

Peter Hubral

The Plato Code



The impact of the misconceived Greek
philosophía on the European culture

Composite Lion and Bull

Bronze sculpture from 1.500-1.000 BCE from northwest Iran, possibly from Koffrabad; now at the Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, USA.

New interpretation

The motif symbolises the *kosmogonia* (world and self-creation) in its transition from unconditioned non-duality (ONE = BEING), symbolised by the common back part of both animals, to conditioned duality (Being), symbolised by the two heads at the front side. The Lion allegorises Youwei (Farsi: *qhar* or *ghalaba*) or Being and the Bull Wuwei (Farsi: *mahabba*) or BEING (INSEPARABLE), the eternal primeval source of Being.

The motif is representative for many other motifs offered in *The Plato Code*. They are profound allegories that cannot be understood by taking them at their face value. If they are, they completely distort the original sense that they convey. If they are well understood, they make very profound sense.

The book revises misinterpretations of many ancient allegorical art objects that all relate to the unconditioned *kosmogonia*, which was the predominant subject of the Ancients. They were concerned with making the observers aware of the unity between creative BEING and created Being.

The Plato Code also shows, how original text passages from the literature of the ancient Pythagorean/Platonic *philosophia* motivated various great western artists and writers who did not recognise the allegorical content, but offer attractive illusions of what they misinterpreted.

THE
PLATO
CODE

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Peter Hubral

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Peter Hubral: The Plato Code - The impact of the misconceived Greek *philosophía* on the European culture

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Man is the measure of all things. Of the things that are as they (truly) are (in unconditioned eternal BEING = primeval source of Being); of the things (in conditioned Being = emanation of unconditioned BEING) that are 'not as they are (because they are transient appearances of unconditioned BEING)'.

Socrates in *Theaetetus* (152a)

Explanation of the quote:

The profound words of Socrates point – contrary to what the first phrase seems to convey - to the limitations of the human mind with respect to what it perceives by way of the familiar senses (Yin-Liugen) conditioned by dual Being. Socrates thus conveys the message that **man is not the measure of all things** (in dual Being), but he can learn - as a Taiji-practitioner - to increasingly measure (perceive) Taiji (BEING) up to certain limit (absolute Nothingness) that he cannot transgress.

He can thus change his conditioned (dualistic) view of Being into the true unconditioned (non-dualistic) view of BEING. In case he does not change his view, he deceives himself with respect to what the Ancients report about BEING (ONE, INSEPARABLE). *The Plato Code* demonstrates the influence of the misconception, i.e. the influence of **man is the measure of all things**, on the western culture.

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Qui vult decipi, decipiatur

(Who wants to be deceived, will easily be deceived)

Legal law of the Romans

Remark by the author

There exist three books in this series - *The Socrates Code*, *The Lao Tzu Code* and *The Plato Code* - that essentially address the same subject: The strong coherency in the search of knowledge, wisdom and health in the traditional Chinese and Greek cultures, which I explain and illuminate from different angles.

The Socrates Code reveals - with a minimum of Tai Chi (Taiji)-knowledge (Taijixue) that is explained it it - the impressive equivalence between the teaching of the Daoist sage Lao Tzu (Laozi) and that of Socrates, Plato and other Greek masters who taught the Pythagorean/ Platonic *philosophía*, which is the mother of modern philosophy.

The Lao Tzu Code describes in detail some aspects of the Daoist Taiji-knowledge that I learned in my Taiji-school and communicate to my readers, so that they understand why I needed it to write the *The Socrates Code* and *The Plato Code*.

The Plato Code shows that it was not, as commonly claimed, the original but the severely misinterpreted Pythagorean/ Platonic *philosophía* that had a strong impact on western philosophy, literature and arts.

I recommend to read the *Socrates Code* before *The Laozi Code* and *The Plato Code*.

Readers who explore the three books to the very end, will find out that the code is discovered by regularly realising a particular meditative formless Taiji-standing posture that is shown on the cover of *The Socrates Code*. The code is the same for all three and many other reputed Ancients of different traditional cultures.

