TIME CONCEPT: PLATONIC AND EARLY CHINESE PHILOSOPHY
ABSTRACT

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This thesis is concerned with the notion of time in Platonic and early Chinese philosophy. The initial point of departure involves a descriptive examination of the different views of time expressed in each traditional framework. In addition, the opposing views of time which have emerged in Western and Chinese philosophy are examined with respect to their traditional foundations.

A second dimension of the thesis involves an examination of the relationship between the time concept and political philosophy. This latter dimension is considered from a general theoretical perspective as well as in terms of the impact which a particular view of time has had on the political philosophical nature of China and the West.
A STUDY OF THE TIME CONCEPT IN PLATONIC
AND EARLY CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and
Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Historically the concept of time has held a dominant position within western philosophy as well as within the classical schools of many non-western traditional frameworks. Within the western philosophical framework the emergence of time as a central concept was already in existence in the writings of Heraclitus and Parmenides. The development of the concept in western thought showed a parallel movement with the development of metaphysical thought in general. Thus it was not surprising that the problem of time in the West became one of its dual and paradoxical nature. Its solution involved not only a resolution of the conflict between being and becoming, but also, as with Kant, an inquiry into the possibility of existence itself. By contrast, traditional Chinese concern with time emphasized problems and questions derivative of an awareness of time's reality within matter and material transformation. It would be accurate to say that Chinese philosophy has never been concerned with the multi-dimensional and complex speculation about time which has been a preoccupation in the West. This concern may be seen as consequence of the non-idealistic, material emphasis which Chinese philosophy placed on explanations of reality.

A culture's concept of time and that culture's general underlying philosophical orientation are relational. The character of this relationship may be described as dialectical. It is dialectical because the way
in which time is understood at any historical point within a given culture has an impact on the nature of the explanation of reality and thus the nature of philosophy within that tradition. The nature of this explanation in turn may effect the development and direction of temporal understanding. Explanation of reality may or may not take on an historical form. Clearly a demarcation may be made on the basis of the nature of temporal understanding within any cultural context.

The attempt to understand present reality in terms of the past, as well as the projection of future potential from an analysis of the present, involves an historical process as well as a particular understanding of time. Historical explanation has developed in two essentially different forms. These two forms may be described as political and non-political. Political historical explanation may be characterized not only in terms of an emphasis on past and present, but also in terms of a concern with potential transformation in the future. Non-political historical explanation may be characterized by an emphasis on the terminal nature of human history. Both of these possibilities are in fact consequential of the nature of temporal understanding during their conceptualization and implementation. The lack of an historical form of explanation can equally be seen as dependent on a particular understanding of time.

An explanation of reality which stressed a certain archetypal permanence could only develop as a consequence of the rejection of change through time. This form of explanation would rely on the identification of certain objects and phenomena as unreal and temporal. The philosophical form of explanation, whether it be non-historical, historical, or politically historical, is clearly influenced by a particular understanding of the nature of time. These philosophical forms are not however static, but in their relationship as ideas to material reality influence their...
own potential for transformation through their impact on temporal understanding.

Time, because of its relationship to the fundamental philosophical form of explanation of reality, may be characterized as having a political quality. The particular way in which time is understood within a cultural tradition can tell us much about the political nature of that tradition. Temporal understanding may be divided into two fundamental categories. These two categories in their simplest forms are: an awareness of time; and a consciousness of time. Each category reflects a fundamental political dimension. Awareness of time does not involve a consciousness of the historical relationship between past, present, and future potential. In a political sense, awareness of time will not manifest a consciousness of the reality of material transformation. Consciousness of time will, on the other hand, manifest a consciousness of the historical relationship between past, present, and future. Consciousness of time, however, need not manifest a consciousness of the necessity of viewing matter as having intrinsic to it a potential for transformation. In this context a consciousness of time may manifest a consciousness of historical termination. In addition, a consciousness of time may, as with Hegel, manifest an historical consciousness wherein idea determinism, rather than material potential, is given historical emphasis. These latter forms of historical consciousness are distinguishable from political historical consciousness, wherein material future potential is recognized as intrinsic to the historical process.

A comparative analysis of time is important because of time's relationship to political form. Through a comparative examination it becomes possible to distinguish certain salient differences between two
cultural traditions during a given historical period. This type of analysis not only penetrates the essence of political differences at a given point, but also provides the basis for an understanding of change within those two frameworks.

This paper is concerned with the notion of time and its political consequences in Platonic and early Chinese philosophy. Time is considered in both the Greek and the Chinese contexts because it is felt that the different concepts of time evidenced in the two cultures have an intrinsic bearing on the philosophical underpinnings of each tradition. The purpose of this introduction, as a point of departure, is to explain the preferability of a comparative framework of analysis for an understanding of the significance which the time concept has on the political character of both cultural entities.

The significance of the differences between the Greek and Chinese notions of time can best be understood through reference to a general theoretical framework. The framework, in characterizing the nature of the interdependency of time and seven other basic concepts, portrays the political dimension of time. The seven concepts which, in addition to the time concept, are fundamental components of the framework, are: (a) space; (b) existence; (c) history; (d) consciousness; (e) self-consciousness; (f) change; (g) motion. In order to portray the relationship of time to the other concepts, it is necessary to consider time as exhibiting two fundamental dimensions. Two levels of meaning for time are introduced in the paper; one of a universal, the other of a particular nature.

The universal dimension of time refers to a process which
establishes a potential for time consciousness in all cultural existence. Space is characterized in the framework as universal and as potential being. Space can only be in a particular form in existence, and can never be limited to that form. Space therefore has inherent to it the potential for transformation because of its particularity, and thus its incomplete nature in existence. Space undergoes change in existence through motion, which acts as a catalyst for transformation. Through the inherency of motion within space, consciousness of space emerges in existence. Consciousness is the means by which space is given particularity in the present, and by which space can be projected from a particular form in the present unto the future. Consciousness must be seen as having a cumulative character in terms of its capacity to project space from a particular form in existence. Through motion (through which is given the interaction of man and nature), man becomes conscious of the quantitative or repetitive nature of phenomena. The quantitative aspect of phenomena accumulates and is transformed into what may be called a qualitative change. Consciousness reflects this passage from quantitative to qualitative change in matter. The development of consciousness can be seen as passing from quantity through quality and then again from the quantitative dimension of a previous quality through a new qualitative distinction. Because of this characteristic, consciousness has the capacity to project space from a particular form in the present. The universal dimension of time is therefore the cumulative process of consciousness whereby space is given particularity in existence and through which potential being can be projected from a particular form in the present. This universal dimension of time establishes the potential for time consciousness in all existence. Time consciousness involves not only a consciousness of past in terms of its differentiation from present,
but also a consciousness of future as evolved from a consciousness of past. A consciousness of time therefore entails a consciousness of the universal dimension of time and thus a consciousness of the cumulative process of consciousness.

Whereas the potential for time consciousness is universally established through the cumulative process of consciousness, its cause is derivative of a universal biological need for food, and its absence. Historically, all cultures have exhibited, during early periods of their development, a scarcity of this object of biological need. Through the quantitative and repetitious nature of the action involved in satisfying the biological need, the self becomes conscious of the relationship of a self to an object. The self-consciousness which arises as a consequence of this repetitive interaction does not in itself manifest temporal awareness. Differentiation at this level is conceived of in spatial rather than in temporal terms. This type of differentiation is necessary, however, for the development of time consciousness. It is because of the scarcity of food, historically evidenced in all cultures, that the self becomes conscious of the differentiation between self and non-self. Through the cumulative process of consciousness and because of the introduction of a qualitative change in man's interaction with nature, the self becomes conscious of a qualitative distinction in its state of being between the past and the present. This consciousness of differentiation between past and present can lead to the development of a consciousness of potential. The continuation of biological deprivation can manifest a qualitative transformation in consciousness in terms of a consciousness of the relationship of future to past. Through the self's reflection on the differentiation between his past state of satiation and his present...
state of need he can develop a consciousness of his potential for transformation in the future. The act of food storage as a means of negation and transformation is an example of the manifestation of future consciousness. A consciousness of future can lead to a consciousness of time. Through a consciousness of past and of potential the self can develop a consciousness of past as a means for an understanding of the present, and for projecting a sense of potential in the future.

While the potential for time consciousness is universal, time consciousness need not develop in any particular culture. Because of the universal nature of the biological need and the absence of its object, a consciousness of the differentiation between past and present has developed in all societies. Thus all societies have developed a consciousness of change from past to present. The particular explanation of change from past to present which has developed in different societies has had an impact on the development of time consciousness in those societies. In this context the early Greek denial of the reality of material change had its consequence not only in the matter-form dichotomy, but also in the rejection of the reality of time. By contrast, the early Chinese assertion of the reality of transformation from the past was made in the context of a consciousness of continuous development in the future.

The presence or lack of time consciousness in a culture is significant in terms of the essential political philosophical structures of that culture. This is most clearly evidenced in terms of the notion of history. History is the cumulative process of consciousness through which universal space is given particularity in existence, and which
constitutes the universal dimension of time. Historical consciousness and time consciousness are therefore of the same nature. The early Chinese concern with historical explanation, as a means for understanding change through time, had a profound bearing on the Chinese concept of human nature and the political potential of man. By contrast, the lack of historical consciousness in early Greek thought had a relationship to the Greek belief in the inherent inequality of human nature and their concern with a non-political eternity as a means for upholding that assumption.

In addition, the development of time and historical consciousness in China, and the lack of such in Greece, had consequences for the later political development of China and the West. In the West, the development of a concern with future did not escape the Platonic influence. Aristotelian philosophy, and later, Christianity, both perpetuated the matter-form dichotomy in the context of a terminal and non-political future. The development of historical consciousness from Hegel, through Marx's reversal of the idealistic foundation, evidenced an emphasis on the terminal nature of history. In both philosophies the dialectical process is viewed as ultimately terminal. The continuation of an historically conscious tradition in China provided an environment for the adoption of Marxist philosophy, wherein a termination of the dialectical process was not in evidence. In China the historical process is not viewed as terminal, but as necessarily subject to continuous change in the future. This difference in consciousness of the historical process is significantly related to the respective concepts of political philosophy in the two cultures.

This study is not concerned with the political differences
and the significance of these differences in the contemporary period. The study is limited to an examination of the time concept in the traditional context, which may be considered as a prerequisite for a more comprehensive and specific understanding of the political nature of the two cultures.

