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**Translation as a New Tool for Philosophizing the Dialectic between the National and the Global in the History of Revolutions: Germanizing the Bible, and Sinicizing Marxist Internationalism<sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstract**

*This paper uses Martin Luther and Mao Zedong's translation strategies to philosophize anew the dialectic between the national and the global in the history of revolutions. Luther and Mao each instigated a "revolution" by translating a universal faith into a vernacular; the end product in each case was the globalization of his vernacularized faith and the export of his local revolution all over the world.*

*By vernacularizing a universal faith, Luther and Mao respectively inaugurated a new national idiom, a new national identity and, in the case of Mao, founded a new nation. The far more intriguing phenomenon which I identify – and on which I seek to make my most original contributions is: Protestantism and Maoism developed global reach not despite, but because of, their insistence on a local translation-articulation of a universalist ideology.*

*My paper attends to both the similarities and differences between Luther and Mao.*

**Keywords:** global and local, revolution, Martin Luther, Mao Zedong, Marxism and Maoism

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This paper uses Martin Luther and Mao Zedong's translation strategies to philosophize anew the dialectic between the national and the global in the history of revolutions. Luther and Mao<sup>2</sup> each instigated a "revolution"<sup>3</sup> by translating a universal faith into a ver-

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<sup>2</sup> I wish to clarify in advance that the topic of this paper concerns Mao's "translation" of Marxism via a yinyang language, which brought together the local and the global in a "unity of opposites." Mao's political practices – both the atrocious and the praiseworthy – are worn-out subjects, which I have no interest in rehashing. Rather, I set myself the original task of tackling how Mao localized and globalized Marxism in one and the same stroke via his yinyang "translation" of Marxism.

nacular; the end product in each case was the globalization of his vernacularized faith and the export of his local revolution all over the world.

By vernacularizing a universal faith, Luther and Mao respectively inaugurated a new national idiom, a new national identity and, in the case of Mao, founded a new nation.<sup>4</sup> The far more intriguing phenomenon which I identify – and on which I seek to make my most original contributions is: *Protestantism and Maoism developed global reach not despite, but because of, their insistence on a local translation-articulation of a universalist ideology.*

The two are also linked in other significant ways. Both engaged in propagating their faiths, and both made extensive use of translation and the printing press to that end. Note that the word "propaganda" has its origin in Christianity – that is, the propagation of faith.<sup>5</sup> Evangelization on an (inter-)national scale was later adopted by secular politics. It is perhaps not surprising that the Bible and Mao's *Little Red Book* are further related in the ways their print circulations continue to rank number 1 and 2 worldwide.

My paper attends to both the similarities and differences between Luther and Mao.

#### *Terminology Notes*

- "Translation":

This paper uses "translation" in its etymological sense. *Translatius* means "carried across/borne over." The term designates not only language translation, but also ideology translation or the transmission of ideas across cultural contexts, as in the case of Mao's induction of Marxism into China via the language of yinyang philosophy. Due to space limitations, I confine myself to ideology translation when discussing Mao, albeit I wish to underscore that language translation was given a prominent role by the CCP's geopolitics in

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<sup>3</sup> "Revolution" changed meaning with the French Revolution; as such, some scholars identify the French Revolution as the first "real" revolution (in contrast to "revolts") in the modern sense. I, however, see the linear temporality and the decisive break with the past – of which the French Revolution was made the emblem - as already present in Luther's religious revolution. The radical break with the Catholic Church *with no return* was not so much the work of the 95 Theses (when Luther was still aiming at reform *within* the Catholic Church), as his decision to translate the Bible into German.

<sup>4</sup> Vernacularizing universalistic religious and political faiths seems to have characterized all revolutions since the onset of modernity, not least because the history of revolutions has been intertwined with the history of the founding of new nations, national idioms, or national identities. The German nation did not yet exist in Luther's days. Nonetheless, Luther has been repeatedly credited to have laid some of the most important foundations for the emergence of a German nation.