It got lost to the western world after the closure of the last Greek schools of the Pythagorean/ Platonic *philosophía* at the end of the Byzantine Empire. I recognised it in the teaching of Dao-Grandmaster Fangfu.

It is based on the millennial Wuwei-principle - do not act, but let nature act - which was taught by Laozi, because it is the essence of the Dao-practice (Taiji-practice). It leads to body-controlled self-movements which differ very much from what we commonly associate with a priori specified Taiji-movements controlled by the mind.

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Introduction

Who gets involved with the public and accepts this great beast as his mistress is subjected to the need to do what pleases the public.

(Plato, Republic 493d)

The happiness of ordinary people seems to consist of doing what the public does .

(Zhuangzi)

Overview

This book uses the unconditioned self-observed prenatal Taiji-knowledge acquired on the Great Path (Dadao), to which I was introduced by Dao-Master Fangfu, for the investigation of the origin of the Western culture. The more familiar I got with this unusual knowledge, the more I realised that after *The Socrates Code* I had to write also *The Plato Code*. In this I now offer unusual insights about the Greek masters and those oriental Ancients who influenced them and ultimately the modern Western culture. What I write falls into the category: *contra opinionem omnium* (against the opinions of all). This means that I offer an interpretation that rigorously contradicts the existing conclusions that have been articulated about the Greek masters, which I consider to be nothing but opinions.

For this reason I expect that I may alienate many readers with what I have put here to paper, in particular those “lovers” of the Greek wisdom literature and art who try to understand it by relying on interpretations of interpreters, whom I consider - from the Taiji-perspective - most questionable in their correct judgement of the Greek Ancients.

The “lovers of Greek wisdom” may reject my conclusions that an “honest study of the ancient Greek literature and art” is impossible

without Taiji-experience. Who has read *The Socrates Code* should know what I mean. He will accept the wisdom behind *traduttore traditore* (interpreters are traitors). He may decide who is cheating! Them, the “expert translators” of the Greeks, or me, a dedicated Taiji-practitioner?

I offer in Chapter 1 good reasons why the long search to understand the Greek *philosophía*, the mother of today’s philosophy, has failed since the closure of its schools. The main reason for misunderstanding it is that its knowledge is put into metaphors and allegorical sculptures, pictures, symbols and paintings like the composite lion and bull motive on the front cover of this book. It symbolises the world and self-creation experienced on the Great Path and as such it is closely connected to the Yin-Yang-symbol on the front cover, which carries the same information¹.

I claim that one can only understand the metaphors and allegories, if one is familiar with the meditation practice that Plato calls the practice of dying (*meléte thanátou*). I am convinced to have become familiar with it in my Taiji-school and thus gained sufficient unusual knowledge to write what I compiled in the three books on this topic.

I feature in Chapter 2 Pythagoras, Parmenides and Suhrawardi as three eminent “pure thinkers” who owe their profound self-observed knowledge (*gnósis, epistéme*, Iran: *al ilm al huduri* = knowledge by presence) to having practised regularly Taiji (or something very similar). What they write or what is reported about them matches well - if correctly interpreted - the Taiji-teaching (Taijixue) of Fangfu.

Chapter 3 illuminates the unconditioned approach - the Great Path - to understand the world and the self in the Middle East (mainly Egypt and Iran) that influenced the Greek masters. This turned with the loss of the Pythagorean/Platonic *philosophía* into a conditioned approach, upon which our modern view of the world and self is based.

Chapter 4 offers various misinterpretations of the Pythagorean/Pla-

¹See what I write about unconditioned world and self-creation in the other two books of this series.

tonic *philosophía* by reputed Europeans like Dante, Shakespeare, Calderon, Goethe and Huxley who have distorted certain profound aspects of it without mentioning or being aware of it. I show that they owe much of their “literary competence” to misinterpreting it.

If they would have understood the *philosophía*, they would have not come up with their “beautiful poetry”, which results from taking its metaphors at their face value. This gives their works an “appealing mystical dimension”, which seems to attract unpractised readers much more than explaining to them the Great Path (Path to Truth).