Prior to a specific comparative examination of the time concept, it is necessary to provide a more detailed study of the relationship between history and time. This latter account will demonstrate not only the political character of time, but also the significance of the traditional concept of time for later political development. The study, while general by nature, makes specific reference to the work, *Cosmos and History*, by Mircea Eliade. This work is examined because its theme is essentially contradictory to the position presented in this study. Its introduction therefore serves to more clearly illustrate the counter-position taken in this study.
CHAPTER TWO
HISTORY AND TIME

Within every historically noted culture there has arisen the need for an explanation of change from past to present. Explanation is determined by the particular nature of any social context, and it is therefore not possible to assess its genesis as a consequence of some general theory of universal and inherent desire for truth. The need for explanation of change from past to present is universal because of the universal nature of consciousness of differentiation between past and present. The universality of man's consciousness of differentiation between past and present and the relationship of this consciousness to the self's awareness of the absence of the object of biological need in the present, necessitate that all societies provide an explanation for change. The type of explanation which any particular culture provides for change from past to present has an impact on the development of future and time consciousness in that culture. In addition, the type of explanation provided for change from past to present has an impact on the political conceptual framework of that culture. All consciousness develops as a consequence of reflection on the past. Through the cumulative process of consciousness, quantity is transformed into quality, and thus consciousness is transformed through the interaction of past and present. Cultural explanation of change from past to present does not necessarily reflect the dependency of present on past. Change can be explained, for example, through reference to some eternal reality, as was the case in the Platonic framework, and thus the past can be
denied reality and meaning for an understanding of the present.

Because of the self's continuous search for food, and through reflections on the differentiation between his states in the present and past, the self can become aware of the potential of the object for a state of being that is not yet present. In the process the self is no longer aware of the object simply in terms of differentiated states of being. The self can become conscious of the differentiation between past and present in terms of the preferability of the past to his present state of need. Through this awareness the self can develop a desire to negate the present state of need and thus a desire to transform himself in the future through action taken in the present. Through a consciousness of action taken in terms of the future the self can develop a consciousness of the need to reflect upon the interaction of past and present as a means for understanding the present and projecting a sense of future transformation. This consciousness of time, which is dependent upon a consciousness of the interaction of past and present, can be denied in a particular culture through that culture's explanation of change from past to present. In the Platonic framework, for example, the denial of the reality of change from past to present did not permit a consciousness of potential and of time to develop in early Greek society.

Historical consciousness and time consciousness are of the same nature because of the identity of history and the universal dimension of time. The political philosophical framework of a culture which utilizes an historical explanation of reality is significantly different from one which does not. The absence of a particular explanation of reality which takes cognizances of the cumulative dimension of consciousness, means that change from past to present will not be examined
in terms of an understanding of the political significance of the past. In addition, the relationship of past and present will not be examined in terms of some projected transformation in the future. In the absence of an historical explanation of reality some other theory will be introduced to deal with change. This theory, because it does not reflect a cognizance of the relationship between past, present, and future, will be obliged to explain reality through reference to some conceptual framework which does not reflect the historical and political past of that culture. The totality of concepts provided for an understanding of the political reality in these cultures will significantly differ from those concepts derivative of an historical explanation of reality.

The existence of an historical explanation of reality in one culture, and the lack of such in another, can have an impact on the later development of political philosophy in these cultures. Marxist thought was adaptable to China in part, because of the existence of an historical tradition in China. It has also been mentioned that the lack of an historical tradition in early Greek thought and the subsequent development of a non-political future consciousness in the Christian context, were inhibiting on the development of historical consciousness in the West. One of the most critical limitations on western historical thought has been a proclivity to see history as a terminal process. Unlike the case in early China, a notion of political potential did not develop in early western thought. The Platonic and Aristotelian establishment of a matter-form dichotomy wherein form took priority as the essence of reality, was significantly influential in manifesting this limitation. The differences between the contemporary Chinese and western concepts of human nature and the political can be understood, in part, through an understanding of the differences in their respective
notions of history. These different concepts of history are, to a significant extent, consequent of early differences between Chinese and western concepts of time and theories introduced for the explanation of change.

It is now clear that consciousness of potential and of time are consequent of a dialectical process, wherein the motor for transformation is given through a particular consciousness of self. An investigation of the meaning which time had for the early Greeks and Chinese establishes the basis for an examination of the development of the temporal notion during the course of western and Chinese history. In addition, the investigation sheds light on the particular consciousness, evidenced in Greek and early Chinese societies of the historical process. This analysis, therefore, forms the background for any study of the critical differences which have emerged during the development of western and Chinese perceptions of reality. A point which must be stressed is that a lack of importance has been given by a host of authors to the relevance of a culture's traditional concept of time to the subsequent development of the societies.

Mircea Eliade is a good example of those authors exhibiting this tendency. Not only is he negligent on this point in his book, *Cosmos and History*, but he is also culpable of a relational error; this being a tendency to universally categorize. His categories of modern and archaic are utilized to distinguish what are in his view the two fundamental typologies of the temporal notion. Each temporal notion, Eliade claims, is supportive respectively of historic and non-historic views of reality.

In short, it would be necessary to confront 'historical man' (modern man), who consciously
and voluntarily creates history, with the man of the traditional civilizations, who, as we have seen, had a negative attitude towards history. Whether he abolishes it periodically, whether he devalues it by perpetually finding trans-historical models and archetypes for it, whether, finally, he gives it a metaphistorical meaning (cyclical theory, eschatological significations, and so on), the man of the traditional civilizations accorded the historical event no value in itself; in other words, he did not regard it as a specific category of his own mode of existence.

Eliade identifies history, which he essentially defines as a sequence of irreversible events, with a linear time flow. His claim is that man became modern when he identified the being of his self with the historical past, and thus sought consciously to create the historical self in the future through his own action. The pre-modern, or archaic was not, according to Eliade, ignorant of history. By this Eliade means that archaic man was conscious of the past and well aware of the flow of history unto the future. But, Eliade claims, archaic man could find no meaning in history, and thus sought consciously to negate it through the imposition of some eternal archetypal model. According to Eliade, archaic man was conscious of two time dimensions. The flow of history he identified with profane time. Profane time signified change and differentiation, and as such was regarded as autonomous of man himself. This was the case because archaic man's consciousness was imbedded in the unifying, archetypal reality. Through his commitment to the archetype, according to Eliade, archaic man was able to explain change in history. The perception of differentiation was explained by archaic man either through its immediate assimilation to some archetype of the past, or through a projection of the negation of this differentiation by means of a regeneration of sacred time. Sacred time was conceptualized as the time of the archetype, and its
regeneration was therefore the projection of a transcendent pre-time at some given and known point within profane time.

Historic time, according to Eliade, took on a positive dimension, essentially because of the Christian concern with historical explanation. During the post-Hegelian, modern period in the West, history lost its trans-historic character, and the self became conscious of a need to explain reality in terms of history.*

Within Eliade's framework no explanation is provided for the development of the self's consciousness of differentiation between past and present. It would appear, according to Eliade's construct, that differentiation is recognized within the archaic structure, but that it can have no impact on the development of time consciousness. Differentiation and its positioning in profane time are recognized as antagonistic to the upholding of reality; but as antagonisms which are universally resolved through the self's absorption within eternal being. Within Eliade's framework a very significant problem emerges. This problem is essentially consequent of his negligence in dealing with the relationship between archetypal explanation and differentiated consciousness. At no point in his book, Cosmos and History, does Eliade clearly state whether or not archetypal consciousness preceded differentiated awareness. Rather, he appears to imply that a choice between historical time and regenerative being was available to archaic man, and that archaic man universally opted for the latter.

* The meaning which Eliade attaches to historical responsibility and his theory of modern return are not dealt with in this study, for this additional examination would necessitate a treatment of his philosophy beyond a point relevant to this study.
What is of chief importance to us in these archaic structures is the abolition of concrete time, and hence their anti-historical intent. This refusal to preserve the memory of the past, even of the immediate past, seems to us to betoken a particular anthropology. We refer to archaic man's refusal to accept himself as a historical being, his refusal to grant value to memory and hence to the unusual events (i.e. events without an archetypal model) that in fact constitutes concrete duration. In the last analysis, what we discover in all these rites and all these attitudes is the will to devaluate time. Carried to their extreme, all the rites and all the behavior patterns that we have so far mentioned would be comprised in the following statement: 'If we pay no attention to it, time does not exist; furthermore, where it becomes perceptible - because of man's sins, i.e., when man departs from the archetype and falls into duration - time can be annulled'.

If explanation merely involves choice amongst alternatives at any given point in history, then Eliade is at a loss to explain why the archetypal structure was approved of at one point, and why, in fact, its opposite was opted for during other periods in history. The notion of an arbitrary threshold factor beyond which archetypal consciousness is no longer capable of manifesting an explanation of change is clearly inadequate. The intent here is not to provide an analysis of the priorities involved in the relationship between archetypal and historical explanation. It is sufficient to say that given the universal character of differentiated consciousness between past and present, the archetypal form emerged in certain cultures as an explanation for change. Whether or not there were certain preconditions for its emergence as a form of explanation in certain cultural environments is not of concern in this study. The extent to which the archetypal form of explanation coexisted with particular levels of historical awareness, and the effect which this relationship had on the development of historical
consciousness in those cultures, are questions which could only be dealt with in extensive and specifically oriented studies. The essential point to be made is that differentiated consciousness and explanation of change are dialectically relational. Viewed in this manner it is possible to see why a particular consciousness of eternal being should, over a period of time, no longer have the capacity to project an explanation of what Eliade has called history. The lack of an historical analysis in *Cosmos and History* is further illustrated by Eliade's insistence on the universal existence of the archetypal form in traditional societies. Time and historical consciousness develop, in Eliade's view, through an initial emergence of the archetypal form of explanation for change. All modern societies have known the archaic period, and all pre-modern societies are presently experiencing such an historic state:

The pre-modern or traditional societies include both the world usually known as primitive and the ancient cultures of Asia, Europe, and America. 3

The position presented in this study is that these traditional cultures did not universally deny the reality of history through reference to some archetypal premise. The early Chinese development of past and future consciousness is culturally significant in its contrast to the Greek response to time. The political differences which have emerged in the contemporary period between China and the West, as a consequence of their different concepts of history, can only be appreciated through a grasp of the significance of the earlier, traditional concepts of time which emerged in each culture. The assertion that the archetypal form has historically preceded the historical form of explanation does not present an explanation of the process of transformation, nor does it explain the political differences, and the significance of these
differences in the contemporary period, between two cultures exhibiting a concern with history.

In order to deal significantly with the concept of time in Platonic thought, there is an obligation to deal somewhat with the time concept in the thought of his predecessors. The following chapter meets this obligation through an examination of the time concept in Sophoclean drama.
Plato's philosophy articulates a strong negation of time consciousness. In this sense at least, he re-establishes the Homeric preference for original being, in contrast to a concern with temporal meaning. The suggestion that restoration provided the sole avenue for transformation is misleading. Sophoclean drama provides insight into the breakdown of Homeric mimesis. Sophocles' concern with differentiation between past and present is indeed primordial in his plays.