<sup>5</sup> The word "propaganda" had its origin in the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* (Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith), a committee of cardinals established in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV to oversee foreign missions. From the very beginning, propaganda had pertained to the attempt to globalize one's faith. The strategy was later deployed by Protestantism.

the Maoist era. *Translation was used by the CCP to remap the world and to create a counter-hegemony to the world orders charted by both the West and the USSR.* China's Foreign Language Press was not just an agent for exporting the Chinese revolution. More importantly, translation was used by the CCP to *tear down the boundaries between the First, Second, and Third Worlds, with the vision of making communism (as reinterpreted by China) truly universalistic, in contrast to Marxism's former confinement to the Second World.* By giving all three worlds equal access to revolutionary ideas via translation, by inciting revolutionary passion in all corners of the world, the CCP tried to prove, *pace* dogmatic Marxism, that all nations were equally ready and qualified for socialism/communism.

I take the originality of this CCP idea one step further by tying this CCP *spatial politics (geopolitics)* to Mao's *temporal politics*. *Tearing down the boundaries between the First, Second, and Third Worlds meant taking down the hegemonic linear narrative of both Western colonialism and dogmatic Marxism* – according to the latter only advanced industrialized societies would be qualified for socialism/communism. See §1.2.1.1 where I demonstrate how the CCP's geopolitics was given temporal expression by way of Mao's use of a yinyang language to translate Marxism, with the goal of overcoming stagism.

Through this spatial-temporal politics, Maoist China sought to deterritorialize the world order imposed by the West and the USSR, and reterritorialized it the Chinese way – with translation as its empirical tool, and Marxism rearticulated in yinyang language as its philosophical and theoretical compass.<sup>6</sup>

- "Local":

In publications whose subject matter is national unity, "the local" is a counter-concept to "the national." In this paper whose guiding theme is universalism versus nationalism ("the global versus the local"), "the local" which stands in diacritical opposition to "the global" is precisely "the national." It is for this reason that my paper is confined to discussing how Luther created a "German language" by opposing it to Latin, without pursuing how his "German language" was also a product of his defining it against "low German" with its many ties to other peoples and nations – including the Hanseatic transnational community and the West Germanic languages. Low German dialects are closely connected to various forms of Dutch, Frisian, and Scandinavian languages.<sup>7</sup> However, this paper will only dis-

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<sup>6</sup> Due to space limitations, geopolitics and the CCP's language translation has to be reserved for another paper.

<sup>7</sup> I thank B. Wittrock for this suggestion.

cuss "German versus Latin" in relation to my topic "the local versus the global" (or "the proto-national versus the universal").

## 1. Vernacularizing the Universal

Luther and Mao each vernacularized a universal faith in order to assert the dignity of his own people against the hegemony of a world power. Both made reinterpretation/"mistranslation" into a tool for challenging the authority of the source culture and for creating an autonomous voice for the target culture. By creating a vernacular Bible for the daily household, Luther became "the creator of New High German" (Stedje 1989, 124). It is well known that Luther played a major role in the standardization of the German language.

Reinterpretation/"mistranslation" was also vital to Mao's assertion of the dignity of the Chinese culture and nation. *By "retranslating" Marx, Mao asserted China's independence of the hegemonies of both capitalism and Marxist universalism – the latter had excluded China and its agricultural economy from the project of communism.*<sup>8</sup>

### 1.1. Luther

Luther theorized about translation in "On Translating: An Open Letter." Through his "German mistranslation" of the Bible, Luther broke away from the hegemony of the "universal" faith of the Catholic Church<sup>9</sup> and asserted the dignity of the German language and people, thereby creating an imagined German community. Luther's "real revolution" began with his addition of the word *allein* to his translation of Romans 3:28, so that it reads: "Thus, we hold, then, that man is justified without the works of the law to do, *alone* through faith" (my italics). "The word *solum* (*allein*) does not exist in the Greek or Latin text," as Luther admitted.<sup>10</sup> By claiming that the addition of *allein* to Romans 3:28 was both required

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<sup>8</sup> This was the official position of the top leaders of the USSR – Lenin, Trotsky, and early Stalin. In December 1929, however, Stalin started reckoning with the massive agrarian economy in his "Concerning Questions of Agrarian Policy in the U.S.S.R."