The Great Path, in turn, makes it possible to experience the genuine contents of the metaphors in the way the masters always attempted to make them accessible to their students by way of practising.

The original contents of the metaphors are largely misunderstood, because of their non-oratory practice aspects, which offer much room for speculation and distortion by non-practitioners. It is this distortion that I attempt to revise following the same strategy as in *The Socrates Code*. While this explained it, I go now one step further. I show in this book the impact of the misunderstanding on the Western culture.

I give an example². The Socratic words *Man is the measure of all things* are a misinterpretation of the original text that means that man is not the measure of all things of the world that surrounds him. The misinterpretation nevertheless spread - from the time when the Platonic (Socratic) “secular spiritual science”, the *philosophía*, was lost - on a triumphal procession to the Western world, where it was enthusiastically accepted by reputed thinkers who steered the target-oriented thinking of the Renaissance, the scientific revolution and the Age of Illumination that strongly influences us.

The objective of *The Plato Code*

The objective is to show: *Much of the European culture, philosophy, literature, arts, science, mysticism and religion results from misunderstanding the philosophía.* I could also say that out of the original

²See *The Socrates Code*.

philosophía emerged “much beautiful poetry” considered by most people to be genuine, while what I offer may be looked upon as a fake.

Take, for instance, the alleged influence that Plato is claimed to have had on Michaelangelo³ : *Nothing is more clear than that Michaelangelo worshipped beauty in the Platonic spirit. Marsilio Ficino, (was the) translator of Plato and source of the Platonic inspiration in Michelangelo’s later work.*

Who inspired Ficino and Michaelangelo was not the true but a strongly misconceived Plato, not the genuine one but a phantom of him. Both Renaissance men believed in a divine Plato and a Platonic God that they projected into him on the basis of their own belief that had nothing to do with him. I call this projection anthropomentalism, which I juxtapose to anthropomorphism. I now explain what I mean with both concepts.

Anthropomorphism and anthropomentalism

Anthropomorphism gives to God, gods and goddesses, external (physical) human characteristics, while anthropomentalism gives them internal (mental) human characteristics. Neither the one nor the other of both projections existed for Plato and other Greek masters. These had, like the genealogy of masters in my Taiji- and other Daoist as well as Buddhist schools, a secular spiritual approach to increasingly understand the world and the self without any projection by regularly practising.

Many intellectual contemporaries consider anthropomorphism primitive, but they easily accept anthropomentalism, which means that they accept God, gods and goddesses to think and act like humans. The literature is full of interpretations of the Greeks, which make this assumption based on like by like. This implies that each human judges others on the basis of what he knows. The Great Path enables in comparison to change one’s knowledge to gradually understand the master who does not give his students directly his knowledge but shows how to obtain it by regularly practising.

³<http://idealinthewest.com/episode-31-michelangelo>

Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) expresses⁴ for instance, his anthropomental notion of God in *Harmonices Mundi: Geometry is unique and eternal, a reflection from the mind of God. That mankind shares in it is, because man is an image of God.* Kepler views in his geometrical and astronomical activities something divine and looks for some godly justification for it, which he like most of his intellectual contemporaries found in the misinterpreted ancient Greeks. For them neither geometry nor astronomy nor the original Greek words, from which they are derived, were divine! For them a human being, conditioned by Being, the familiar world including the physical cosmos, was not the measure to understand the familiar world. They saw themselves embedded in what extends Being: BEING!

Many researchers are, like Kepler, anthropomentalists. I once assisted a presentation by a distinguished professor of Eugenics. When he was asked whether he showed no concern about any possible negative consequences of his research activities, he replied: *I belong to a creed that believes that man is an image of God. So don't worry! Whatever I do is in perfect agreement with God.*

I observed in my scientific live that science offers many opportunities for people like him who do not reflect on their imperfection and the need for self-improvement as the Ancients did. There exist many scientists who consider themselves to be the measure of all things, which was not the way of the Ancients. These attempted to overcome being conditioning by Being, which many of us consider to be the true reality and some of us even set equal to God or their consciousness.