In Sophoclean drama, man is distinguished by his time-bound condition, and tragedy is largely the futility of human action performed against the backdrop of time. Time faces the Sophoclean hero as an enemy; it is the personification of flux and flows inexorably by the individual who measures out his life in relation to it. He is caught in isolation between a past which holds no meaning for the present and a future which provides no promise. It is the permanent and regular movement of time (chronos) which makes individual action and the search for an island of order appear futile; the time (aion) of man is ruled by tyche which, like the mind of a child, is unintelligible and with which no prophecy can deal.

While it is plausible that the drama serves a certain consciousness of departure from established value, the emphasis in this quotation on the tragedy of time, is perhaps too severe. Two of the Oedipus plays of Sophocles will be discussed for a twofold purpose. Oedipus The King and Oedipus At Colonus are relevant as portrayals of a rejection of the Homeric standard. The past is no longer capable of
inhibiting a consciousness of transformation through the present. Although the passage of time is viewed as disruptive of the Homeric standard, there is no desire to extend and thus restore and reformulate the past. Sophoclean drama is not, however, merely a statement of discontent. While the comparison of time to some notion of eternity and permanence is in evidence, the possibility of finding meaning in time is also portrayed. The thesis that Sophoclean drama is concerned with political potential should not be sighted as primary interpretation. It is clear that the major theme is one of social disintegration in time and not of potential transformation in the future. The minimal attention given to the potential of past for the future is worthy, however, of some notation. This is the case because of the rejection afforded temporal potential consciousness by Platonic philosophy. Thus an examination of Sophoclean drama illustrates not only the disquieting impact of temporal awareness, but also the potential this impact had for Greek consciousness.

In Oedipus The King, Oedipus is initially presented as a Homeric heroic figure, standing somewhere between the deities and humanity. The priest in addressing Oedipus says:

We know you are no god, omnipotent with gods ... It is because on life's unequal stage we see you leader of man and consummate atonner to the powers above. For it was you, coming to the Cadmus capital, who disenthralled us from the Sphinx - her greedy dues - that ruthless sorceress who sang. No primed by us, not taught by hidden lore, but helped by God - in no way else, we think - you raised us up again and made us sound.

As hero, Oedipus served as an archetype for the unique occurrence. Change, or any new event in the present could be overcome through reference to the memory of the hero's capacity. The hero had, through his past
deeds, created a unified order within the entire cosmos. Those qualities which signified his title were born through his act of creation. Thus the emergence of a hero represented an origin, or creation of an order which signified the end of chaos. Origin represented not so much beginning as a final creation at the end of chaos. Origin thus symbolized the end of temporal differentiation. As a terminal synthesis it also served as a permanent beginning or eternal source of value. Thus differentiated consciousness was inhibited through constant reference to the archetypal unity. In this context all value rested within the person of the hero. His presence represented the presence of the past in the present. Through his action he replicated the act of creation. Thus, the unique event could not emerge as an object of a consciousness of change, and its meaning took on the meaning of the distant moment of origin.

The priest speaks for the populace when he asks Oedipus to deal with the disaster befalling Thebes. It should be noted that even when he makes reference to the possibility of "enlightenment from man", he does so in the context of this knowledge being imparted to Oedipus. Such capacity on the part of a citizen was of course granted in varying degree since the time of Homer. It is significant, however, that only through Oedipus can the knowledge have meaning for the society.

So Oedipus, you most respected king, we plead with you to find for us a cure: some answer blown from God or - could it be - enlightenment from man. For, still I see the prowess of the well-proved mind - its tested buoyancy. So holy Sovereign, go. Raise up our city. Go. Now on your guard. Your old devotion celebrates you still, 'Defender of the State'. You must not let your reign go down as one when men were resurrected once - and once replaced. Mend the city, make her safe. You had good omens once. You did your work. Be equal to your stature now. If king of men (as king you are), then be it of a kingdom manned and not a desert.
The appearance of a veiled threat in the priest's speech foreshadows what is essentially a commentary on the breakdown of the heroic archetype. The remainder of the play deals with the incapacity and collapse of the heroic structure. It is relevant to note that the plagues falling upon the city are related to the most basic aspects of its survival. They essentially affected both the progenitive and regenerative nature of mankind. Thus Oedipus is faced with a threat against the very continuation of humanity.

Yes, look upon the city, see the storm that batters down this city's prow in waves of blood. The crops diseased, disease among the herds. The ineffectual womb rotting with its fruit. A fever-demon wastes the town and decimates with fire, stalking hated through the emptied house where Cadmus lived.

Oedipus cannot replicate his own past action and thus guarantee the regeneration of origin. He cannot do so because it is his own past which is the cause of the present misfortune. The past has a specific meaning for the present, but not in terms of a fated determinism or heroic archetype. This point is in fact central to the analysis. The crisis facing the city was not preordained simultaneous with the proclamation of Oedipus' venture in patricide and incest. The crisis serves as a mechanism whereby the hero, Oedipus, must seek out knowledge of the past. In seeking this knowledge he becomes conscious of the differentiation between past and present. Not only is the present not a replication of the past, nor can it be if the city is to survive; but the past is no longer the glorified moment from which all value emanates. The past quite suddenly appears to consciousness as incapable of rectifying the present, and in that symbolic moment Oedipus is removed from his exalted position. As Oedipus once controlled the unified consciousness of mankind, he now symbolizes man conscious of his own differentiation in time. The character of Oedipus exhibits a dual nature.
When he becomes conscious of his past he wills his blindness and his own exile. Both symbolize the removal of the heroic structure from Greek society. The removal is not given through fate or the gods but through man's own consciousness. Thus Oedipus removes his heroic being from society and destroys his capacity to guide and rule that society. It is Oedipus the man who takes this action. It is significant that he neither desires death nor the command of the gods as recourse for the future. If this were the case one could argue that the play is merely concerned with the termination of the heroic structure. Oedipus, blind and exiled, remains man, alone and conscious of the past, yet sealed from any disturbance in the future. One might argue that through his removal Oedipus seals the awareness of time within his person, and thus carries the burden of time with himself from the city. While this interpretation is plausible it should be noted that no alternate standard to the heroic structure is granted to the city. Oedipus does carry with him the burden of time, but it is a burden with which the city must ultimately deal. In this context, Oedipus At Colonus cannot be divorced from the initial play. Oedipus, in the second play, appears to contrast the flow of time to some eternal standard. He states:

The immortal Gods alone have neither age nor death
All other things almighty time disquiets
Earth wastes away; the body wastes away;
Faith dies; distrust is born.
And imperceptibly the spirit changes
Between a man and his friend, or between two cities.
........ but time goes on,
Unmeasured Time, fathering numberless
Nights, unnumbered days ....

This statement, however, must be seen in the context of Oedipus' relationship to society. Sophocles has changed the way in which Oedipus left Thebes, and for a reason. In Oedipus At Colonus it is stated that contrary to the reference in Oedipus The King, Odeipus
desired to remain in the city and was exiled against his will. This novel circumstance parallels a transformation in Oedipus' consciousness. He no longer feels guilty about his past action. He answers Creon:

Murder, incest, and catastrophe -
you spewed the lot at me,
and all the lot I bore in misery,
not through any choice of mine
but through some scheme of heaven,
long insensate perhaps against our house.
.......Neither in this marriage then
shall I be called to blame,
nor in the way my father died -
on which you harp with so much spite.
Let me ask you this, one simple thing:
if at this moment someone should step up to murder you,
would you, godly creature that you are,
stop and say: 'Excuse me, sir, are you my father?'

Oedipus no longer consciously accepts the value structure which he upheld as king. Exiled from the city, and thus obliged to carry the burden of his past, Oedipus appears transformed by the experience. By contrast, Thebes is still held under the spell of the heroic arete. It has cast Oedipus and its own potential for transformation from its midst. It still values action and deeds in terms of an archaic structure. It is within this context that Oedipus' speech on time can be understood. Time means for Oedipus all that he claims it does. But it is because of the reality of time for man that it becomes necessary to understand the significance of change. It is through a consciousness of the relationship of present and past that Oedipus evaluates his own past and thus brings into question the social structures of his society. Thebes still governs its actions through reference to a value structure whose worth cannot be accepted in light of Oedipus' transformed consciousness. Thus his speech on time is meant as an attack on an illusory value structure. Time does disquiet, yet only through a consciousness of time can one evaluate the disruption. The point made in
Oedipus At Colonus is that restoration or continuation of the past is futile when judged from the perspective of time.

It is relevant that an oracle proclaims that the presence of Oedipus' corpse on the border of Thebes will give that city victory in its preordained struggle with Athens. The power of the corpse refers to the eternal value of the heroic figure. Oedipus cannot go because of his new awareness. That he can return in death as an eternal protectorate of Thebes symbolizes the still present archetypal consciousness of the Thebans. Oedipus wins his struggle with Creon, and enters, in death, the deified Colonus. He does not enter Athens to die, and so give her the eternal protection desired by Thebes. He cannot do so for the same reason he could not rest near Thebes. Yet his relationship to the Athenians is different from his relationship to his own society. The Athenians are not presented as equals to the Thebans. They do not attempt to force Oedipus to accept his past role, and in fact accept his decision to enter Colonus. They do not judge his past through heroic reference, but accept his analysis of past action. Oedipus must enter Colonus, for to act contrary he must do so as hero. Oedipus the hero dies in the land of the gods. His heroic memory is granted to no human society. On the other hand Colonus is a protectorate of Athens. There is no inconsistency here if it is remembered that Oedipus in the second play is representative of man's consciousness of transformation through time. Thus while Oedipus the hero becomes a property of the gods, the memory of Oedipus the man is given to Athens. Athens is entrusted with this memory because she alone has understood man's relationship to the past. Athens displays a consciousness of the past in terms of the present, while Thebes remains ignorant of this knowledge.
Oedipus warned that through time all is destroyed by change. He establishes the "immortal gods alone", as being immune to time. But he does not set up the gods as an archetype through whose replication man can negate his temporal reality. Oedipus' consciousness of the past is a refutation of that possibility. He alone is aware that the heroic structure cannot stand the test of time. Time destroys, and awareness of that destruction is only possible through an awareness of time. The plays do not establish that Sophocles was conscious of potential in the future. Equally, they do not establish that he viewed time as an enemy whose negation was of immediate and necessary concern. The consciousness which Oedipus gained of present and past is, as was stated, imparted to Athens. The Athenians represent a society which has, through a consciousness of the past, refuted the value of the heroic standard. They are as much subject to change in time as the Thebans. They, unlike the Thebans, have secured meaning from time because they do not negate its reality. Sophocles is concerned however with Theban society. Athenian society does not serve so much as a contrast to Theban society, as it does its potential. Upon Oedipus' death, Antigone does not desire to remain in Athens and is determined to return to Thebes, where:

There shall we stem (if stemming be),
the coming bloodbath of our brothers

It would be difficult to support a thesis that Sophocles had a consciousness of future potential. He is concerned essentially with man's consciousness of differentiation between past and present and consequently his need to deal with the interaction of past and present. Athenian consciousness by being presented as a necessary alternative for Theban society, emphasizes its existence as potential for the Thebans. If Theban consciousness is not transformed to accommodate the reality of
time, however, then Thebes will be destroyed through the passage of time. The archetypal figure has been permanently removed, and thus the possibility of denying the reality of change through time by reference to an archetypal structure, is forever in the past.