<sup>9</sup> "Catholic" means "universal" in Greek. *Katholikos* (καθολικός) comes from *Katholou*, meaning "throughout the whole" – that is, universal. Some Protestants read Luther as returning to early Christianity before the corruption of the Catholic Church. Certain scholars emphasize Luther's continuity with Catholicism. See, for example, H. Oberman, B. Mamm, V. Leppin, and H. Schilling.

<sup>10</sup> See Luther's "On Translating: An Open Letter" (1530):

I knew very well that the word *solum* is not in the Greek or Latin text [...] At the same time [...] it belongs there if the translation is to be clear and vigorous. [...] it is the nature of our German language that in speaking of two things, one of which is affirmed and the other denied, we use the word *solum* (*allein*) along with the word *nicht* [not]

by idiomatic German and offered the truth of the gospel, Luther subtly asserted a connection between "the Christian (universal) truth" and the German language. What his claim amounted to was the robbing of Greek and Latin and the Catholic Church of their "universal" authority, transferring it instead to his native tongue. He did the same with Hebrew and tried to "make these Hebrew writers talk German,"<sup>11</sup> as he put it (Koelpin 1977, 3).

Luther's German translation of the Bible was closely related to his resentment of foreigners – of papal disregard for the German people, of the Italians ruling German bishoprics, of the Catholic exploitation of German Christians through the sale of indulgences, and of the cultural arrogance of the Jews and the Greeks. Lacking a centralized government to protect them from papal taxation and bullying, the Germans rallied to Luther's efforts to give them German dignity and a unique German identity associated with a German language.<sup>12</sup> Likewise, Mao's Chinese "retranslation" of Marxism is closely linked to his insistence on asserting the dignity of China against its century of humiliation by various imperial powers.

No less important for the assertion of German authority over the Pope was Luther's provision of every German with direct access to God's Word through his vernacular translation, thus stripping the Pope and priests of exclusive control over God's Word. The Bible becoming widely available through the printing press, the German people no longer needed to cower in front of the Pope. Johannes Cochlaeus, a German Humanist and a leading Roman Catholic opponent of Luther, complained how even German commoners relying on their own reading of the Bible would debate priests and doctors of divinity:

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or *kein*. For example, we say, 'The farmer brings *allein* grain and *kein* money.' [...] This is the German usage, even though it is not the Latin or Greek usage. It is the nature of the German language to add the word *allein* in order that the word *nicht* or *kein* may be clearer or more complete. [...] I was not only relying on the nature of the languages and following that when, in Romans 3:28, I inserted the word *solum*, "only," but the text itself and the sense of St. Paul demanded it and forced it upon me. (*Luther's Works*, Vol. 35, pp. 188-190)

Some argue that "*sola fide, sola scriptura*" was not Luther's original idea, and that some forms of such arguments could be found in Nicholas of Cusa and John Wycliffe. However, Luther was "revolutionary" in that he attributed this "revelation" of the true meaning of the gospel to the rendering of the Bible into German, and by doing so subtly asserting the superiority of his vernacular to both Greek and Latin.

<sup>11</sup> Luther's declaration cannot be attributed to his anti-semitism alone, given the fact that he had great admiration for the Hebrew language.

<sup>12</sup> Luther vented his frustrations energetically: "There is no greater scorned nation than the German. Italy calls us beasts. France, England, and all other lands mock us. Who knows what God wishes to – and will make out of – the Germans)" (*D. Martin Luthers Werke: Tischreden* [WA TR] 2:98; translation quoted from Borthwick 2009, 27, n. 71).

Luther's New Testament was so much multiplied and spread by printers that tailors and shoemakers – even women and ignorant persons – who had accepted this new Lutheran gospel, and could read a little German, studied it with the greatest avidity as the fountain of all truth [...] In a few months such people deemed themselves so learned that they were not ashamed to dispute about faith and the gospel not only with Catholic laymen, but even with priests and monks and doctors of divinity. (*De Actis et Scriptis M. Lutheri ad Ann*; quoted from Schaff 1910, 350).