The human discovery of the gods

I explain in my three volume a number of “gods” and “goddesses” who are from the perspective of Taijixue nothing but Qi-fields inclusive the two drives, the natural one (Wuwei) and the cultural one (Youwei). They all characterise the triune psychic *kósmos*, which is

⁴See *The Socrates Code*.

discovered on the Great Path (Path to Truth).

To call them gods and goddesses results from anthropomorphic or anthropomental⁵ constructions in the mind of those who misconceive the psychic *kósmos* and the natural unconditioned laws, Qi-fields and principles that describe it.

I am sure that such gods and goddesses, conditioned by human attributes and behaviour, did not exist for the Greek masters. If they would have existed, I could not compare them to the Daoist masters. There exist indications that the Greek masters criticised the belief in gods of the religious public. Socrates was, for instance, not impressed by Greek polytheism, the belief in gods.

But the polytheist were in the majority at his time, which explains why he was sentenced to death for "impiety" and "atheism"; for denying the human-like deities worshipped by the Athenians and for apparently corrupting the youth. I repeat, Taijixue knows no gods and its great similarity to the *philosophía* requires that the practising Greek Ancients also knew none. Only the Greek public accepted them. It is the task of interpreters to distinguish between the public and the masters

Accepting the anthropomorphic and anthropomental characteristics of gods and goddesses provides uncountable pitfalls to understand the Greek masters that unpractised interpreters have stumbled into since centuries without noticing. To remove the pitfalls, as I attempt to for my comparative study, is - in the light of all the unbelievable distortions - not an easy task.

Who dedicates himself, like Taiji-practitioners, to experiencing *ta gnósta* (realm of true knowledge) by way of practising needs no gods, only those who devote themselves to *ta dóxasta* (realm of belief). *Ta gnósta* is associated with *noumenón* or what in my Taiji-school is called Qi, the mixture of Xing and Shen. Qi is experienced and cherished by Taiji-practitioners, but not venerated! The Greeks call Xing *sóma* (Farsi⁶ : *nafs haiwani*) and Shen *pneúma* (Farsi: *nafs ruhani*).

⁵Anthropomental means that the gods are expected to think like humans.

⁶"Farsi" means that I found the expression in the literature of Iranians who may have used instead of Farsi also Arabic. Readers familiar with both languages will be able to make the distinction.

Downgrading the natural and upgrading the artificial

Much of what the practising Greek Ancients mention about Qi-fields (*daímones, theoi*) has been either up- or downgraded by religionists after the loss of the *philosophía* and persecution and eradication of its masters. I give an example. I mention in *The Socrates Code* that the Pythagorean Monad, which equals Prometheus, corresponds to Taiji.

Prometheus, the bearer of fire (light = Qi) turned with the downfall of the *philosophía* into Lucifer. He became a synonym of the Devil (Satan)⁷ who I do not, like God, see anywhere mentioned in the original Greek but only in its misinterpreted (distorted) literature. This is one of the many indications that the Greek masters knew no God-Devil dualism. They were - like all ancient secular masters - ir-religious. Their concern was with healing and not with holiness!

The origin of gods

Xenophanes explains the origin of gods and thus the distortion of the ancient truth⁸ : *...Men make gods in their own image; those of the Ethiopians are black and snub-nosed, those of the Thracians have blue eyes and red hair.* Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677) knew this as well. He conveys essentially the same message as Xenophanes: *... for I believe that, if a triangle could speak, it would say, in like manner, that God is eminently triangular, while a circle would say that the divine nature is eminently circular. Thus each would ascribe to God its own attributes, would assume itself to be like God, and look on everything else as ill-shaped.*

To project oneself - one's own mind - into the "misconceived non-oratory *kósmos*, its Qi-fields and two drives" is the way the anthropomorphic and/or anthropomental gods were created by the public, which got angry with those masters who did not accept their belief.

