

Object Analysis: A New Dimension in the Study of the Sinicization of Marxism

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Abstract: The study of the object of the Sinicization of Marxism is of great value to deepen the study of the subject of the Sinicization of Marxism, to clarify the process and results of the Sinicization of Marxism, and to analyze the logic of the Sinicization of Marxism. However, this issue is not taken seriously at present; the relevant research is relatively weak. We should deepen the study from three aspects: the analysis of basic issues such as the definition and composition, the studying of specific issues in different historical periods, and the comparative study of the object of the localization of Russian Marxism.

1. Introduction

In a sense, the problem of the Sinicization of Marxism is the problem of “understanding” and “application” of Marxism. The “understanding” process includes the internalization of Marxism in terms of translation, interpretation, analysis and evaluation. The “application” means to apply Marxism into the interpretation and transformation of practical problems. It is a process of externalization. Without discussing the issues of “understanding” and “application”, it is difficult to deepen the Sinicization of Marxism. Thus, we need to first discuss the texts in which the subject can be understood, and practical problems that Marxism can be applied to. These are the precondition. In this paper, we propose to study the specific objects which enter the vision of the subject and interact with the subject in practice, namely, the object study, in order to deepen the study of the Sinicization of Marxism.

2. The Necessity of Studying the Object of the Sinicization of Marxism

The object of the Sinicization of Marxism can be studied as a proposition or as a question. The main task of proposition research is to determine whether a proposition is true or false. The main task of problem research is to answer the question. Only when a proposition is established can it be answered. Is there an object in the process of the Sinicization of Marxism? The answer has been implied in the interpretation of the subject of the Sinicization of Marxism, because only in the unity of opposites between the subject and the object can the subject obtain its own stipulation. If we recognize the existence of the subject, the object cannot be denied. Why do we study the object of the Sinicization of Marxism? This is the first question we should answer when we study the issue as a question.

2.1 Object study is the basic trend of promoting the subject study of the Sinicization of Marxism

Both sides of the contradiction depend on each other as the premise, and the further study of one side will inevitably require the study of the other side. The Sinicization of Marxism is a process with multiple factors' interaction. The subject is the most active factor, which dominates the direction and process of the Sinicization of Marxism. For this reason, the academic circles have paid due attention to the study of the subject. Issues about connotation, compositions, functions, characteristics and conditions of the subject have been discussed. However, the localization of Marxism in China is not a monologue of the subject itself, but a process in which the subject and the object promote and integrate with each other. The subject and the object are closely related; the deepening of the subject study inevitably calls for corresponding development in the object study,

which is the inherent trend of the dialectical development of the research process.

2.2 Object study is the only way to clarify the process and the result of the Sinicization of Marxism

The process and the result are inseparable. Without the process, there will be no result. It is in accordance with the logic of research to explore the source of the result from the process. The study of the Sinicization of Marxism includes both the process study and the result study. In the long historical process, the Sinicization of Marxism has produced both theoretical and practical results. The study of the results should be traced back to its origin rather than the results. The results do not come from empty space, but from the absorption, transformation, creation and development of the subject to the object in the process. Which objects do the subjects interact with in different historical periods? What does the subject absorb from the object? What has been abandoned? These specific problems in the actual process have significant impacts on the results. Finding out the actual object faced by the subject in this process is the key to understanding the formation process of the result.

2.3 Object study is the proper way to analyze the logic of the Sinicization of Marxism

In his book *The Origin and Functions of Marxist Terminology in Chinese*, Bo Li put forward that “Chinese people’s understanding of various socialist schools in Europe, including the socialist theory founded by Marx and Engels, almost all comes from Japanese version of these theories. Some are from Japanese translation of the original European language works; some are from the socialist works in Japanese.”^[1] Ji-lin Xu pointed out that the greatest early Marxists in China, such as Da-zhao Li, knew both Marxism and Leninism from pamphlets written or translated by the Japanese.^[2] The generality of these views in Marxism accepted by the Chinese people is not the primary form, but the secondary form that has been screened or filtered. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the early stage of Chinese people’s acceptance of Marxism, what is the form of Marxism that people accept? What have they learned from it? Have they grasped the basic views of Marxism? What other factors have played an important role in this process? These questions are the fundamental questions about why the localization of Marxism took place in China. To find the answer to these questions, we need to study the actual object faced by the subject, that is, to carry out the object study.