1.1.1. *From Germanizing the Bible to a "German Language"  
and a Proto-German Nation*

Luther's new Bible interpellated the German people as a community able to stand up to the bullying of foreigners. Hearing God's Word in the same language with other German-speaking people gave rise to the imagined community called "Germany." Although *Germania* as a term already existed in ancient Greece designating the region inhabited mainly by the Germanic people, and the term was already well used by the Roman Empire, it was merely a geographical designation with no existential resonance, and did not become subjectively assumed by the German people as their own (inner) calling until Luther's Bible gave them "their own language" and a nascent national identity.

Simultaneous with Luther's rebellion against Catholicism was the rebellion of the German language against Latin, and a nascent German nation against the Holy Roman Empire. The success of all three was fanned by Luther's use of dialect which enabled his German Bible to penetrate every Protestant *home* in Germany. Eric W. Gritsch observes: "If the German Bible had not become the most popular book in German households, a common German language would not have been born" (Gritsch 2003, 71). Luther's popularity enabled him to reform not only religion but also the German language, laying the foundation for a German national culture. It also inspired him to act as the leader of the anti-Roman movement in Germany (Grisar 1914, 402). He was thus to become a prophet of the new German nationalism (Green 1964, 193), and ushered in a new spirit and a new epoch in German history (Ritter 1963, 213).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> As Antoine Berman puts it, there is "a *before* and an *after Luther*, not only religiously and political-ly, but *literarily*" (27). Ruth L. Dewhurst makes a similar point:

For both [Ernst Moritz Arndt and Johann Gottlieb Herder], the German language found its best definition in Martin Luther. Nascent German national sentiment was infused with the language of Luther – not just vocabulary and syntax, but certain Reformation concepts that were part of the culture of the German people. (Dewhurst 2013, 17)

In time, Luther's Bible would be hailed as the first German classic, and his sayings and translation as part of the German national heritage. His influence on the German language and the German identity was such that a new definition of "nation" based on language would arise. After Luther, Herder saw language as the force that created the *Volk*. The historian John G. Gagliardo observes, "If language was indeed to be the criterion, 'nation' included all who spoke a certain language. For the first time, therefore, the 'folk,' the broad masses of the people, became a part of the nation" (Gagliardo 1969, 144). Nation in this way took on an existential and spiritual dimension hitherto unknown, recruiting the passion of "an entire people." This new passion allowed the German identity to survive the French occupation, when four men – Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Ernst Moritz Arndt, and Friedrich Ludwig Jahn – enlisted the language of Luther to "rouse the *Volk* and ignite an awareness of a spiritual people with deep roots in their own land and their own history" (Dewhurst 2013, 18). By mobilizing the German language in speeches, sermons, poetry, songs, myths, histories, and lectures, they cultivated the "uniqueness" of German culture and community, developed a notion of the *Volk* with strong emotional and spiritual resonances which was deployed with full force in national projects (Dewhurst 2013, 18).

The passion inspired and united by the national language which enabled the German identity to survive through the French occupation was eventually to turn toxic in the two world wars.

## *1.2. Mao*

Like Luther, Mao was no passive recipient of his "faith." By vernacularizing Marxism, Mao affirmed China's "own developmental laws, its own national characteristics, its own precious things" (Mao 1976, 260-61). Mao's translation of Marxism also enabled China and the Third World to participate in the communism project – from which they had previously been excluded for lacking the proper economic infrastructure; their aspirations to nation-building as a response to imperialism had likewise been stifled by Marxist internationalism.

### *1.2.1. Translating Marxism via Yinyang Philosophy*

Mao asserted China's autonomy by reinterpreting/"mistranslating" Marxist universalism via Chinese philosophy – yinyang thinking in particular:

- Mao used yinyang to debunk the linear temporality of Marxism *which excluded pre-industrialized countries from the communism project*. By so doing, Mao demonstrated

the Third World's readiness for socialism/communism. Mao's subversion of the colonialistic linear temporality needs to be read in light of the CCP's use of translation to break down the spatial divisions between the First, Second, and Third Worlds. Removing those spatial divisions means taking down stagism and the linear narrative that deems industrialized societies as alone qualified for socialism and communism. Providing all countries equal access to revolutionary ideas was to make them equally ready for revolution, in defiance of dogmatic Marxism's stagism.