What I indicate should be considered to understand the scenes,

⁷I have a clever friend who tells me that the Devil is for him a synonym of ignorance. To accept this definition can imply that we see in everything that goes beyond our knowledge something devilish, which is not the right attitude towards our fellow human beings. It can be the source of intolerance.

⁸Diels, B16, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 1903, pp.38–58 (Xenophanes fr. B16, Diels-Kranz, Kirk/Raven no. 171 [= Clem. Alex. Strom. Vii.4])

pictures, graphs, etc in the following gallery, which is a collection of ancient allegorical motifs describing the *kosmogonia* (world and self-creation), which was the main theme of the Ancients.

These motifs cannot be understood without knowing their allegorical contents. These can be viewed in either the irreligious metaphorical terms of the masters who experienced their original meaning on the Great Path, or in religious-mystical terms of those non-practising believers who recognise in them either divine objects of devotion or pagan symbols of disbelievers. In Being, the world of belief, all is relatively judged. The belief of one is the disbelief of the other.

Or short: All motifs in the Gallery from Figure 1-15 can be associated with non-oratory *ta gnósta*, the original realm of true knowledge, or *ta dóxasta*, the oratory realm of belief that results from not knowing the allegories. The first is dedicated to unconditioned BEING, the second to conditioned Being. I explain BEING in terms of my understanding of *ta gnósta*, which is for me the world of unconditioned Taiji-knowledge, which enters into the mind (awareness) of Taiji-practitioners thanks to Wuwei (*philia*, Farsi: *mahabba*).

Gallery of motifs from the Middle-Eastern climes of the *philosophía*

I show in *The Socrates Code* that Pythagoras had nothing to do whatsoever with mathematics, arithmetic, music, geometry, astronomy, music theory and music of the spheres. This misinterpretation is due to ignoring the unconditioned knowledge *gnósis* (Farsi: *ma'rifa*) gained on the Great Path (Path to Truth).

The misinterpretation can only be revised if one accounts for it. The ancient literature that refers to Pythagoras and other masters has, however, created the impression that they were dedicated to these disciplines. This is, however, not the case.

It is therefore, as we see with these examples, the misconceptions of the Greek Ancients and not what they actually taught that shaped the western culture. The key message of this book therefore is: *The western culture is based on the misconception of the Greek philosophía, which inspired its literature, art, religion and mysti-*

cism. It also inspired the sciences, but this subject is too comprehensive to be discussed here in very much detail.

Five milestones to European Enlightenment

The following reputable “promoters of the modern sciences” made themselves, just like Johannes Kepler (1571–1630), believe that *man is the* (true, divine, pure) *measure of all things* was in agreement with Plato (Socrates) and was the way to grasp the ultimate cosmic truth and get illuminated.

I cite now five milestones in chronological order offered by Tom Verde in *Hayy was here, Robinson Crusoe*⁹. Verde’s intention is to advertise the Andalusian Ibn Tufayl (ca. 1116–1185) as an early promoter of the modern sciences. My intention is to show that *man is the measure of all things* was and still largely is the misconceived Platonic guide for the advancement of the modern conditioned sciences.

1. Ibn Tufayl, the author of *Hayy*, a prototype *Robinson Crusoe*: Who remains “ignorant in the (conditioned) sciences” makes false claims to “experiencing the ultimate truth.”
2. Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), who studied Averroes (Ibn Rhusd; 1126–1198) and strongly believed in “man is the measure of all things”, concluded in *Heptaplus* like Ibn Tufayl that humans - after living lives of rigorous scientific and spiritual reflection - are destined to rise above this world and enjoy reunion with the Divine.
3. Francis Bacon (1561–1626), regarded as the father of empiricism, conceived a mythical island in his *New Atlantis*. With an eye to both *Heptaplus* and *Hayy*, he envisioned an insular society in which the religiously devout inhabitants are also devoted to the pursuit of pure, scientific knowledge. His concept

⁹<http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/201403/hayy.was.here.robinson.crusoe.htm>

of purity is not that of Plato who connects it to experiencing BEING (primeval source of Being) and not like Bacon to Being.