While Platonic philosophy is not concerned with the writings of Sophocles, the latter is of specific relevance to Plato. Plato's attack on Homer and the poets serves his purpose of replacing chaos with the eternal. The Sophoclean drama is important because in attacking the impact of Homeric arete upon social consciousness, Sophocles does not seek to replace it with some eternal standard. Sophoclean drama, while not concerned specifically with future consciousness, existed as a potential for the development of Greek time consciousness. The negation of this potential through the Platonic denial of the reality of time, had its impact on the development of the political form of Greek culture.
CHAPTER FOUR
PLATO AND TIME

There exist three fundamental assumptions in Plato's Republic which serve to introduce the intricate superstructure of his ideas. The first, a cognitive assumption, is the postulate that knowledge is a faculty, indeed the most powerful faculty of the human mind.

I will begin by placing faculties in a class by themselves; they are powers in us, and in all other things, by which we do as we do. Certainly knowledge is a faculty, and the mightiest of all faculties.

Intimately linked with this is the second, an ontological assumption. It postulates that the real is that which is the object of knowledge.

Being is the sphere or subject-matter of knowledge, and knowledge is to know the nature of being.

The third, an ethical assumption, is the postulate that all men seek the Good, no matter how dimly they may perceive it.

...but no one is satisfied with the appearance of good - the reality is what they seek: in the case of the good appearance is despised by everyone. Of this then, which every soul of man pursues and makes the end of all his actions, having a presentiment that there is such an end, and yet hesitating because neither knowing the nature nor having the same assurance of this as of other things, and therefore losing whatever good there is in other things.

Within the Republic, the link between the cognitive and the ontological postulates gives rise to two parallel scales, one of cognition,
the other of being. At the poles of these scales are: (a) knowledge as such, episteme, the object of which is the real, understood as absolute and non-temporal being; and (b) absence of knowledge, the counterpart of which is the non-existent. Intermediate between these extremes on the ontological scale are the events of the sensible or observed world, which are in constant temporal flux and subject to contradictory predication. The cognitive counterpart of this world of semi-real semblances is the state of belief, doxa, which unlike episteme is subject to error and persuasion, and is incapable of self-accountability or absolute truth through the rational process. It is productive to look at Plato's simile of the Line in order to realize fully the equation of the categories of cognition and their respective fields of truth. The lower portion of the Line represents the faculty of doxa and the physical world to which it appertains; while the upper portion represents the faculty of episteme and its counterpart in the absolute Forms.

Doxa and episteme are subdivided into the four categories of eikasia; pistis; dianoia; and noesis. Eikasia represents non-awareness of even the sensible world, and noesis the apprehension of the absolute eternal world of Forms, under which are subsumed the transient particulars of the sensible. Having illustrated the subdivision of the Line, Plato then equates these divisions to divisions in the soul.

Let there be four faculties in the soul - reason answering to the highest, understanding to the second, faith (or conviction) to the third, and perception of the shadows to the last - and let there be a scale of them, and let us suppose that the several have clearness in the same degree that their objects have truth.16

After Plato has explained the relationship of knowledge to
reality it becomes necessary for him to juxtapose this relationship to the ethical category. This he accomplishes in the Republic through the simile of the Sun. Its generative power and its focal position in Plato's system are evident by the fact that it is the form by virtue of which all other forms are knowable and gain, "their very being and reality", as well as by the fact that it is, "that form which everything that is good and right derives its value for us".

The symbolism of the Line, then, reveals the inter-connectedness that exists between Plato's epistemology and his metaphysics. The image of the Sun, symbolizing as it does the ultimate form of the Good, renders clear the further interrelatedness of the primary relationship with the Platonic ethic, the role of which must be regarded as fundamental in his philosophy.

Plato states in the Phaedrus that:

... good discourse presupposes a knowledge in the mind of the speaker of the truth of his subject.

Truth for Plato initially concerned the necessity of a separation of the individual psyche from the orally upheld culture. This liberation of the self could only be effected once the rhythmic movement of an externalized self was removed. Poetic expression had to be relegated to the realm of doxa, and only thus could episteme be realized through the medium of philosophy. Plato separated thought from action in order to discredit the type of heroic action portrayed in the epic. Arendt holds that Plato destroyed action for purposes of making or rulership; yet Plato only conceived of the necessity of a separation because for him knowing had been submerged in doing through the encyclopedic formulae of poetic mimesis. Plato wished to separate knowledge from doxa,
and to accomplish this elevation of consciousness it became necessary to reinterpret the meaning of action.

For Plato the compact unity of state and cosmos which characterized the integral myth was broken, and his problem was one of restoration, although the restoration could not be an actual return to the age of Cronus. The physical and institutional order of the state could be constructed by the founder so that it would best overcome the problem of decline, but above all the psychic order must also be such that a sense of timelessness is created in the mind of the people. The temporal order of the state and the life of the individual are assimilated to the cyclical celestial archetype, and the style of social life becomes that of a cosmic and mathematical ritual.

The attempt at restoration involved in the replacement of Homeric mimesis with a knowledge of eternal truth. In order to present philosophy Plato utilizes myth. This paradox is understood once it is realized that his use of myth permitted him to express his philosophy without the destruction of an acceptable medium. Homer and the poets had succeeded in negating the reality of time through mimetic reference to the past. Their explanation of transformation was not capable of maintaining its integrity for Plato because the object of truth remained hidden in their epistemology. Plato’s use of myth served on the one hand to discredit what was for him a contradictory system, and on the other served to retain the form of mimetic expression.

In the Timaeus the myth is no longer understood as reality but as a representation of that which cannot be expressed logically (i.e. the ineffable perceived by the eye of the soul). Plato realized that myth was a game, but simultaneously he sought that it be taken seriously because it projected a visual archetypal image through which his philosophy could, not so much be understood by, as poetically be
impressed upon the psyche. So long as one is aware of his use of myth as an instrument of man's intellect, one cannot become confused with his use of a medium which he had sought to discredit.

In the *Timaeus* Plato states that matter in space, which he designates as becoming because of its inherent chaotic motion, was derivative of being or pure form which has no material receptacle. The creation of the universe involved a "moving image of eternity", which was the ordering of becoming in space through an approximation of pure form. Cosmic time is the process of movement of spatial existence as it approximates pure form through the ordering mechanism of the soul of the universe. Thus within the universe being is in becoming. This is eternally so because the soul of the universe is continuously at work approximating becoming to being. This then is the quality of cosmic time. Cosmic time is the movement of the soul, taken in its task of approximating matter to form.

Human time involves several categories for Plato. In the *Statesman*, Plato speaks of the cosmic crises which affected man, society, and the cosmos. The age of Cronos stands as the last age before man became disengaged from unified order. Thus the age of Cronos was the last period in which the material universe was unified through a first order approximation of being. Man and society are distinguished in the present from the universe as twice removed from being because of an incapacity to maintain a perfect approximation of form. Plato juxtaposes history, or the time of man, when change is proof of the absence of form on matter, to the age of the poets, where time is understood as cosmic movement. He does not wish to return to the age of Cronos, but rather to legitimize man within the *polis* through a re-
establishment of origin. This can only be done if one abolishes human
time or the type of knowledge which does not have as its object real
being. Myth for Plato contained an approximation of truth in that it
perpetuated a sense of unity through reference to a past moment of
origin. In this fashion myth, by artificially perpetuating a relative
sense of order, resulted in a new form of chaos. While myth contained
the essence of being or unity, it failed to maintain itself because of
its inherent contradictory nature. This contradiction is manifest by
the awareness of temporal differentiation to which Plato addressed
himself. Myth could not explain the reality of transformation because,
while it absorbed the present in the past, it did so in terms of a
relative standard. This relativity is a function of its material nature.
Thus the archetypal images which served as a standard by which time
could be abolished, failed to do so because of their material nature
which subjected them to time. The major criticism of the Homeric
standard is, for Plato, its inability to reveal truth as it is because
of the epic involvement in action and change. Thus while the Homeric
standard imparted an approximation of truth, it could not help but
manifest a chaotic situation because of its own subjection to time.

This fluctuation is one way of describing that
change and variety of situation which alone can
inform a story that is time conditioned. Plato's
expression for it in this context is rolling or
wandering. He uses these terms to describe an
endless alternation between the condition of
being and that of not being. That is, Agamemnon
is noble in one context and base in another;
therefore he is both noble and not noble, base
and not base. Achilles is now angry and now
remorseful; that is, he is and he is not angry;
he is and is not remorseful. For that matter,
Achilles is alive and then dead; he wanders
between is and is not. This is a way of
dramatising the fact that concrete narrative
deals with concrete objects and situations
which are all different, or else there would
be no narrative, rather than with categories, principles or formulas which persist unchanged.

The epic standard was utilized to evaluate the ethical character of the particular in the present. Its use of visual imagery was, for Plato, a signification of its differentiated nature. For Plato, the Good could only be, as was stated previously, that which was real. Epic imagery, while it portrayed a timeless sense of reality, was itself subject to contradictory standards. Only the incorporeal forms upheld the perfect standard of goodness. Because they were represented as non-material objects, they alone were not subject to transformation in time, and thus they alone signified the non-oppositional unity of being.