3. The Present Situation and Comments on the Object Study of the Sinicization of Marxism

At present, the research on the object has not been fully carried out in academic circles. Monographs have not been seen; specialized research articles are few. The representative papers are Min-qing Jin’s *The Object System of the Sinicization of Marxism and its Historical Openness* (published in *Journal of Nanjing Normal University, Social Science Edition*, May the 2017) and Fang-fang He’s *Interpretation and Reflection: Research on the Object of the Sinicization of Marxism in China* (published in the *Journal of Inner Mongolia Agricultural University, Social Science Edition*, March the 2018). In addition, there is a small amount of object research in the articles on the subject of the Sinicization of Marxism. Generally speaking, the study of the object is relatively weak in the overall pattern of the study on the Sinicization of Marxism. In existing studies, scholars mainly focus on the composition of the object. The main points of view are as follows.

The first viewpoint is “China’s concrete practice” in terms of the single object theory.^[3]

The second view is “Marxism” in terms of the single object. Scholars who put forward this view have different specific opinions. Some scholars think that the object is the Marxism with Chinese features;^[4] Some scholars put forward that the most important object in the contemporary era should be the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics;^[5] some scholars hold that the object should include the whole system, the universal contents, the core contents and the theoretical essence of Marxism, but exclude the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics.^[6]

The third viewpoint is the theory of double objects, namely, Marxism and the concrete reality of

China.^[7]

The fourth viewpoint is the theory of three objects, namely, the basic principles of Marxism, the specific national conditions of China and the theoretical achievements of Marxism with Chinese characteristics.^[8]

The Sinicization of Marxism is the dialectical unity of “the localization of Marxism in China” and “the Marxism of China”; the two parts cannot be separated. Both China and Marxism are the objects of the subject. Only taking one of them as the object is a one-sided interpretation of the Sinicization of Marxism. Although the single-object theory of “Marxism” defines the object as Marxism, the specific elaborations are different. The biggest difference lies in whether the “Sinicized Marxism” belongs to the object. The differences between the dual-object theory and the three-object theory also involve this issue. Undoubtedly, if “the basic principles of Marxism” and “the concrete reality of China” are regarded as the initial raw materials, then the “Sinicized Marxism” should be the result of the combination of the two. In this way, it cannot be regarded as the object of the subject, but as the result of the production, so it is not the object. However, after the formation of the Sinicized Marxism, it is not a theory that has been put on the shelf, but a guide to further guide China’s reality. That is to say, the theoretical achievements of the previous stage are also the object of the subject’s understanding and practice at this stage. Therefore, the Sinicized Marxism should be included in the object system. It should be noted that the establishment of the objective status of the Sinicized Marxism does not shake or replace the objective status of the classical form of Marxism, but expands the scope of the object system. The dual-object theory puts forward that the object of the Sinicization of Marxism is the “object of the subject to be combined”. It is undeniable that the “object of the subject to be combined” belongs to the object, but is the object only equivalent to “the object of subject to be combined”? In fact, it is inevitably narrow to define that the object only includes the object of subject to be combined, which will miss some objects that have entered the subject’s vision and served as an important reference, but have not been directly combined, such as the advanced experience of foreign countries.