Located at the “very eye of Bacon’s kingdom” is “Salomon’s House,” an institution that anticipated the modern research university, and in 1660 inspired the establishment of England’s Royal Society of London for Improving Natural (conditioned) Knowledge.

The Society, among whose early presidents was Isaac Newton (1642–1727), who wrote more books on religion than natural science, chose as its motto a shorthand version of one of Pico’s favoured, autodidactic canons of the Roman poet Horace, “Nullius in verba.” Rough translation: “Don’t take anyone’s word for it.” Also the Great Path is based on this canon. But it is truly unconditioned, which science is not!

4. A translation of the *Hayy* by the reputed Oxford Arabist Richard Pockoke (1704–1767) was published in Oxford in 1671. The subtitle spelled out the nuts and bolts: “In which it is demonstrated by what means human reason can ascend from contemplation of the inferior to (conditioned) knowledge of the superior.”
5. The Age of Enlightenment was for Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) an age when mankind gained the courage and determination to rely on one’s own understanding (of Being). He writes in *Answering the question: What is enlightenment?* (1784): “Enlightenment is the exit of humans from their self-inflicted immaturity, which is the incapability to serve himself of his mind without guidance of someone else”.

I am sure that Plato would have pulled the legs of all these “distinguished researchers” for what they state about illumination (enlightenment), truth, knowledge, divine and spiritual reflection.

Does science eliminate all misconceptions?

I offer many conclusions in my three books - like the interpretation of the *Composite Lion and Bull* - arrived at by the unconditioned Great Path, which cannot be obtained by scientific reasoning. This indicates that the scientific approach cannot detect and eliminate all misconceptions, only those that fall into the range of the Yin-Liugen (ordinary senses). The Yin-Liugen get employed in targeted investigations, which are directed. The Yang-Liugen (extraordinary senses), which are reawakened on the Great Path are non-targeted. They are open for all directions. For further details see *The Laozi Code*, which is the most scientific of all three books of this series.

***Kosmogonia*: Main theme in ancient allegorical motifs**

The misunderstanding of the allegorical motifs largely results from misconceiving the unconditioned *kosmogonia* (world and self-creation) due to projecting BEING (Taiji) into Being (You). This projection was unknown to the traditional Eastern and Middle-Eastern cultures that have always been aware of BEING and had the desire to get in harmony with it. They have always recognised Being, the world that we now identify with, to be the image or appearance of BEING.

The sculpture on the front-cover of this book symbolises what I want to say. It shows dual Being (two heads), the image (projection) of non-dual BEING (joint corpus) on earth. Both worlds are part of the same reality. They are two different perceptions of it. The Byzantine Empire disconnected itself, however, after the downfall of the *philosophía* from non-oratory BEING. I could also say that it articulated, materialised and socialised it, which was a significant change of paradigm from ancient to modern world- and self-perception as indicated by Mas'udi¹⁰. The modern world became head-minded and lost the body- and heart-mindedness cultivated by the pagan Ancients.

¹⁰See *The Socrates Code*.

All motifs in the gallery and most that follow refer to the unconditioned *kosmogonia* as it is corroborated on the Great Path. I show, how this was misconceived in the West. I begin by showing what has been fantasised about Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans who truly experienced it. Not only that, I show how the misconception inspired the literature, art, religion, mysticism, etc of the gradually emerging modern Western culture.

Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans

Figure 1a and 1b give the impression that they have to do with the teaching of Pythagoras, but they have in fact nothing at all to do with him just as little as the Greek loan words have nothing to do with the Greek original words. The contents of the figures are a fiction in the “beautiful mind of their creators (artists)”, like so many other motifs that result from projecting BEING (Taiji = world of truth) into Being (You = world of opinion).

This projection is a characteristic of the Western “post-*philosophía* art”, which would have been inconceivable to the ancient Greeks and other traditional cultures who valued the natural and profound, but not the artificial and superficial.



Figure 1a: Pythagoras Emerging from the Underworld