is right. I

feel that the way that Benjamin Hoff has chose to explain the principle of the Uncarved Block is a very creative and effective way. This is a simple book and

it does not take much thinking or scholarly knowledge to read; just about anybody can read and understand this book. I believe that he was trying to teach

the uninformed about the principles of Taoism and the Uncarved Block and I think

that he successfully accomplished that by writing this book. How he decides to

use Winnie the Pooh, stories that everybody is familiar with, is such a

magnificent way to explain the principles of Taoism. He definitely got his point

across. I do not think that he is trying to make you believe in the principles of Taoism or the Uncarved Block, but that he is just trying to teach you or inform you of them. I believe that he does accomplish that. Using Winnie the Pooh is a very clever way of going about that. I loved this book. I can honestly

say that I did not really understand Taoism or where it was coming from before I

read this book. Now I do. I think that by comparing the principles of the Uncarved Block to Winnie the Pooh characters and using them to explain it was a

brilliant idea. It really helped me understand it. I was not confused at all throughout the book. I was a little confused in the beginning because I was reading too much into it. Then I realized that I did not need to read into anything at all, but I just needed to simply read the book. I am so used to having to look into things when I read. I love how he chose such an easy way to

describe Taoism. It is such a complicated religion and he explained it so well

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by just being simple. I like how he did not read too far into it and he did not try to explain things that just simply did not need to be explained to understand Taoism. In a sense I guess you could say that his book is also an example of Taoism, it is simple and to the point.

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