

Research on the Social Function of Library from the Perspective of Marxism

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Abstract: From the perspective of Marxism, this paper discusses the library as a multiple carrier of social functions, and analyzes its important role in social change, knowledge dissemination and cultural ideology. By elaborating Marxist theoretical criticism of social function and cultural ideology, this paper reveals the unique functions of libraries in promoting the cultural awakening of the working class, promoting social justice and class liberation. As a public cultural service institution, library's social responsibility is not only limited to the transmission of information, but also carries the mission of ideological enlightenment and social progress. The article also emphasizes that the library is not only a tool for the storage and dissemination of knowledge, but also plays a positive role in the class struggle and ideological struggle, and is an important position for social reform and ideological liberation.

Keywords: The Library; Social Function; Knowledge Dissemination; Ideology

1. Introduction

Library, as an important institution of social culture, undertakes multiple functions of knowledge transmission, cultural accumulation and social service. However, traditional library theory focuses on its functions as a store of knowledge and dissemination of information, and pays less attention to its responsibilities in the broader socio-political context. The Marxist perspective provides us with a new analytical framework, revealing that libraries are not only the disseminators of culture, but also the fields of class struggle and ideological competition. Marxist theory emphasizes that culture and education are not only an extension of the class struggle, but also an important tool for the ruling class to maintain social order and control ideology. Through Marxist criticism of culture and ideology, this paper discusses how

libraries play a unique role in class struggle, social change and ideological enlightenment, and promote social equity and justice.

1. Overview of Marxist Social Function Theory

1.1 The Basic Theory of Marxist Social Function

The basic Marxist theory of social function is derived from its deep understanding of social integrity and historical development, especially in the analysis of social structure and historical process, social function is regarded as the key factor to promote social change and class struggle^[1]. According to Marxism, society is not just a collection of individuals, but a dynamic system in which production relations, economic base and superstructure interact and restrict each other. Under this framework, social functions are not fixed, but constantly transform and evolve with the development of society and the change of productive forces. Marxism emphasizes that the core of social function is to serve the development of productive forces, especially under the drive of class relations and material interests, the various functions of society appear as tools to promote the progress of productive forces, promote the change of social structure, and shape specific ideologies.

In Marx's classical theory, the realization of social function is often reflected through two mechanisms: one is the change of economic foundation, which directly determines the form and function of the superstructure; The second is the promoting role of class struggle, which makes the social function show different nature and performance under specific historical conditions. Especially in class society, the dominant class exerts its shaping power on social function by controlling resources and possessing means of production. Marxism, therefore, argues that social function is not merely the synergy between the various parts

of a particular social system, but more profoundly reflects the deep-seated social dynamics behind class struggle, power structures, and economic interests.

1.2 Marxist Perspective on Culture and Education

Marxism's perspective on culture and education deeply reveals their unique position and function in the social structure. According to Marx's historical materialism, culture and education are not only a part of social ideology, but also a core component of the superstructure, which is closely interlinked with the economic base and class relations^[2]. Marxism believes that culture and education are not neutral, abstract existence, but the product of class struggle, is the ruling class to maintain its dominance of the tools. The forms of culture and the content of education are often controlled and shaped by the ruling classes, which reinforce the existing social order and mode of production by shaping specific values, belief systems and social norms. For example, in a capitalist society, education not only imparts knowledge, but also subtly cultivates the consciousness and attitude of workers to conform to the capitalist mode of production, thus promoting the further deepening of the division of labor and the solidification of social classes.

The Marxist perspective does not view culture and education as mere instruments of oppression. On the contrary, it believes that under certain historical conditions, culture and education can also be a force for resisting oppression and promoting social change. Especially in the struggle between the working class and the oppressed classes, culture and education became the key media for awakening class consciousness, spreading revolutionary ideas, and organizing collective action. Marxism emphasizes that culture and education in the true sense should transcend the limitations of class rule and strive to liberate all mankind and eliminate social inequality. In this process, the universality of education and cultural diversity are particularly important, they can break the barriers between classes, promote equal communication and ideological collision between members of society, and thus promote social progress and change.

