

改寫翻譯的文化主體

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摘要

翻譯不僅是兩國或多國語際的轉換，更應充份表達兩種或多種文化的多樣性與差異性。文化樣貌的獨特性亦賦予文學翻譯家權柄，以自身的文化經驗以及文化表述改寫異國的文學作品。翻譯過程中，翻譯家亦同時發展與傳承本國文化，翻譯活動因而成為文化發展的途徑之一，譯者應體認翻譯的文化性優先於語言的對應性。

本文針對文學文本內性別議題所透露的文化性，對應討論翻譯過程中跨文化之各項考量。其論述包括社會大眾如何以繁衍後代，多數性(主流)傾向合理化異性戀婚姻，如同翻譯過程中多數譯者為追求譯入語與譯出語於文字上之對應，合理化地捨棄了部份原文外所傳遞的特定訴求與立場。如此，文本的忠實性，便成為翻譯家之第一原罪。本文更進一步討論文學作品內單一個體的獨特性無法滿足/吻合社會功能/社會規範對他(她)性別的設定與期待，如同翻譯所被期待的功能，或許因譯者獨特的風格、其文本領略及文化背景而無法滿足制式化文字的忠實。應忠實於自我或順應社會(原作)的標準，是身為一位個體(譯者)應深刻探討的性別議題。

關鍵字：文化表述，性別議題，跨文化，忠實性，翻譯家之第一原罪。

The Cultural Identity of Rewriter in Literary Translation

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Abstract

Translation Studies not only exchange two languages but also present the diversity of two cultures. Language is a kind of the cultural identity with the visible and invisible characters to represent the unique sense of civilization among different nations. In recent years, the Translation Studies have apparently moved from linguistic aspects to non-linguistic stances. Cross-cultural consideration is one of the significant non-linguistic issues, which should be concerned in the process of translating. Translators experience the similar process to the original authors' creation if they can bring a piece of good literature crossing the boundary to be a new literary text with the local cultural-sense.

The authority and diversity of cultures is two pole-views in translation studies. Although cultural diversity causes translators' difficulty, cultural image renders the authority of rewriting to translators. Gender is one of the significant cultural images in the developing of human history. Translators should be aware of the specific thought and position in the process of the translating, and re-shape the ideas to different target readers with different cultural consideration for the same initial purpose on their writing. In other words, a translator as a rewriter who has authority to create new text renews a classic literary text for contemporary readers with expert authorities of language, culture, and translation.

Hence, this paper attempts to reveal the significance of cultural consideration and authority of translators as rewriters during the process of translating the gender-oriented texts to reproduce the equivalent reading-experience for target readers.

Key words: cross-cultural consideration, the authority of rewriting, equivalent, reading-experience, cultural expression.

I. Different Orientations in Translation Studies

Language is a kind of cultural identity marker with the visible (signifier) and invisible (signified) characters representing the unique sense of civilization among different nations. Distinct symbolic characters and the differentiation of syntactic expressions belong to visible formations. Yet, invisible features equally reflect the reality of living; invisible features are communicated through more abstract concepts. Translators must have the capability to distinguish those characteristic features (visible and invisible), and ponder the relevance between the source language and target language before translating a foreign text into the target text. Gideon Toury, professor at Tel Aviv University in Israel, points out this idea about language and beyond language in his essay “The Nature and Role of Norms in Translation”:

“Translation is a kind of activity, which inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions, i.e., at least two sets of norm-systems on each other level.” (55)

Professor Toury notes that culture and language mutually and quite naturally influence and internalize aspects of one and the other. Translators should not ignore factors that lie beyond the surface-level language during their translation activities. After all, cultural factors represent the inner value of a piece of literature as well as the final translated product. André Lefevere resolutely defines the job of the translators as “The artisans of compromise” (6). In fact, patrons, the source message, original author, target audience, and other invisible factors such as the individual concept of traditional culture, the differences of language systems and rhetorical methods are all involved in the translation movements of literature. Thus, these components also force translators to compromise and/or make adjustments to their translations. Translators always attempt to achieve the norms of translation or the so-called text-based translation to produce the “appropriate” production in terms of specific strategies, criteria and perspectives of translation theories in different trends and generations. This “right-way” translation might satisfy the contemporary ideology and the

mainstream of Translation Studies, but it can neither bring a piece of literature across the cultural boundary nor re-create a new production to enrich the literature of a target culture.