The poetic structure of the epic had served to unify the self with the heroic standard of the past. It was through this externalization of self that the self became identified with the actions and thus the value of the hero. The change from oral repetition to written representation served as a catalyst for a transformation in self-consciousness. Writing permitted the self to reflect upon the past in the present and thus aided in the breakdown of the mesmerizing effect of oral repetition. For Plato, the temporally differentiated self, while signifying a condition of separation of the I from an object, only increased the potential for chaos and disorder. Plato feared that with the possibility of reflection, man would turn upon the epic as object. Plato feared that in reflecting upon the past in this manner, man would subject his intellectual psyche to time. Through informing himself about the past, the self would consciously evaluate the past. The self would thus become an arbiter of transformation. The self would
separate good from evil, but in the process it would subject its intellect to the contradictory ethic found in time. This was Plato's persuasion because for him, all knowledge of material transformation must manifest a concealment of truth. The self's reflection on the past was as dangerous as its absorption in the past. Rather than seeing the one Good or the object itself, the self would see many instances of good. This type of evaluation, for Plato, could only lead to deception. The many instances of good were not only capable of transformation into their opposite, but more importantly, this transformation of the quality of the object could remain hidden to the self. Only once the many had been replaced by the one could there be an ethically perfect relationship between knowledge and being. Only once the self were informed of what was, could it know what was not. This separation of oppositional interaction was, for Plato, a conquest and explanation of time. If the self were permitted to reflect upon the past, then the self could never know or actualize its potential. Knowledge of matter could only manifest an increased entropic relationship to the future. Through an isolation of being, Plato felt that the self would correspondingly isolate non-being. If being were known, then it would be known eternally, and material existence, continually subject to transformation in time, would be eternally known as having no relationship to reality. Thus temporally infested matter could be controlled through an explanation and knowledge of eternal being. The self would not seek to know in time, and this is Plato's expressed purpose. For him, the new cannot be explained in terms of an evaluation of its relationship to the past. The past must be explained and understood in terms of eternal being. Once reflection on the past has been replaced by a knowledge of eternal truth, then all potential material transformation
would be consciously negated through reference to being. Thus not only would potential change be negated through Platonic consciousness, but more importantly for him, there would exist no desire to consciously know in time. Plato, through an isolation of unity from the particular, granted no significance to differentiation. The many were non-being, and as such, were isolated in time, and from his concept of reality.

While he cannot accept a notion of reality as truth in the material particular, he paradoxically establishes a hierarchy of the approximate degree of truth found in certain types of material knowledge (this was demonstrated in his symbolism of the Line). This paradox is of significance, not only for a discussion of time consciousness in Platonic thought, but also for a consideration of the topic in the philosophy of his successors.

In the Sophist, Plato attempts to clarify the issue by confronting those who assert that existence belongs exclusively to matter and those who hold that existence means only bodiless forms and maintain that all else is not real being but becoming (genesis). Both activity and inactivity are real and can be said to be, while reality is by its very nature neither rest nor movement.

The notion of an ethical imperative implies action on change, and this action was no more than the imposition of being on becoming. The creation of the universe was the manifestation of this activity. Human knowledge, for Plato, implied a similar attempt at approximation.

Plato argues that since it is the soul that knows, and real being is capable of being known, and to be known is to be acted upon, real being must in some sense be changeable. He also asserts that change, life, soul, and understanding must belong to reality, and since the real does not exclude life and intelligence and the soul in which they reside, it is necessary to conclude that that which changes and change itself belong to reality.
In a further concession to the reality of matter, Plato states:

Although the divine part has its central seat in the head, it is extended throughout the human frame in the marrow, for the bonds of life, so long as the soul is bound up with the body, were made fast in it as the roots of the mortal creature. It is sight which makes possible the observations of the divine celestial movement, and hearing makes possible the perception of musical sounds which give pleasure by the representation of the divine harmony in mortal movements.25

The apparent paradox between Plato's notion that the forms constitute reality, and his concession to the existence of a degree of reality in matter, is somewhat resolved in the Sophist, the Laws, and the later dialogues. The concession is however minimal and in no way essentially effects the split between matter and form, which rests central to his philosophy.

In the dialogues written after the Republic, Plato admits that although the forms are known through pure intellect, an approximation of their likeness can be known in matter. Thus not only can the philosopher or lawgiver transform matter to approximate form, but those of lesser intellect can know an approximation of unity or being, and thus the Good, through matter. This should not, however, imply that Plato granted the possibility of truth in material knowledge. Knowledge of matter is still, for him, doxa, and only those of superior intellect can know truth. Plato still maintains the absolute necessity of a separation of form and matter. What he does is state that the Forms are to some extent visible in matter and that matter can be adjusted so as to most closely approximate truth. The cosmos, which Plato claimed was the closest material approximation of the Forms because of its visibly rhythmic and regular nature, can serve as a model for the ordering
of society. Society can be structured as a second order type of reality, if its own form is likened to the cosmos. This is not a concession to his previous notion of doxa, nor to his negation of the reality of time. In claiming that matter can be known he is only claiming that what was impossible in the Republic, the existence of reality in society, can now be demonstrated and acted upon. With this alteration he must no longer claim that the many are to be disregarded. He can now claim that the many can be transformed unto an approximation of unity. The Platonic system thus attempted to integrate the differentiated consciousness with society, and society with the cosmos. His use of myth can be seen in this context as a mechanism for re-establishing an archetypal form on society, wherein matter becomes a mere reflection of eternal, incorporeal being. Change could now be evaluated by the self in terms of a standard which existed beyond the material universe, and yet could extend itself throughout material existence. In conceding that the one could exist amidst the many, Plato attempted to transform a consciousness of the past as having a significance for the present, unto a consciousness of time which he defined as regular movement rather than change. Thus human time became for Plato an approximation of the movement of the cosmos; a movement whose regularity ensured the imposition of eternal being on material transformation. Thus as man conceived of time as an approximation of the movement of the cosmos, Plato claimed that society would take on a "moving image of eternity". As the self gave up its consciousness of the interaction of past and present, the self came to know itself in time as an approximation of some static unity. In the process, not only did man give up his capacity for a consciousness of his material past, but also the potential for the development of a consciousness of the future and of history.
Over time Plato's particular notion and explanation of change came into question. Man's consciousness of the interaction of past and present enforced a conscious removal of the self from the archetypal unity. Plato was not conscious of the significance of the past for the present. Had he been conscious of the interaction of the past with the present, he might not have attempted to extend the Homeric structure through a negation of the reality of time. Consciousness of differentiation had manifest a breakdown in the legitimacy of the old value system, yet Plato was not aware of the reality of this consciousness. Had Plato recognized that consciousness is cumulative and that through reflection on the interaction of past and present one could act in terms of future, there might have emerged the foundation in Greek thought for a political history in the West, rather than merely the roots.

A complete investigation of the political philosophical consequences which Plato's denial of the reality of time had for Greek culture cannot be undertaken in this study. In summary, several concepts which emerged in Greek thought because of the lack of an historical framework of analysis should be examined. These concepts are of significance because of their relationship to the Greek understanding of human nature, and the political development of man. In juxtaposition to his notion that transformation of matter from past to present was not
real, Plato established incorporeal being as the essence of truth. The matter-form dichotomy had an impact on Plato's concept of political man. Rather than establishing a standard for men's actions in terms of an historical judgement of the past, he placed the standard beyond history. This emphasis on a non-historical model was of paramount importance to Plato's notion of the natural inequality of human nature, and his subsequent insistence on the need for laws as a means for institutionalizing this inequality. The notion of eternal truth, inherent to which is a notion of natural inequality, and the conviction that the potential of man is no more than his approximation to this standard, are derivative of Plato's denial of the reality of the interaction of the past and the present. In addition, had the standard not been placed beyond history, and had change from past to present been conceived of as an integral part of human reality, political philosophy might have been viewed as a mechanism for the development of human historical potential.

The political consequences of Plato's notion of time were extended through the Western tradition as a consequence of Aristotle's philosophy. Rather than establishing an historical standard for action and thought, Aristotle strengthened the Platonic rejection of the reality of historical development through a reformulation of the matter-form dichotomy. Aristotelian philosophy concerned itself essentially with the paradox of the one and the many in the Platonic system. The existence of incorporeal being and the possibility of that being existing within the material many were denied by Aristotle. Rather than postulating that there were real incorporeal objects which existed outside of time, Aristotle claimed that eternal essence could be found within time. Matter is, however, subjected to form within his system.
For Aristotle, an object gains its reality not through its inter-
relationship with the self historically, but rather through its
predicative identity. For Aristotle, either matter is or it is not
as determined a priori. The reality of an object is not determined
in terms of an examination of its development and transformation
through time, but rather in terms of its designated identity in the
present and a projection of its terminal state in the future which it
may possibly achieve. Aristotelian and Platonic thought are essentially
similar in that in each both being and non-being are not viewed as
interrelated elements of a process, but as exhibiting an exclusive and
separate identity. Negation did not signify the mutual dependency of
the that which is and the that which is not, a relationship which
necessitates a conception of existence in time. Negation for both
philosophers meant removal of non-being through reference to the
exclusively permanent.

The emergence of potential consciousness in the West may be
traced through the Roman concern with past to the development of
Christian eschatology. The trends of thought which followed the breakdown
of Greek consciousness did not however involve a politically historical
awareness. Christianity did evidence a concern for the past and a notion
of potential, but time had meaning in this context only in terms of a
belief in its immanent negation by an eternal non-material being.
Hegelian thought was perhaps the source of historical consciousness in
the West. Yet its pronouncement, as well as that of Marx, were perhaps
limited by the tradition to which they were addressed. The dialectical
analysis of potential, for example, was in part conditioned by the
identity logic of Aristotle, which both Hegel and Marx inherited. Thus
potential was here expressed through the future tense of the verb to be. The isolation of the future relationship in terms of some staticized identity reflects the Western tendency not to comprehend and reflect beyond some terminal state, except in terms of a projected eternal present. The existence of a tradition wherein the standard for action was conceived of as outside of time, and thus not in terms of an historical standard for action in the present and potential development in the future, was instrumental in the type of time consciousness which did develop in the West. A more detailed examination of the relationship of this development to the Greek notions of time, as well as the political consequence of the West's understanding of time, is beyond the scope of the present study. The comments on western time consciousness beyond the Platonic consideration are only presented as an introduction for future analysis. The content for an extension of this present study can be placed in some perspective once some essential contrasts to the Greek concern with time and history have been made. Through an investigation of the early Chinese notions of these concepts, the basis for an analysis of the impact of historical consciousness on political philosophy in the modern period, will be in evidence. Only through a cross-cultural analysis of the traditional notions of time, can the significance of the differences in time consciousness for potential political transformation in the West and China, be appreciated.
CHAPTER SIX

CHINA AND THE PAST

Euro-American ideas of history are strictly defined. Western historians are suspicious of encapsulations of oral tradition, particularly those concerned with periods of time that are - in the Western sense - prehistoric. A verbal heritage without definite links to archaeological proof rarely finds acceptance. The no-man's-land between what is hypothesis and what is proven is rigidly patrolled.28

But to the Chinese mind, for which a useful analogue is that of a revolving sphere, history exists in its original concept: inquiry into the past. Within this spherical mode of thinking - which not only revolves around the object of its inquiry but also is revolving around the axis of its own psyche - history is total. It is far more than chronology and event. It is the cumulative evidence of all that has been. Within this spherical mode of thinking, nothing has existence of itself, isolatedly, but it exists as part of and at the same time in relation to everything else.