1.3 Marxist Analysis of Ideology and its Impact on Library Functions

Marxist analysis of ideology provides a profound perspective for understanding the social role of library functions. Ideology, as an ideological system reflecting social class relations, has a profound impact on all levels of society, especially in the field of cultural transmission and knowledge production. Marxism believes that ideology is not neutral or purely rational; it is a tool shaped and disseminated by the dominant class through culture, education and other ways to safeguard its interests and dominance^[3]. Under this framework, the library's resource selection, information management, and even its spatial layout may reflect certain social values or political positions. In capitalist society, libraries tend to indirectly shape the public's thought and behavior patterns by screening and distributing specific types of knowledge and cultural products, thus strengthening the existing social structure and power relations. From the perspective of Marxism, the library is endowed with a more active social function, and it should become a position to promote the awakening of class consciousness and promote social change. By providing the oppressed classes with the resources to reflect on the social situation and challenge the dominant ideology, libraries can help people develop critical thinking and thus play an active role in the ideological struggle.

2. Library as a Tool of Knowledge Dissemination

2.1 The Role and Mission of Libraries in Social Change

The role and mission of library in social change has always been regarded as the core institution carrying knowledge transfer, culture shaping and social enlightenment. From a Marxist perspective, the library is not only a neutral carrier of knowledge, it is part of the social structure, class struggle and ideological struggle^[4]. In capitalist society, library, as a tool of cultural communication, often imperceptibly strengthens the existing social order and power structure. The knowledge, information and cultural products it collects and disseminates not only convey certain worldviews and values, but may also inadvertently strengthen the capitalist

oppression and exploitation of the working class.

In the process of social change, the role of the library can not be ignored, it has played an irreplaceable role in promoting the awakening of class consciousness and promoting social progress. Especially in the historical nodes of the workers' movement, the national liberation movement or other social reforms, the library has become an important position of social change. By providing the vast masses of working people with intellectual weapons, libraries helped transform them from silent oppressed to critical and revolutionary minded actors. Whether through the popularization of scientific knowledge, the dissemination of Marxist thought, or the provision of political and historical reflection materials, the library has promoted the profound change of social structure with its unique function in the process of shaping social change.

2.2 Access to Knowledge and Equality: The Social Responsibility of Libraries

As a tool of knowledge dissemination, the inherent social responsibility of library is deeply rooted in its historical mission of promoting knowledge popularization and promoting equality. Marxist theory emphasizes that knowledge is not only the driving force of social development, but also an important dimension of the class struggle. In traditional societies, knowledge is often the exclusive resource of the privileged class, while the public is excluded and unable to share these knowledge resources^[5]. In modern society, especially under the influence of Marxist ideas, libraries have been entrusted with the important responsibility of breaking the knowledge gap and promoting social equality. As a public cultural service, one of the core functions of the library is to ensure that every member of society, regardless of social class, gender, ethnicity or economic status, has equal access to information and knowledge by providing freely accessible knowledge resources, thereby reducing the cultural and educational gap between classes.

This social responsibility of the library goes far beyond the superficial function of its physical space or library collection. It is not only a place to store and borrow information, but also a catalyst for social mobility and individual liberation. By making knowledge widely

available, especially in science, history and culture, libraries help people break the shackles of ignorance, enhance their sense of autonomy and critical thinking skills, which are invaluable in developing socially responsible citizens and promoting the democratic process. More importantly, in the process of promoting the popularization of knowledge, the library can play its special social function -- by providing resources free of charge, the library realizes the universality of knowledge resources, and thus plays a key role in narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor and promoting social justice in the social structure. Therefore, the social responsibility of the library lies not only in the dissemination of its knowledge, but also in promoting the overall fairness and justice of the society through this dissemination process, and promoting the development of the society towards a more equal and inclusive direction.

2.3 Analyze the Functions of Knowledge Production and Reproduction of Libraries from the Perspective of Marxism

From the perspective of Marxism, library, as a tool of knowledge dissemination, has unique functions of knowledge production and reproduction. This function is not simply knowledge storage and transmission, but is closely related to social production relations, class structure and ideology. Marxist theory emphasizes that the production and reproduction of knowledge is not only a cultural phenomenon, but also a product of class struggle. In the capitalist society, as the "intermediary" of knowledge, library also participates in the screening, shaping and dissemination of knowledge. The knowledge it selects, preserves, and ultimately disseminates to the public often reflects the ideology and value orientation of the dominant class, and strengthens the control of the ruling class over social ideology. Libraries in capitalist societies tend to give priority to the collection and promotion of knowledge that is conducive to the existing mode of production and social order, while neglecting or suppressing intellectual resources that reflect the struggle of the working class or social criticism.