- Using yinyang, Mao identified "poor and blank" as precisely China's strength in that its people did not suffer from the "overmaturity" and moral decadence that had neutralized the revolutionary spirit in the liberal West. The poor had no private interests and the attendant ideological baggage. Tapped the right way, this "blankness" *could allow China to succeed in socialism/communism where the West had failed*:

The uniqueness of China's six million people is that they are poor and blank. This may look like a minus, but is in reality a plus. Poor people want change, want to take action, want revolution. A blank sheet of paper has no blotches, on which the newest and the most beautiful words can be written, and the newest and the most beautiful pictures be painted. (Mao 1958, 3-4)

Note that the concept of "blankness" central to this argument is not alien to Western thought. Since the French Revolution, "revolution" has always been associated with "creation *ex nihilo*" – of beginning anew from a blank slate. China in its "blankness" was ripe for writing history anew.

- Translating Marxism into the yinyang language enabled Mao to dislodge Marxism from economic determinism, such that the Third World was no more to be held back by its economic conditions as yang could be by yin, and vice versa. Contra determinism, yin and yang are always in a state of potential transformation into their dialectical opposites. Neither the base nor the superstructure is primary; it is thus possible to initiate the revolution by stimulating people's consciousness to drive changes in the economic conditions (see Mao 1966).
- The mutual inclusiveness of yin and yang allowed Mao to tease out the symbiotic relations between nationalism and internationalism, agricultural economy and socialism/communism. The yinyang symbol embodies how opposites are interdependent; yin is always already inhabited by yang and vice versa. This cosmology enabled Mao to create opportunities for pre-industrialized countries where Marx had failed, inclu-



ding *Mao's transformation of Third World nationalism and internationalism into mutually supportive operations*. Given the linkage between capitalism and imperialism, the more the Third World stood up as autonomous nations against imperialism, the more they would be participating in the Marxist project of destroying capitalism.

## 2. Globalizing the Local

Both Luther and Mao who vernacularized a universal faith ended up offering the world a new "global religion." Luther became the founder of what would later be called Protestantism, and Mao's *Little Red Book* ranks second only to the Bible worldwide in print circulation. Both Luther and Mao used vernacular to deterritorialize and reterritorialize their respective predecessors' universalism. Part 2 *uses translation as a new tool to tease out the intricate relationship between the local and the global* in Luther and Mao's revolutions. *Via yinyang thinking*, I demonstrate how the local and the global are intertwined even as they are opposites.

### 2.1. Luther

Luther who began by "mistranslating" Romans 3:28 ended up founding a new "universal" church to displace the old universalism. Luther's vernacular translation of the Bible made the text widely accessible. Its local success soon triggered an "international" success – a success throughout Europe which would become global in due course with colonialism helping to spread the gospel. Note that the popularity of Luther's Bible was fanned not only by its accessibility in dialect, but also by its claim to be the real Truth – that is, the universal Truth – that believers thought everyone should revere and study with care.

Just as Mao's sinicization of Marxism synecdochically qualified other pre-industrialized societies for implementing socialism/communism, Luther's assertion that his vernacular Bible was closer to the Christian truth than the Latin Vulgate synecdochically authorized and inspired other vernacular translations of the sacred text across Europe, forming a much wider imagined community and movement beyond Germany. One example was the Tyndale Bible and its offspring the King James Bible. The latter would consolidate the English Reformation by supplying a central text for Protestantism against Rome's Latin Bible. In time, the wars of religion raged throughout Europe, setting vernacular Bibles against Catholicism, national languages against Latin, and national identities against Papal authority in both religion and politics.

How did vernaculars manage to overwhelm Latin with regard to the Christian faith in so many countries? After all, translators from other linguistic communities might not be able to duplicate Luther's convenient claim that the grammar of their own vernaculars, like that of German, "constrained" them to better reveal God's Word than Latin and Greek. One argument in favor of vernacular Bibles is that vernacular brings out the best of what is true for oneself and for a people – a *subjective* concept of Truth which began to take over as the defining criterion of Truth starting with Luther's inward turn<sup>14</sup> – that is, Truth as originating from the heart, and a Christianity built on the heart, the conscience, and sincerity. God speaks to each in one's own language;<sup>15</sup> vernacular allows one to receive God's Word directly into one's heart in one's mother tongue. Luther's vernacular Bible caught on, because the vernacular gave people an *authentic* language that speaks the hearts and minds of the faithful, and is associated with emancipation from the oppression of the foreign tongue of the powerful known as Latin. Herder's characters Dietrich and Winnifried discuss how the first German converted to Christianity when the Bible was translated into the vernacular: "As soon as the language of the people was returned to them, *their mind, heart and soul were also returned to them*" (Herder 1993, 104; my italics).