The preoccupation of classical Chinese philosophy with historical insight, as a means for understanding and transforming society, developed through an intensive concern with the significance of the ancient past. This method of philosophical inquiry differed substantially from that of classical Greece. There is a premium in Plato's philosophy on the notion of origin and the use of a non-historical standard for the evaluation of reality. The notion of origin had been central to the themes of the pre-Socratic tradition. Authorship,
and thus original purpose and action, had served as a unifying source
of value through which novelty could be assimilated or denied reality.
The authority which was bestowed on origin served to effectively dismiss
the reality of a previous value structure as well as potential novel
forms of explanation in the future. Thus the emergence of a new
philosophical structure was usually accompanied by a break with the
past. This is not to say that a sense of continuity with the past
was totally rejected with the emergence of every new philosophical
development in the Greek framework. The notion of origin did however
rest on the supposition that the creation of a new foundation for
the understanding of reality was based on an absolute and total knowledge
of truth. Plato acknowledged that the thoughts of his predecessors
exhibited degrees of truth. He did not, however, claim that it was
through an understanding of this partial truth that he developed a
greater insight into reality. In this sense there is no sense of
the cumulative nature of knowledge in his philosophy. The past was
not used as a standard for an evaluation of the present, and the
potential for change which Plato envisaged was not based on historical
insight. In a more general sense, Plato journeyed into the past to
more concretely portray his conception of the relationship between
absolute truth and temporal knowledge. His imagery of the more
distant past was used to create a sense of the rhythmic order which
originally existed in temporal existence. His use of mythical imagery
served several purposes. Primarily the device was used to discredit
the thought of his predecessors by contrasting original order with the
subsequent chaotic nature of existence. Secondly, the device served
to strengthen the claims of his own philosophy. The distant past was
portrayed by Plato in terms of mythical imagery because he wishes to show that the epistemological basis for true order in human society had never existed in reality. Had a real knowledge of truth existed in the past, then the chaotic present would not have emerged in time. The original order of the mythical past was only an illusion because the basis of that order (the Forms) was sensed but not known. Plato journeyed into the distant past to portray the real basis of order for existence. He did not find the basis within history, nor at the beginning of history. The basis of order was found beyond history. Because his philosophy created a basis for instituting permanent order in existence, he could claim that his philosophy both terminated the chaotic past and originated a source of permanent value.

Plato's use of a non-historical, absolute standard of truth, and his notion of establishing a new beginning which could negate the forces of time, are clearly related to his denial of the reality of the past. In addition, his hostility towards the relevance of the past helped to emphasize the individual and exclusive nature of his ideas. This is in contrast to Chinese philosophy where the collective nature of many works was a result of developing new ideas from recognized previous sources.

The Five ching are: I ching, Book of Changes; Shu ching, Book of History; Shih ching, Book of Odes; Li chi, Book of Rites; and Ch'un ch'iu, Spring and Autumn Annals, a chronicle of events from 722 to 481 B.C.. The authorship, or compilation rather, of all these works is loosely attributed to Confucius. But much of the Li chi is from later hands. Of the I, the Shu, and the Shih, it is only in the I ching that we find additions attributed to Confucius himself, in the shape of appendixes. The Ch'un ch'iu is the only one of the Five ching that can be described as his own "making".29
The point is not that one should dismiss individual differences within a given school of thought. To ignore the differences between K'ung Chi and Mencius, both exponents of Confucian philosophy, would be to ignore the essential patterns which emerged in Chinese history.* The point here is rather one of emphasis. The fact that a given author did not set out to create an individual and thus exclusive position is important. In many cases an author revived an ancient work or added an extension to some existent body of material. The extent to which extension supported other material in the work, or radically altered a previous position, did not violate the principle of maintaining links with the reality of the past. Because of this commitment to the cumulative nature of knowledge, it is possible to speak in general terms of a particular school of thought such as Confucianism. The differences within this school may be examined at a number of historical points. At any given point of radical departure, however, certain fundamental links, in terms of both content and form, with the past, are maintained. The notion of continuity is significant in contrast to the way in which Plato dealt with the past. This difference is important because the notion of continuity was based on

* Differences within Confucian thought are ignored in this thesis because specific nuances in thought and their historical impact are not under examination. The notion of Confucianism is used in the general body of this work to denote the essential principles of that school.
an acceptance of the meaning of the past for the present and future. No major school of thought arose in China to challenge the validity and authority of historical value. Opposing schools, such as Taoism, which did not accept the validity of the Confucian ethic, did not attempt to deny the reality of Confucianism in terms of some non-historical standard of truth. The Taoists, for example, established pre-Confucian historical models as exemplary for present existence.

Because this thesis does not deal in a specific fashion with Chinese classical philosophy, it is appropriate to provide some background for the concepts that will be discussed. The Shu ching, or Book of History, spanned a period of seventeen hundred years, beginning around 2300 B.C. It is appropriate to examine several concepts in this work, especially because the development of these concepts formulated the basis for the Confucian understanding of reality.

The Shu ching, Book of History is considered the oldest complete Chinese classic, although parts of both the I ching, Book of Changes and the Shih ching, Book of Odes have older sections. The Shu is basic to the subsequent literature of China. China's continuous history and the natural bent of her citizens for historical writings combine to endow the Chinese people with a collective consciousness. Thus, Chinese writers again and again refer to the personages and events that move across the pages of the Shu.

The Canon of Yao, or the first document of Shu ching, deals with the attempts of the sovereign Yao to find an appropriate successor. Initially, the sovereign orders that the movements of the heavens be charted so that the actions of society be in accordance with the seasons. Once this is done the sovereign asks for a man who can deal adequately with a flood that is threatening the land. Each suggestion
is dismissed because of some flaw in that person's character.

The sovereign said, "Who will search out for me a man according to the times, whom I can raise and employ?" Fang Ch'i said, "Your heir-son Chu is highly intelligent." The sovereign said, "Alas he is insincere and quarrelsome. Could he do?" The sovereign said, "Who will search out for me a man equal to the exigency of my affairs?" Huan Tou said, "Oh the merits of the minister of works have just been displayed on a wide scale." The sovereign said, "Alas when all is quiet, he talks; but when employed, his actions turn out differently. He is respectful only in appearance. See the floods assail the heavens." The sovereign said, "Oh Chief of the Four Mountains, the waters of the inundation are destructive in their overflow. ...Is there a capable man to whom I can assign the correction of this calamity?" All in the court said, "Ah is there not Kun?" The sovereign said, "Alas how perverse he is. He is disobedient to orders and tries to injure his peers." The Chief of the Four Mountains said, "Well, but try him - to see if he can accomplish the work." Accordingly, Kun was employed. The sovereign said to him, "Go; be reverent." For nine years Kun labored. But the work was not accomplished.31

The sovereign is about to yield his throne to one of these less than deserving persons when he hears of a peasant who has led an exemplary life.

The Chief said, "He is the son of a blind man. His father was obstinately unprincipled; his stepmother was insincere; his half brother Hsiang was arrogant. Shun has been able, however, by his filial piety to live in harmony with them and to lead them gradually to self-government, so that they no longer proceed to great wickedness." The sovereign said, "I will try him."32
The initial part of the story, wherein a calendar of celestial movement is drawn up, is significant. Because of the agricultural basis of society, natural phenomena and changes within these phenomena were viewed as highly important for survival. This dependence was in part responsible for the Chinese view that phenomena could not be viewed in isolated terms, and must be seen as relational. Thus the particular position of celestial bodies at any point in time was seen as relational to a particular existential situation within human society. The sovereign, therefore, has had the heavens charted in order to have a deeper understanding of the proper relationships within society. The persistence of the flood indicates that an imbalance exists within society. Potentially destructive natural forces were seen by the Chinese as warnings to the ruler about some inadequacy in society. This relationship between the natural, and human society, is in sharp contrast to Plato's notion that a good society is one which approximates the rhythmic and eternal movements of the universe. In Plato's view there is a separation between celestial and social bodies. His notion of the necessity for human approximation of non-human movement did not permit him to place an emphasis on continuous social action in relation to a changing environment. The persistence of the flood in the story was an indication of the faulty character of those in the sovereign's employ, as well as of those who were his potential successors. The ultimate choice of a peasant, as successor, is made by the sovereign, because of the exemplary nature of his character and actions. It should be noted that obedience to command was never accepted as sufficient by the Chinese. The sovereign had ordered Kun to be reverent, but in nine years of toil Kun had not been capable of
terminating the disaster. The persistence of the flood against all enterprise was indicative of the necessity for men to possess an inner moral character. External action, which was not accompanied by a moral capacity, was never considered sufficient. Thus it was the peasant, Shun of Yu, who was to be considered as a potential successor because his actions had revealed a commitment to a higher moral principle. Shun, his peasant background notwithstanding, was the one person who could act as a model of behaviour for others in the society. In essence a ruler fulfilled his obligation as a ruler through exemplary action and thought. It was through emulation of this model that others were able to transform themselves.

These ideas were studied by the man Confucius and formed the basis for his own philosophy. In the later writings and additions of Confucius, the sage rulers of the past such as Yao became the models of proper conduct through which all men could elevate their moral being. The two points which Confucius emphasized in his philosophy were the notions of emulation and natural equality. Natural equality implied that all men at birth possessed an evaluating mind. The notion of an evaluating mind meant that all men possessed a natural potential for becoming sage-like. The notion of sageliness was that of a man who, like the sovereign Yao, understood the proper relationship between things, and whose actions conformed with the various obligations to others deemed proper by the Confucian ethical standard. All men did not fulfill their potential because the social environment in which they lived did not permit for a development of this potential. In the Analects Confucius stated:
By nature men are nearly alike; by practice, they become very different. Whether society was to move towards fulfilling its potential, was dependent on the establishment of a proper social environment in the present. A proper environment meant the maintaining of proper social relationships. It was necessary, Confucius believed, that those whose actions most closely approximated the actions of the ancient sage rulers, maintain the highest social privilege. Through proper example all men would be given the opportunity to understand the improper nature of their past action and transform themselves. Because of the assumption that all men possessed an equal capacity to transform themselves under proper conditions, the obligation of the man of wisdom to transmit his knowledge was given highest priority. If men did not transform themselves then the greatest responsibility for this failure rested with the sage. In this sense the Confucian standard for the evaluation of change was truly political. In the Platonic framework, the standard for human transformation remained absolute and independent of man. In the Confucian framework the standard for evaluating the direction of change rested within the context of the mutual dependency of ruler and ruled.
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE EARLY CHINESE CONCEPT OF TIME: THE CONFUCIAN CONCEPT

All the time that has passed from antiquity until now is called chou: all the space in every direction, above and below, is called yu. The Tao (the Order of Nature) is within them, yet no man can say where it dwells.

