Lecture Four Karl Korsch and “the End of Philosophy”

**(Western Marxism,** Spring, 2012 )

**One, Karl Korsch and *Marxism and Philosophy* (1923, 1930)**

**Two, the Problem of Marxism and Philosophy**

1, the dialectical relationship between German Idealism and the French Revolution (Hegel’s own thoughts about this)

2, the workers’ movement as the inheritor of German Idealism

Four moments within only one historical process

The “autonomous” nature of the workers’ movement and that of the Marxism (the question of “the end of philosophy”)

**Three, the Crisis of Marxism**

**1, About the History of Marxism**

A, 1843-1848: the critique of the philosophical consciousness

Not of the standpoint of “pure philosophy” (three steps of its criticism)

The philosophical nature of the early theory (the perspective of totality, the dialectics of theory and praxis)

B, 1848-the end of the 19th century

Marx and Engles: from the criticism of philosophical consciousness to that of the political-economic consciousness

The revisionist Marxism:

The “orthodoxy” Marxism:

Marxism as the “ideology”

C, 1900-now:

The crisis of Marxism

**2, About the essence of “the Crisis of Marxism”:**

The dominance of the bourgeois ideology (the dominance of positivism)

The dictatorship of ideology (not to admit ideology as a spiritual reality)

**Four, the Dialectic of Theory of Praxis and “the End of Philosophy”**

1, to revive dialectic:

The mistake of “the simple materialism”:

P131**“He drags the whole debate between materialism and idealism back to a historical stage which German Idealism from Kant to Hegel had already surpassed.”**

Hegel’s own criticism of the so-called opposition between materialism and idealism:

P132 “**The one kind of Enlightenment calls absolute Being that predicate-less Absolute, which exists in thought beyond the actual consciousness from which this enlightenment started; the other calls it matter. If they were distinguished as nature and spirit or God, the unconscious inner working and weaving would have nothing of the wealth of developed life in order to be Nature, while spirit or God would have no self-distinguishing consciousness. Both, as we saw, are entirely the same notion; the distinction lies not in the objective fact, but purely in the diversity of starting-point adopted by the two developments of thought, and in the fact that each stops at its own special point in the thought-process. If they rose above that, their thoughts would coincide, and they would find out that what is to the one, as it professes, a horror and is to the other, a folly are one and the same thing.”(quotation from *the Phenomenology of Spirit*)**

2, the difference between Marx’s dialectic and Hegel’s dialectic

P93 **“They (forms of consciousness) exist within this world as a real and objective component of it, if also an ‘ideal’ one. This is the first specific difference between the materialist dialectic of Marx and Engels and Hegel’s idealist dialectic. Hegel said that the theoretical consciousness of an individual could not ‘leap over’ his own epoch, the world of his time. Nevertheless he inserted the world into philosophy far more than he did philosophy into the world. This first difference between Hegelian and Marxist dialectic is very closely connected with a second one.…This passage states with full materialist clarity that, given the unbreakable interconnection of all real phenomena in bourgeois society as a whole, its forms of consciousness can not be abolished through thought alone. These forms can only be abolished in thought and consciousness by a simultaneous practico-objective overthrow of the material relations of production themselves, which have hitherto been comprehended through these forms. ”**

Hegel:

A, the coincidence of reality and consciousness with history

B, Philosophy as the result of Spirit’s Self-Consciousness

On the one hand, the state is the way to solve the problem of universality

On the other hand, we can only arrive at the wholeness within Philosophy itself

C, there are two different kinds of forms of consciousness:

One is those within history

The other is the absolute philosophy, which is after the end of history

Lukacs:

Dialectic could only be the dialectic within history

The dialectic of soul and form in the process of the origin of the proletariat

Korsch:

Not only those false consciousness are part of the reality within history, but our criticism of them(the criticism of the dominant forms of consciousness and the comprehension of the new content) is also the form of consciousness within history.

A, how the false consciousness is connected with the other parts of the reality with the totality of the world.

B, how our criticism is also connected with the new emerging reality(a self-conscious part within the new reality)

C, this kind of criticism is the sublation of the traditional philosophy. It is the end of “pure philosophy”

The second theses within *Theses on Feuerbach* :

**“The question whether human thinking can reach objective truth---- is not a question of theory but a practical question. In practice man must prove the truth, that is, actuality and power, this-sidedness of his thinking. The dispute about the actuality or non-actuality of thinking---- thinking isolated from practice is purely scholastic question.”**

Human practice and the comprehension of this practice: the rational solution of all mysteries. This means the end of the “philosophy” that is not at the same time practice.