Marxism also points out that the library's knowledge production and reproduction function is not completely dominated by the ruling class. At certain periods in history,

especially when the working class and revolutionary forces were on the rise, libraries could contribute to social change and intellectual emancipation by providing knowledge of revolutionary, critical, or class-awakening significance. Through the reproduction of knowledge, the library not only transmits the mainstream ideology of the existing society, but also may become an ideological weapon to resist the oppression and overthrow the unfair system. In this way, the library plays a dual role in the reproduction of knowledge: as a disseminator of the ideology of the ruling class, it may also be a catalyst for change of thought and class awakening.

3. The Library's Social Service Function

3.1 The Important Position of Libraries in Community Services

The important position of library in community service runs through the core of its service function, especially in the context of the increasing emphasis on cultural sharing and social justice in modern society, the community function of library is particularly prominent. As one of the core institutions of public service, library is not only a repository of knowledge, but also an important platform for social members to exchange ideas, interact with culture and obtain information. In the contemporary society with the acceleration of urbanization and the enhancement of social mobility, library, as the cultural center of the community, undertakes the important responsibility of promoting social integration and maintaining social stability. Especially in the face of economic poverty and the lack of educational resources of vulnerable groups, libraries make up for the unequal distribution of social resources by providing free books, information and various cultural activities, and promote equality and integration among social members.

The community service function of the library is not only reflected in the popularization of knowledge and the dissemination of culture, but also in the fact that it provides a multi-functional communication and learning space for community members. From children to the elderly, from ordinary citizens to special groups, the library provides personalized and differentiated services for people with different backgrounds. In many communities, libraries

have even become places of social mobilization and engagement, where citizens have increased their sense of collective and social responsibility through lectures, exhibitions and discussions organized by libraries.

3.2 Library's Role in Promoting the Cultural Development of the Working Class

The library's promoting role in the development of working class culture has far-reaching historical significance and realistic value. From the perspective of Marxism, the working class, as the main force of social productive forces, has long been in a marginal position in the social structure, and its opportunities to acquire cultural resources and knowledge are extremely limited. As a public cultural institution, library plays an irreplaceable role in this context, especially in providing cultural and educational resources, ideological enlightenment and social participation opportunities for the working class. By providing free books, learning materials and rich cultural activities, libraries provide an effective way for the working class to break through the restrictions of social class and improve their self-awareness and cultural literacy.

The library is not only a center for the storage and dissemination of knowledge, but also a catalyst for the cultural awakening of the working class and the promotion of class consciousness. It provides the majority of workers with access to advanced ideas, to understand the social history and political status of the channel, to help them beyond the simple identity of workers, realize their own important status and role in social change. The dissemination of Marxist classics, for example, provided the working class not only with scientific tools for social analysis, but also with intellectual weapons for understanding the roots of class oppression and the path to labor liberation. In this process of cultural transmission, libraries help the working class to change from a passive state of receiving knowledge to active actors fighting for social equity and justice.

3.3 The Social Welfare Function of Library and its Realization Path from the Perspective of Marxism

From the perspective of Marxism, the social

welfare function of library is not only the disseminator of knowledge, but also an important part of the social welfare system. Marxist theory deeply reveals the class struggle and economic foundation behind social welfare, and emphasizes that libraries play a unique role in promoting social justice and achieving class liberation by guaranteeing and improving workers' rights to culture, education and information. As a public service institution, libraries bear the important responsibility of bridging the social resource inequality and promoting social class mobility by providing equal knowledge resources to the general public, especially in the disadvantaged groups and low-income groups. Its core task is not only to provide free books and learning materials to members of society, but also to play a vital role in eliminating the cultural and knowledge gap and promoting equal participation of members of society in cultural construction.

The social welfare function of library can be realized through a series of concrete paths. The free books and information services provided by libraries have broken the barriers for the material poor to obtain cultural resources, enabling low-income people to integrate with the mainstream culture of society and enjoy equal opportunities for knowledge and education. Through the organization of various educational activities, lectures, seminars, etc., the library helps the public to improve their cultural literacy, broaden their horizons, and further promote the ideological enlightenment and social participation of the working class. More importantly, the open space and information exchange platform of the library have become an important position for people to exchange ideas, express their demands and engage in social mobilization, promoting the deep combination of social welfare and class struggle.