At present, the study of the object of the Sinicization of Marxism is generally ignored. The reasons may be as follows: Firstly, although scholars interpret the connotation of the Sinicization of Marxism from various perspectives, such as the text theory, the process theory and the combination theory, they seldom interpret it from the perspective of the system theory. So it is rare to analyze the Sinicization of Marxism from the perspective of object elements. Secondly, there are still many unsolved problems in the study of the Sinicization of Marxism, and the object problem is not taken into account. Thirdly, in current research, there are many separate studies on practical problems of Marxism and the reality of China. It seems that the object research has always existed, even though there is no title of “the object research”. In fact, “what is the thing itself” and “what is the thing in people’s vision” are two different but equally important issues, among which the latter belongs to the scope of the object research. At present, there are not enough distinctions between the two studies in the academic circles. In the research, it is often forgotten that the object should be the actual object that the subject faces, and the object is simply equated with the proper object. The phenomenon makes the object research lose its place. The object of the Sinicization of Marxism should be realistic objects which interact with the subject in the process of the Sinicization of Marxism. Subject exists in the concrete and complex realistic environment and points to a wide range of objects. The object research involves contents that the subject has screened out from various kinds of information to promote the Sinicization of Marxism. It is the historical restoration of the actual combination of the subject and the object, aiming at revealing the complete historical process of the Sinicization of Marxism and laying a solid foundation for further development.

4. Research Directions for the Object Study of the Sinicization of Marxism

The object study aims at studying the actual object that the subject is facing in the process of the Sinicization of Marxism, focusing on the “actual object” rather than the “ought object”. For this new problem, the author believes that the following three aspects can be studied.

Firstly, the basic research on the object of the Sinicization of Marxism is the basic work of the

object research. It includes the sorting out of the status and role of the object in the process of the Sinicization of Marxism, the defining of its connotation and the clearing up of its basic composition. These problems have appeared sporadically in the current research, but they are far from reaching consensus. The object and the subject are dialectically unified; the subject vision should be the starting point of object research. Nowadays, the world orientation perspective in the study of the Sinicization of Marxism has been put forward, and the investigation of the subject's world vision has been launched. Scholars usually take excellent civilization achievements in the world as one of them when summarizing the experience of Sinicization of Marxism, so the object analysis should also have the vision of the world. In addition, if the object of the Sinicization of Marxism is not single, the positions of different objects in the whole object system, the connection and mutual influence between objects through subjects should also be included in the scope of basic research.

Secondly, the research on specific problems about the object of the Sinicization of Marxism in different historical periods is the main work of the object study. The concrete research of the object can be started from three aspects. The first is to examine Marxism from the perspective of the subject, including Marxism texts people read, key contents of the theoretical system, main doubts and controversies, as well as the similarities and differences of subjects from different classes, occupations and ages. The second is to examine what are the practical problems in the subject's vision, including the main problems that people pay attention to as well as the types and characteristics of these problems. It is to examine the concrete manifestations of the Chinese reality combined with Marxism in different periods. Thirdly, it examines other specific factors that have entered the subject's field of vision and exerted an important influence on the localization of Marxism in China.

Thirdly, in the process of the localization of Marxism, the comparative study on the objects between China and Russia should also be carried out. It is the beneficial extension of the object study. The localization of Marxism was earlier in Russia. Research questions include, through which specific texts they acquired the theoretical resources of Marxism, which specific viewpoints of the Marxist theoretical system did they apply to practice in different historical periods, and which practical problems did they solve through Marxism. These specific contents in the object field are related to the success or failure in their social construction. Through a detailed comparative study of the object in the process of the localization of Marxism in China and Russia, scholars can analyze the choice of the subject to the object and the combination of the subject and the object, which will have certain enlightening values for the study of the Sinicization of Marxism.

5. Conclusion

In a word, the deepening of the study of the Sinicization of Marxism requires scholars to actively explore new research perspectives. The object study focuses on the actual objects interacting with the subjects in different historical periods. It means to add details to the current study of the Sinicization of Marxism and to restore the true picture of history. It is an inevitable question out of the internal tension of the Sinicization of Marxism. The issue is of positive significance to break through the existing research horizons and research dilemmas, and make the research develop in depth.

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