## 2.2. Mao

By 1967, Mao's *Little Red Book* had already been translated into 65 languages. A widely known fact reiterated by John Gray is:

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<sup>14</sup> This inward turn should not come as a surprise: faith is inward and God-given; heresy also originates from the spirit. Luther was not the first to make the "inward turn" in Christianity. There were the desert fathers, Augustine, Meister Eckhart, John Tauler, Henry Suso and other representatives of so-called "German mystics" who developed the concept of the inner man before Luther. Medieval and early modern Catholic monastic spirituality obviously focused plenty on the "inner life of the soul." However, Luther was the first to *very successfully* place the principle of personal conviction over and against the principle of Church authority. Earlier figures like Hus and Wycliffe made similar attempts. But their movements were far from as successful or influential in history as Luther and the Protestant Reformation which he brought about.

<sup>15</sup> The New Testament makes references to God using the vernacular. In Acts 26:14, God is explicitly depicted as speaking in Hebrew to Saul: "And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." See also Acts 2:2-13 which describes how the disciples, anointed by the Holy Spirit, began to preach in many recognizable tongues (supposedly unknown to the disciples) to those around them. This might be a basis for Luther and his followers to talk of the divinity speaking to each human individual in "his/her own language." Note also that Christ is presented in the gospels as speaking in vernaculars such as Aramaic. This provides an example of the divinity speaking in vernacular for Luther and his followers' "orthodox" Christology.

At the peak of its popularity from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, [Mao's *Little Red Book*] was the most printed book in the world. In the years between 1966 and 1971, well over a billion copies of the official version were published and translations were issued in three dozen languages. There were many local reprints, illicit editions and unauthorised translations. Though exact figures are not possible, the text must count among the most widely distributed in all history.

What explains the global popularity of Maoist Marxism at that time, and how did Maoist translation of Marxism which localized the universal in one and the same stroke globalized the local?

Had Mao only dogmatically followed Marx, the world would have had no reason to read Mao. Had Mao limited himself to asserting Chinese dignity, there would have been no reason for him to gain readership outside China either.

It was Mao's vernacularization of Marxism that better fulfilled Marxism's "universal" claim, and saved Marxism from being destroyed by its own internal contradictions, such as:

- Marxism's claim to universal applicability being contradicted by its exclusion of pre-industrialized countries' candidacy for socialism;
- Marxist claim to international brotherhood being contradicted by its neglect of the colonized's urgent task of nation-building;
- Marxism's claim to concrete practice being contradicted by its abstract universalistic claim.

Mao vernacularized Marxism not by limiting, but by expanding Marxism's potentials. By sincizing Marxism, Mao recreated and revitalized Marxism, making it valid for a number of Third World countries. *In one and the same stroke, Mao made Marxism serve China, and transformed Marxism to help better realize its claim to universality.* Mao "explicitly conceived of Marxism in relationship to the problems of [Third World] societies" (Dirlik 1997, 543). When remaking Marxism to create a place for "the Chinese voice in a global Marxism" (Dirlik 1997, 538), Mao synecdochically enabled developing countries' voices in a global Marxism.

Only by localizing can Marxism become truly global, in the same way as yin and yang are simultaneously opposite and interdependent. In order to be truly universal, Marxism itself had to be translated into a national voice, for a Marxism that could not account for a specifically national experience abdicated its claims to universality (Dirlik 1997, 540).

Mao gained readership worldwide in the 1960s and 70s, because Mao's "retranslation" of Marx – his "Marxism with Chinese characteristics" – rendered Marx applicable to all. It also helped better actualize the ideas of Hegel and Marx. For example, by making Mar-

xism speak to the historical and cultural circumstances of China and the Third World, Mao vindicated Marxism as a concrete practice, rendering it subjectively meaningful and concrete for the Chinese population.

