Lecture Eight The Frankfurt School and the critique of Enlightenment

One, About the book *Dialectic of Enlightenment ---- Philosophical Fragments*

1, the historical background for the writing of the book:

Near the end of the National Socialist Terror

The tendency toward the administered society

Written during the years from 1939-1944

First publicly published in the year of 1947 in Holland

Republished in the 60s of the last century

2, direct theoretical resources for the book

Studies in State Capitalism

Psycho-analysis

3, It represents a new stage of the development of critical theory

A, The former understanding of critical theory (Horkheimer: *Traditional and Critical Theory, 1937*):

The unity of theory and praxis

Social philosophy (the inter-disciplinary studies in social reality, the integration of philosophy and empirical studies)

B, the New changes (Horkheimer and Adorno: *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 1944)

The connections with the traditional theory have been broken

The connections with political actions have been broken

The criticism of enlightenment: theoretically more radical, practically more conservative

4, It is the result of their former researches:

Studies in Authorities

Analysis of Nazism

Critique of Mass Culture

Two, About the Critique of Enlightenment

1, the necessity of the criticism of enlightenment

A, the original problem concerned with in the book:

“to explain why humanity, instead of entering a truly human state, is sinking a new kind of barbarism”

fascism on the international level

the tendency toward the administered society

after the wars, the renewed growth of totalitarianism in the third world

the terror of wars

B, the new problem dealt with in the book:

The self-destruction of enlightenment

C, the reason for the necessity of the reflections on the self-destruction of enlightenment

Thought has been turned into commodity (instrumentalization of science)

Those tendencies which were in opposition to the official sciences were caught up in the same process (the truths of them have evaporated)

The function of censorship of the whole social machine (social mechanism of censorship)

2, different dimensions of their criticism of enlightenment

A, the concept of enlightenment (to prepare a positive conception of enlightenment)

The cause of enlightenment’s relapse into mythology: fear of truth (fear of departing from facts, fear of social deviation)

The enslavement of people to nature:

the technological apparatus and the group who are controlling of them---- the nullification of the individuals in face of the economic powers ---- culture itself becomes a commodity ---- the danger of fascism on the international level

B, the criticism of culture industry (the enlightenment regresses into ideology)

Enlightenment: embodied as the calculation of effects and the technology of production and dissemination;

The commodity character of culture;

Culture as the ideology (the idolization of the existing order and the power)

The danger of fascism

C, The criticism of “Anti-Semitism”(Enlightenment reverted into Barbarism)

The philosophical pre-history of “anti-Semitism”: The irrationalism of the dominant reason

D, the standpoint of their criticism: Dialectical anthropology