This statement from the Huai Nan Tzu text (120 B.C.) is illustrative of the early Chinese perception of time. Tao, or the principle of order is contained within the temporal passage from past to present, and is not, in comparison with the Greek notion of standard, positioned at some moment of past origin, or external to the temporal dimension itself. Concern with the historic past as a means of comprehending the present and anticipating the future is, almost without exception, inherent to the Chinese Classical Period.

The Chinese linguistic structure is not committed to the type of ontological notion as is evidenced in the western pattern of conception. Chang Tung-sun in his article, A Chinese Philosopher's Theory of Knowledge, makes the distinction between Aristotelian identity logic and the correlational logic of China. It has been demonstrated in this study that western logic, dependent on the verb to be, imposes a static dimension on conceptualization. In addition it emphasizes, through the subject-predicate structure, the separate and non-dependent nature of an object to its opposite in time. By contrast, Chinese correlational logic is not founded upon a sense of being, and there exists no comparable notion to the verb to be in the language. Chang's notion of a correlational
logic is derivative of the Chinese emphasis on becoming rather than on being, as well as on an insistence on the relational nature of opposites within any totality of things.

Within this framework it is essential to consider the validity of the concept 'identity'. If we accept t'ung as the Chinese equivalent it is essential to note its significance as identity, similarity, agreement. In English 'identity' means sameness or precise duplication, while t'ung may characterize components with the quality of sameness as well as opposition.35

Within early Confucian thought there is in evidence both a consciousness of the past as well as of the future. Correlational logic is at the foundation of the philosophy and thus bears an important influence on the Confucian consideration of time. The past in Confucian thought serves as a basis for action in the present. The past here refers to the historically perceived existence of ancient sage rulers whose actions became exemplary for the present. This notion of model emulation is not, however, correspondent to patterns of archetypal replication or identity. Thus the model of the sage did not serve as a personification of being or essence which could artificially and mechanically be imposed in the present. Because conceptualization of change did not occur in terms of the static, to be, the present could only be viewed in terms of transformation through a process from the past. The notion of understanding in Confucian terms could not be considered as a knowledge of the 'that which is' which could eternally negate the 'that which is not'. For Confucius, both the positive and negative dimensions of phenomena had to be viewed in terms of their continuous, historical interaction. For Confucius knowledge of the past allowed one to understand the specific nature of the present and this understanding of the present meant knowing
how to act and what to do. Knowledge of the sage kings involved an understanding of the proper relationships between opposites so that one might apply this understanding to the complex and unfamiliar present. It was only through such temporal knowledge that one could act in terms of a 'return' to the higher level of civilization, as represented by the sage kings of the past, in the future. It must be stressed that this process is not equivalent to the Greek notion of time negation through reference to the heroic standard, nor to the Platonic knowledge of Form. Nor should the distinction be considered as merely a fine point. The Confucian consciousness of potential can only be understood in terms of the Confucian consciousness of past. Platonic concern with past did not evidence an awareness of the cumulative nature of consciousness. Whereas Plato viewed the past from the perspective of an eternal standard for purposes of temporal negation, it is clearly the Confucian view that one can only have knowledge of the present through reflection on the past. The Greek dichotomization of essence and matter permitted the disassociation of knowledge from material interaction. Thus it was possible for the Greeks to deny the reality of reflection upon material transformation through time. In Confucian thought reality is only comprehended as a consequence of a knowledge of the oppositional character of matter. In order to evaluate the reality of a situation in the present, it is necessary to comprehend the possible causes of that situation. Cause was not understood deterministically, in the sense of a teleological purpose, but rather in terms of the particular relationship of factors through which a present situation has developed in time. Emphasis, in Confucian thought, was on 'return', wherein movement towards the past was considered in terms of a progression. There existed no notion of identity wherein particularity
was negated through reference to some archetypal unity, but rather a consciousness of potential transformation of things in the future. If the past was, in Confucian thought, considered as a unity, then the present was considered as a development of the many from the one. The desire to return to the past could not be achieved by simply imposing unity through a negation of the particular many. What was necessary if one wished to move towards the higher level of the past in the future, was to study the relationships in the present in terms of the familiarity of the past. Knowledge of the past was entertained for the expressed purpose of understanding the unfamiliar present by means of comparison. Through reflection on the past, the Confucian scholar could understand the proper relationship between heaven and earth and within social hierarchies, and thus institute proper social conduct in the present. The institution of proper conduct in the present as a consequence of understanding the interaction of past and present, guaranteed that the direction of change in the future would be towards the morally superior society of the ancient sage kings. The lack of an identity logic in China and the emphasis on the existence of oppositional relationships within phenomena, bear an important relationship to the nature of future and time consciousness in that culture. Because the Chinese concept of future was dependent on the notion of becoming rather than on being, future could not be perceived of in terms of some terminal state. The absence of the possibility of a perfected terminal point and the consequent insistence on the continuous nature of change, established the necessity for continuous appraisal and evaluation of the present in terms of the past. In addition, because of the emphasis on the relationship of opposites in a totality, it was not possible to isolate an exclusive characteristic of a thing. One had to be continuously
aware of the oppositional tendencies involved in any social relationship. In order to move towards the morally superior society of the past it was necessary to be continuously cognizant of the possibility of deviant non-conformance to the standards of excellence.

The Confucian notions of human nature and the political potential of man are derivative of the Confucian consciousness of time. The Confucian insistence on the reality of history evidenced a philosophy of the political, significantly different from that of Plato. Prior to an examination of this theme it is necessary to appreciate the fact that the historical dimension was not limited to Confucian philosophy. Early Taoist philosophy, which developed as the major opponent of the Confucian ethic, exhibits a concern with the reality of history and time.
Lao Tzu's actual words are: 'Reversing is the movement of the Tao. To go further and further means to revert again.' The idea is that if anything develops certain extreme qualities, those qualities invariably revert to become their opposities. This constitutes a law of nature. Therefore: 'It is upon calamity that blessing leans, upon blessing that calamity rests. Those with little will acquire, those with much will be led astray. A hurricane never lasts the whole morning, nor a rainstorm the whole day. The most yielding things in the whole world master the most unyielding. Diminish a thing and it will increase. Increase a thing and it will diminish.' All these paradoxical theories are no longer paradoxical, if one understands the fundamental law of nature.

Taoist philosophy, in the first instance, developed as a conscious attack on the Confucian notion of political transformation. The standard upon which the philosophy is based is found within history, and thus the opposition to Confucian thought is not made through a denial of the reality of time.

Taoist philosophy exhibits, as did Confucian thought, a concern for perceiving phenomena in terms of their opposites. In the Tao Te Ching, the notion that opposites are continuously in a process of reversing, is introduced. As a reaction to the Confucian doctrine, the Taoists claimed that in striving to evaluate a proper relationship within a totality, one in fact achieved the opposite to that desired. The Taoist concern with causality was undertaken in terms of a temporal and historical
theory. The notion that opposites interact in terms of a process of
reversal was put forward not only as a renunciation of the Confucian
doctrine, but in conjunction with a theory of history: The theory of
history established by the Taoists maintained that in order to deal
with the complexities of the present, it was necessary to comprehend
the present in terms of some totality of the past. The ultimate goal
of such understanding would involve a movement in the future towards
a past, existing prior to the Confucian age of the sage kings. This
pre-Confucian past represented, for the Taoists, a higher level of
cultural attainment than that level put forward for emulation by the
Confucianists.

It is significant that in describing the relationship of the
Tao, or principle of change, to existence, the Taoists spoke not only in
terms of change from the one in the past to the many in the present, but
also in terms of the causal relationship between Being and Non-Being. The
notion that each is the cause of the other, and thus that each would
return to the other, established the direction of future as movement
towards the past in accordance with the principle of change.

From the past to the present, its (Tao) name has
not ceased to be, and has seen the beginning
(of all things) ... From Tao there comes one.
From one there comes two. From two there comes
three. From three there comes all things.37

The Tao, which the Taoists conceived of in terms of Non-Being,
and from which was derived Being and thus all things, is not conceptually
equivalent to the Platonic Form. The notions of Non-Being and of Being
cannot be understood as separate from matter, and can only be understood
in conjunction with the Taoist notion that there never was a period in
which things or being did not exist. The Taoist reference to the becoming of things from Being, which in turn was derivative of Non-Being, served a two-fold symbolic purpose. On the one hand the reference focused attention on the past. It pointed to the necessity of dealing with the many conflicting elements of the Confucian doctrine in terms of some past unity. On the other hand it stressed not only the oppositional nature of that unity, but also the principle of change within opposition. The principle is essentially represented by the reconciliation of Being and Non-Being. In focusing on this reconciliation in the past, the Taoists symbolically exhibited the principle of transformation in the past. Reflection on the past was, however, portrayed in Taoist philosophy in terms of a desire for potential transformation in the future. Thus through a comprehension of the relationship between Being and Non-Being in the past, man became conscious of the future as a return inasmuch as Being necessitated reconciliation with Non-Being.

For the Taoists the many came from one (Being), but the Confucian evaluation of the many and their subsequent insistence on social hierarchies exhibited an ignorance of Non-Being as the cause of Being. The Confucian notion that there were unequal relationships between things and their insistence that society should reflect this inequality were denied by the Taoists. It is in this context that the Taoists claimed that in practicing the Confucian doctrine one would achieve the opposite to that desired. In order to achieve the preferred state one was obliged to practice wu-wei, or non-action. Wu-wei did not involve a negation of interaction in the world and consequently a reliance on the determining and non-dependent force of the Tao. The concept of wu-wei was primarily understood as interaction on a human level which would not permit the social consequence of Confucian philosophy. In this
context the Taoists upheld the necessity of reflection on the past as a means for understanding the unrealistic character of the present and for returning to the pre-Confucian past in the future. The Tao was not considered as a primordial cause through knowledge of which one returned to origin by transcending the many. The Tao was considered as contained within being itself and was not conceived of as possessing an independent nature. Through a symbolic return to the proper relationship between causes in the past one understood the necessity of doing nothing in the present. Thus an understanding of pre-Confucian history permitted action, (non-action in opposition to Confucian action), through which man could return in the future to the past. Taoist thought, placed as it is in juxtaposition to the Confucian ethic, shows not only its concern with the historic past, but also its concern with the past in terms of the future. The deterministic aspect of the philosophy is limited to its notion of the principle of change. Because the notions of Being and Non-Being were conceived of as within existence and within history, return to the desired past was not an automatic process. The action one took (non-action in opposition to the Confucian notion of action) involved an understanding of the present in terms of the past. Only as a consequence of this knowledge and only as a consequence of a particular form of interaction, would return to the past in the future be accomplished. Kuan Feng in an article called: "Critique of the Philosophy of Chuang Tzu", has claimed that Taoist thought in general, and particularly that of Chuang Tzu, is both relativistic and idealistic. He claims that Chuang Tzu divorced the absolute or Tao from matter and that consequently the Tao is independent from phenomena. He further claims that Chuang Tzu considered the interaction of opposites as relative and conditional, and unity as absolute and unconditional.
Given this emphasis the role of man in determining social outcomes is negligible and \textit{wu-wei} becomes a recognition of the relative and inconsequential nature of oppositional interaction. All change becomes dependent on primordial cause or \textit{Tao}. This type of argument is erroneous mainly because it would deny the very basis for Taoist opposition to the Confucian ethic. Kuan Feng attempts to address himself to this problem by claiming that Chuang Tzu believed his own subjective being to be one with the absolute spirit. The attempt to formulate an analogy between Taoist and Hegelian philosophy not only denies the Taoist emphasis on the mutual dependency of the one and the many, but also the primacy given to the reality of material change through time.
CHAPTER NINE
THE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE EARLY CHINESE CONCEPT OF TIME

The Chinese consciousness of progress in history distinguished them fundamentally from the Greeks. For the Chinese the past was always necessary for a consideration of the present. This concern with past was intrinsically related not only to an awareness of the continual process of change inherent to matter, but also to an awareness of the increasing complexity of change through time. Consciousness of the past became, for the most part, a means for explaining transformation in the present, and for projecting potential development in the future.