Furthermore, Mao made good the Hegelian-Marxist concreteness by mediating the universal and the particular through each other, as in Mao's mediation of Marxist internationalism through *Chinese nationalism* and vice versa. Chinese Marxism made possible a genuine Chinese national participation in an international socialist discourse, and *synecdochically* enabled (and did inspire) other developing countries to make good Marxism's *universalistic* claim. Arif Dirlik points out how Mao's demand of a Chinese voice in a global Marxism "would have far-reaching implications not just for the Chinese Revolution, but for Marxism globally" (Dirlik 1997, 538). Dirlik credits Mao's Marxism as "most significant in the development of Marxism as the first fully articulated Third-World instance" (Dirlik 1997, 539). He further elaborates that "Mao's significance as a philosopher of Marxism rests upon his recognition of a problem that was not just a Chinese problem but would emerge in later years as a global problem of Marxism, and his articulation of it in a philosophical formulation which remains one of the most comprehensive statements of it in the abstract" (Dirlik 1997, 557).

*By remaking Marxist dialectic via yinyang philosophy, Mao significantly expanded the influence of Marx by transforming the theory into one infinitely adaptable to a variety of social-political circumstances. In one and the same stroke as he "localized" Marxism, he globalized both Marxism and Chinese Marxism. Mao's Little Red Book has far wider print circulation than Marx's own writings. It was Mao who really globalized Marxism, garnering popularity from different corners of the world.*

### **3. Translation between the Local and the Global: Critical Differences between Luther and Mao**

#### ***3.1. The Old "Faith": Luther's Exclusiveness versus Mao's Inclusiveness***

Luther vernacularizes the Bible by demonizing Catholicism. By contrast, Mao sinicized Marxism not by disavowing it, but by extending Marxism and helping it to better actualize its claim to universality and concreteness. This divergence is in part induced by the monotheism of Christianity with an intolerant, jealous God, versus the all-embracing, all-inclusive nature of yinyang philosophy.

Even as Luther claimed his faith to be the universal Truth, it excluded a huge population of Catholics, "heretics," and heathens. By contrast, Mao founded a new Marxism that would include a large population who were formerly excluded. *Yinyang highlights the in-*

*terdependence between opposites, and the coevalness of the self and the other.* Not surprisingly, therefore, Maoism is inclusive of the old Marxist faith, hence its relevance for a far wider audience than Protestantism which establishes its own imagined community by excluding its predecessor.

### ***3.2. Protestant Intolerance vs a Nascent Marxist Pluralism Enabled by Yinyang Philosophy***

Both Luther and Mao were guilty of heinous intolerant acts. Nonetheless, they diverged in their *philosophical* openness. The later Luther and his roughly contemporary followers were conditioned by their jealous monotheistic God to vehemently condemn and even condone executing "heretics." By contrast, yinyang's infinite openness to difference enabled Marx to *structurally* pluralize Marxism, thus opening communism to the participation of countries used to be deemed "not qualified" by dogmatic Marxism.

While Lutherans and Calvinists claimed liberty of conscience, "to grant it to others never occurred to them so long as they were the stronger side" (Dollinger 1862, 68). Save for the early Luther when he was powerless, the Reformers such as Luther, Beza, and especially Calvin were intolerant not only of the Catholics but also of dissidents in general (Cross 2009, 1383), and advocated punishing the "crime" of heresy. Luther favored the death penalty for Anabaptists. In his *Dialogues* of 1535, Bucer called on governments to exterminate by fire and sword all professing a false religion, and even their wives, children, and cattle. Jean Calvin in 1557 advocated persecuting and executing "blasphemers" or "heretics." John Knox recommended executing all heretics, and reducing to ruins all cities deemed primarily heretical (see Muir 1929).

Mao had no doubt been guilty of egregious intolerance in his political practice also. On the philosophical level, however, yinyang's infinite openness to alterity made it impossible for Mao not to continue to embrace Marxism. The philosophy even helped Mao pluralize and broaden Marxism's global appeal and applicability.