4. The Influence of Library on Social Ideology

4.1 How does the Library Play a Pivotal Role in the Dissemination of Ideology

As the core place of knowledge dissemination, library plays a crucial pivotal role in the shaping and dissemination of social ideology. Marxist theory deeply reveals that ideology does not arise spontaneously, but is constantly

transmitted and reshaped through specific social institutions and cultural forms, subject to the interests of the ruling class and the needs of production relations. Under this framework, the library is not only a center for the storage and dissemination of knowledge and information, but also a key channel for the dissemination of social ideas, cultural identities and even values. Through their open bookshelves, rich documentary resources, and diverse cultural activities, libraries play an important role in shaping public consciousness and building social value systems.

In the process of the spread of ideology, the library embodies a certain ideological tendency and choice through the selection, classification and storage of books and materials. Certain systems of knowledge and thought dominate the library's resources, while others may be marginalized or suppressed due to their political sensitivities or biases in class positions. Through its various lectures, exhibitions and cultural activities, libraries promote the dissemination and identification of specific ideologies. Especially in public education and social and political mobilization, libraries provide a public space for the exchange of ideas among different groups, thus subtly influencing the values and behaviors of social members. In this process, the library not only transmits information, it also participates in the construction and reproduction of social ideology, especially in promoting the dissemination of mainstream values, but also may become an ideological position to reflect on and criticize the existing social order.

4.2 Marxist Criticism of Cultural Ideology and its Enlightenment to Libraries

Marxism's criticism of cultural ideology deeply reveals the function and role of ideology in the social structure, especially its potential power in safeguarding the interests of the ruling class. Marxism believes that ideology is not a simple expression of ideas, it is the ruling class through culture, education and other means to shape and spread the ideological system, aimed at maintaining the existing economic and social order. In this theoretical framework, culture is not only a reflection of social life, but also a part of the relations of production and the class struggle. The fundamental purpose of Marxist criticism of cultural ideology is to reveal how it promotes class

oppression and strengthens the rule of the working class through implicit or explicit means. Cultural products, especially the knowledge and information disseminated through public cultural institutions such as libraries, often reflect a certain class position invisibly, and then affect the world outlook, life outlook and values of social members.

On the basis of this criticism, Marxism provides a profound enlightenment for the library. As an important place for the dissemination of knowledge and culture, library should transcend its traditional neutral role and take the initiative to promote the change of social consciousness and class awakening. From the perspective of Marxism, the knowledge resources of the library should not only serve to maintain the existing social order, but should become a force to fight against oppression and promote social change. By providing resources for critical thinking and supporting ideas of social justice, libraries can help members of society realize the class nature of ideology and guide them to form a more just and equal social concept.

4.3 The Library as a Position of Ideological Struggle: a Marxist Perspective

From the perspective of Marxism, the library is not only a place of knowledge transmission and cultural accumulation, but also an important position of ideological struggle. Marxist theory reveals the fundamental role of ideology in the class struggle, pointing out that by controlling cultural resources, the ruling class shapes and maintains social ideas that suit its interests. As the center of cultural production and information dissemination, library is not only limited to the storage and sharing of information, but also plays an important role in the construction, dissemination and reproduction of ideology. Through its selection, classification, storage, and distribution of resources, libraries determine to some extent which ideas can be widely disseminated and which perspectives may be marginalized or suppressed. The library is not a neutral cultural institution, it itself participates in the ideological struggle of the society and becomes a microcosm of the class struggle.

In this context, the mission of the library is not only to provide undifferentiated cultural services, but also to shoulder the responsibility

of promoting social change and ideological liberation. The social change advocated by Marxism requires us to realize that the function of library should go beyond the traditional knowledge transmission, it needs to actively challenge the mainstream ideology, and become the position of ideological resistance and consciousness awakening of the working class and the disadvantaged groups. By providing resources for critical thinking, revolutionary thinking, and class analysis, libraries can prompt people to re-examine the root causes of social inequality and oppression, thereby driving profound changes in social ideology. Therefore, from the perspective of Marxism, the library is not only the disseminator of knowledge, but also the promoter of social change, and the position of cultivating ideological weapons and forces for social change.

5. General Junction

Library not only occupies an important position in the social structure, its function is far more than traditional knowledge transmission and cultural accumulation. From a Marxist perspective, libraries, as tools of social change, have the potential to promote the awakening of class consciousness, social justice and class liberation. By providing the working class with resources to reflect on the current social situation, the library can help them break through the shackles of ideology and move towards ideological liberation. In modern society, the social responsibility of library is more and more important, it is not only the disseminator of knowledge, but also the promoter of social change. By promoting equality and dialogue among members of society, libraries have become a powerful support for social progress and ideological liberation.

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