For over one thousand years we find the recurrence of the same fundamental pattern; commencing with one and developing toward the many; from the simple to the complex with things being in motion following a circular pattern. The motor of history propelled by the interaction of primary and secondary components within an oppositional framework.39

The totality of political philosophical concepts which emerged in Classical China in relationship to the Chinese concern with history cannot be dealt with in this study. This would involve not only an investigation of the several schools of thought, but also an examination of their impact on Chinese historical development. Certain concepts can be presented in brief as a means of portraying some essential differences between Greek and Chinese political philosophy.

In both the Confucian and Taoist frameworks, human political
potential was considered in terms of an appraisal of human interaction in the past. The differences between the two schools of thought were essentially opposing beliefs in the nature of material causality. What is common to both schools is an insistence on the reality of matter and a consequent emphasis on understanding the present in terms of its interaction with the past.

In Confucian thought, transformation of the community was only possible as a consequence of some link with the past. This link with the past was provided by the existence of certain men, whose comprehensive knowledge of the past entitled them to be recognized as counterparts of the ancient sage rulers. The existence of a sage in the community meant that all members of the community were given the potential of becoming sagely equivalents through emulation of the actions and beliefs of the person recognized as a sage. For in conjunction with the notion that knowledge of the past enabled movement towards the past in the future, there was the corresponding notion that all men equally had the potential for developing this knowledge. The Confucians emphasized the dependency of the community's capacity for change on the social development of every member of the community. It is in this context that the notion of a mutual obligation sage and community, in terms of the sage's obligation to communicate his knowledge, and the community's obligation to emulate him, can be understood. Knowledge of the past became a means of determining one's position in society. The degree to which one possessed this knowledge became a significance of one's virtue. Thus the position of a person in society was an indication of that person's virtue. As the virtue of the sage was dependent on his capacity to communicate his knowledge to the community, and the virtue
and social position of a person was dependent on his capacity to respond, emphasis was placed on the continuous transformation in belief and virtue of the community.

The major result of the idea of human equality, for Confucians, was that education was regarded as the key to the solution of urgent political and social problems. If men were without innate defects (all possessing the evaluating mind), whether or not they become good or evil depends on the environment in which they live, especially on the educational situation. And the cure for the appearance of human evil is improvement of educational procedures so that the evaluating mind can be developed and allowed to function fully. By adhering to the doctrine of the equally possessed evaluating mind, the early Confucians had the strongest possible argument to support their contention that merit rather than hereditary status should be the criterion for awarding political and economic privilege.

The emphasis which the Confucians placed on action, in terms of the standard of the past, as a means for social transformation, can be seen through their concern for a continuous appraisal of social positions. Thus it was necessary for a man whose actions did not comply with the standards of his position to readjust to those standards through social action.
CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

The utilization of an historical standard for political action, and the consequent lack of a dichotomization between form and matter, in China, were instrumental in the development of the Chinese concern with political interaction and transformation. The establishment of a non-historical and non-political standard for action by Plato, was equally instrumental in the development of the Greek concern with human approximation of abstract principles. Because the model for human behaviour was conceived of by Plato in non-human terms, the method for adjustment and social organization involved a primary use of law. In the course of western thought, law, in the form of natural law theories, became the prime standard for political action and political judgment. In China, by contrast, the development at an early point in time of a concern with political history as a means for understanding change, established a tradition wherein the political and ethical potential of man was given prime consideration. The actualization of this potential was seen as possible only if emphasis was placed on a continuous evaluation of the present society in terms of the standards of the past. In the modern period, Marxist thought took root in China in a substantially different fashion than it did in the West. The existence of a tradition wherein historical explanation had developed as a major theory of political change made it more logical for the Chinese to extend Marxist thought beyond its formulation in the West,
One of the major aspects of this extension has been the notion of Mao Tse-tung that one can project potential social developments in a communist society. This notion is consequent of his commitment to the existence of contradiction within the development of all things.

This study is not primarily concerned with the development and nature of time and historical consciousness in contemporary Western and Chinese cultures. The study serves, in pointing to some essential differences in the past, to provide a framework for this type of analysis. The notion of time consciousness is central to any discussion of the modern period because of the relationship of this consciousness, not only to the basic social structures in the present, but also to the potential transformation of those structures in the future. In order to comprehend any particular society's potential for change, as well as offer judgment as to its capacity for change, it is necessary to understand the nature of its past. In looking at a society's past consciousness of history and change or a lack of such, one can more rationally appraise the existing alternatives for a society's conceptualization of modernity.

History and the universal dimension of time are equivalent. Both refer to the cumulative process of consciousness through which universal space is given particularly in existence. Space is potential being because of its particular and thus limited form in existence.

The potential for a particular consciousness of time and history arising within any culture is universal. This is so because of the universality of the biological need and the fact that historically all cultures have evidenced a scarcity or absence of biological need.
As a consequence of the cumulative nature of consciousness, wherein quantity passes into quality, and because of scarcity, a consciousness of the differentiation between the self's relationship to nature in the present and the past develops in all cultures. Thus a potential consciousness of change from past to present develops in all cultures. Through the cumulative nature of consciousness and as a consequence of particular material interaction, this temporal separation can be extended to include a consciousness of future. As a consequence of this temporal separation, a particular consciousness of the universal process and thus of history can develop within any culture. Such consciousness can manifest an historical explanation of change wherein the present and future are understood in terms of a standard established through an analysis of the meaning and significance of events in the past. Awareness of change from past to present, and from present to future, need not yield a consciousness of time wherein historical or politically historical explanation is a dominant feature of society.

In the case of both early Taoism and Confucianism the principle of unity was never conceptualized as divorced from particular transformation. Unity and multitude were conceptualized only in terms of their mutual dependency. As a consequence of this dependency it was not possible to conceive of two separate levels of time. Action was the sole vehicle for transforming the inferior into the superior. One could not, through a mechanic of the mind, dismiss matter from reality. Historical time became the only means of understanding and explaining reality. In addition, because man and his actions were the only standards for political evaluation, it was not possible to claim that history would terminate through an ultimate approximation of some metaphysical ideal. History could approach perfectibility, but perfectibility always remained
as a process of transformation within the community. The Chinese consciousness of time could never be separated from the Chinese consciousness of political history as a fundamental reality of human existence.

The way in which time was understood in the traditional context has significance for the development of temporal and philosophical conceptualization. Within this context the differences between the early Greek and Chinese concepts of time emerge as politically significant. In the West, although a consciousness of history did develop, the previous denial of the reality of time by Plato, and the subsequent emergence of Aristotelian identity logic, had an impact on the nature of that consciousness. Plato's notion that a knowledge of material change in time was doxa, and his notion that a knowledge of the atemporal Forms was truth, were not essentially denied by Aristotle. Aristotle's positioning of truth within time was not consequent of a politically historical understanding of reality. Aristotle's dichotomization of form and matter and his teleological perspective had a significant influence on later historical interpretations of reality in the West. In political terms, the two major philosophical tendencies which developed in the West, in relation to the particular form of historical explanation, were a tendency to dichotomize form and matter, and a tendency to give future a terminal character. In summary, the early western denial of the reality of temporal change and thus the early emergence of metaphysical, ahistorical standards of truth, were influential on the later emergence of historical forms of explanation of political reality which emphasized its necessary and possible termination. In China, the early development of an historical explanation
for change, and an insistence on the temporal and correlational reality of matter, were instrumental in the development of the Chinese conceptualization of political potential. The changes which have emerged in modern Chinese historical and political thought could emerge in the present society because of a tradition wherein the reality of political history and thus the reality of continuous change through time were essentially never in question.

Clearly the circular dialectical mode of classical Chinese thought did not provide in itself the foundation for an explanation of reality in twentieth century China. The form which this dialectic took, however, in positing the continuous nature of oppositional interaction, helped create a framework for an understanding and extension of the Marxist dialectic in China. Mao Tse-tung has stated in On Contradiction, as well as in subsequent writings, that there is an absolute necessity to regard contradiction as a fundamental notion in all historical periods.

Each of two aspects of a contradiction, in the process of development of things, regards its opposite aspect as the condition for its existence. ... The contradictory aspects in every process exclude each other and are opposed to each other. Such contradictory aspects are contained without exception in the processes of all things.41

In positing a relationship between the dialectical process and socialist society, Mao provided a means for understanding the relationships between productive forces and the relations of production within a socialist society. By emphasizing the existence of contradictions within a socialist framework, Mao simultaneously placed an emphasis on the breakdown of synthesis, rather than on ultimate resolution. The existence in China of an historical attitude, which perceived of the
continuous development of matter, provided a point of departure for
the further development of political historical consciousness in
China.
FOOTNOTES

2 Ibid., p. 85.
3 Ibid., p. 3.


6 Ibid., p. 24.
7 Ibid., p. 24.
8 Ibid., p. 24.
9 Gunnell, p. 121.
10 Roche, p. 126.
11 Gunnell, p. 121.
12 Roche, p. 159.


14 Ibid., Republic 478.
15 Ibid., Republic 505.
16 Ibid., Republic 476-8.


18 Ibid., p. 246.
19 Gunnell, p. 125.
20 Ibid., p. 214.
21 Ibid., p. 209.
22 Eric Havelock, Preface To Plato (Massachusetts: Belknap

23 Gunnell, p. 182.
24 Ibid., p. 183.
25 Ibid., p. 183.
26 Ibid., p. 209.
29 Ibid., p. 249.
30 Ibid., p. x.
31 Ibid., p. 5.
32 Ibid., p. 6.
33 D.J. Munro, The Concept of Man in Early China, p. 13.
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