By opening up the Hegelian-Marxist closed dialectic to the boundless surprises of yinyang philosophy, Mao *transformed what the West deemed to be "illogical contradictions" into symbiotic thoughts and practices.* Mao enabled Marxism to acquire global appeal when he made China a living example of how Marxist internationalism and Third-World nationalism could be directed to work in a mutually enhancing manner in an expanded Marxism.

By further opening up rather than shutting out Marxism in his sinicization, Mao laid the foundation for Marxist pluralism. As Dirlik observes, Mao's insistence on sinicizing

Marxism represents the world's "first significant challenge to a Marxist hegemony." Mao's legacy "points to a new kind of *non-hegemonic universality*, in which a genuinely universal Marxist discourse is to be constituted out of various *vernacular Marxisms*" (Dirlik 1997, 539; my italics). By inaugurating Chinese communism as a living example of the viability of vernacularized Marxisms, Mao legitimized *singularity* in each nation's interpretations of communism as the truth of Marxism, and *plurality* in articulations as precisely what renders Marxism genuinely *universal* and all-embracing.

### 3.3. *Hegemonic Universalism of Empire versus the All-Embracing and All-Equal Universalism of Yinyang*

There is another factor accounting for the differences in Luther and Mao's attitudes toward their old faiths, and a correlated divergence in their relations to other variations of their respective faiths. The hegemonic, intolerant universalism of both Luther and the Catholic Church could ultimately be traced to the universalism of the Catholic Church as intertwined with the universalism in the Roman Empire.<sup>16</sup> Christian monotheism with a jealous God combined with the imperial nature of empire resulted in a hegemonic universalism.

By contrast, yinyang cosmology pre-existed empire. In contrast to the hegemonic, jealous, and exclusive universalisms of both Protestantism and Catholicism, yinyang consists of a perpetual opening to the other in the self and vice versa. While the spread of Protestantism inside Europe originated as an assertion of the local against the Catholic ("Universal") Church, the globalization of Protestantism beyond Europe was very much powered by colonialism and trade, and the direction of the spread of this faith was from what modern lingo would call "the First" to "the Third world." Maoist Marxism reversed this trajectory. Besides being widely embraced by the Third World, Maoist Marxism also spread from China back to First World leftists and intellectuals, defying the hasty postcolonial generalization that *translatio studii* is necessarily a product of *translatio imperii*. *The globalization of Maoism was the result of neither conquest nor trade*. Translation and propaganda played an important role in the globalization of Maoism – strategies which Protestantism also deployed. But in addition, there was the First World intellectuals' fascination with China's ability to stand up to the U.S. in the Korean War despite the former's significant lack in

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<sup>16</sup> The Roman empire continued its policy of *Cura Religionis* when it became Christian. Hence it became the job of emperors to protect the Church by repressing paganism and heresy. As part of their care of religion, emperors gained a large role in the Church. I thank Alexander Rosenthal-Pubúl for the input.

infrastructure, and they thought that Mao had successfully realized the dream of communism. Hence his wide popularity in the 1960s-70s.

**Afterword:**

**Language as Existential versus Language as Instrumental**

This essay is devoted to "Translation as a New Tool for Rethinking the Local and the Global" in the revolutions instigated by Luther and Mao. Note that "translation" is understood linguistically by Luther and ideologically by Mao. Language is existential in Luther's project and is part and parcel of faith itself, as much as language in the post-Lutherian era also progressively became part and parcel of nationhood, with nation evolving from a territorial to a cultural, linguistic, and ultimately existential, concept. While the West's attention to language can be traced in part to the Christian identification of God with Logos (or the Word), Luther's inward turn inaugurated in German intellectual history an obsession with language, of which German idealism is one articulation, after which Heidegger, despite his ambivalence toward German idealism, reflects on how "language is the house of being."

By contrast, an existential relationship to language is foreign to traditional Chinese culture. Daoism and Buddhism express their distrust of language: "The Dao that can be named is not the enduring Dao." Not surprisingly, in translating Marxism, Mao's attention is not to language, but to content and ideas. National identity was asserted by Mao not via language, but via Chinese philosophy, literature, and art.

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