A given culture nurtures the essence of language, and each language represents a certain culture. Belgium scholar, André Lefevere, in *Translating Literature*, proposed the idea that “Cultures that derive their ultimate authority from a text” (120). The incumbent authority of rewriting that is given to translators, and the inherent diversity of cultures within a text, present two-polar influences in translation studies. Although cultural diversity causes translators difficulty, the embedded cultural images and cultural nuances of a text must yield to the ultimate authority/professionalism of the translators. Nevertheless, the significance of cultural consideration in the process of translating cannot be ignored. A good piece of translation should be limitless and multicultural, containing at least two of cultures (original and target). Cultural consideration in Translation Studies represents an unbounded idea, which not only conveys an exotic sense, but also re-creates the cultural features of source texts in target text.

Different orientations, criteria, theories and strategies of translation are the traditional and artificial boundaries as well as traditional norms of patriarchy that limit the identity and personal development of queer group. Hence, this paper attempts to reveal the significance of cultural/gender considerations and authority of translators as rewriters during the process of translating a piece of literature in order to reproduce the equivalent reading-experience for target readers and emphasize the concept and the position of the original authors, and its influences for cultural development through applying the perspectives of rewriting theory in order to replicate the remarkable ideas behind the gender-oriented texts. To exemplify the above concerns, this study selected two gender-oriented texts from lesbian literature to explore the development of issues regarding gender. The perspective of rewriting theory from Professor André Lefevere’s angle and queer theory will be used to focus upon the outstanding identity and specific considerations of lesbian literature in Chinese

version.

The following discussion attempts to address further issues on the significance and direction of the cultural boundaries between English and Chinese in the activities of translation through the review and analysis of relevant studies.

II. Cultural Consideration and Rewriting Theory

Translation Studies nowadays gradually shift the language from source text into target text, but also reflect the reality of source culture within the local expression of the target text. That is to say, those culture-orientated Translation Studies are constructing a new stance to translators as rewriters who may earn equal position or even more priority than the original authors' position in target country by re-shaping the specific imagination for target audience. Lawrence Venuti, the editor of *The Translation Studies Reader*, mentions the idea of the translation as an emerging interdiscipline (1). Translators, according to Venuti, should acquire interdisciplinarity for bringing a piece of literary work across the boundary of culture, language and thought in order to re-produce an imaginative, resonating, and special literary taste with his or her mother tongue. Similarly, Jeremy Munday organized several approaches to demonstrate "Translation studies as an interdiscipline" (181-196) in his introduction of *Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*. In short, translations create a unique way to study cultural interaction, which not only produces an environment to realize a given culture at a given generation, but also appears that translation influences the development of society and history in different domains. Munday underscores André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett interconnection of translation, culture, and history: "If we want to study cultural history, the history of philosophy, literature, and religion, we shall have to study translations to a much greater extent than we have done in the past." (6) Their statements point out the vital interaction among the studies of culture, language, and translation. Nowadays, Translation Studies represent an interfield study which connects other domains closer than ever before. A literary translator must be a good learner for interdisciplinary studying and must acquired experience with multiculturalism.

Translators should focus on the primary component to make the necessary adjustments in the text so that the target text can clearly express the original author's stance and thought. André Lefevere proposed a candid viewpoint of translation as a rewriting in his book *Translating Literature*, "Rewriting is simply a cultural given of our time" (14). In other words, a translator as a rewriter has authority to create new text and can renew a classic literary text for contemporary readers with expert authorities of language, culture, and translation. André Lefevere's thinking drew Translation Studies into the "culture turn" of translation. His and similar translation theorist changed the trend from traditional theories of faithful translation—word for word translation and sense for sense translation—to rewriting cultural translation.

Lesbigay literature presents anti-naturalized ideas that echo throughout the development of the Cultural Studies and the resistance of the dominance imposed by patriarchy. Thus, the following section translated and discussed selected text from the lesbigay literature and attempt to express their specific stance and thought found in each of the texts.

III. The Identity in Lesbigay Literature

The uniqueness of cultural character provides an advantage, a special niche point of view, to literary translators as rewriters; cultural authority enlarges translators' capabilities of producing and processing with self-cultural expressions and self-cultural images. Cultural translation, a kind of rewriting texts, is a new trend in Translation Studies; its premise is based on cultural considerations that bring audiences into various cultures. Luise von Flotow, Professor and Director of the School of Translation and Interpretation University of Ottawa in her book, *Translation and Gender* offers readers unique ideas from feminist translation theory for the practice of translation. Some of her ideas include the experience of nature, women as political instruments and representing women's lost works in new writing project (14). Flotow offers feminist translators a clear, definable direction to translate feminist works other than the traditional perspective - words and meaning. Feminist liberation and queer identity in the literary works are the crucial value of these texts. Translators

must apply a multi-theoretical translation to highlight the author's stance and thought in the target text.

In addition, Professor Keith Harvey mentioned that translators should be aware of the comparable function and effect between the source and target text in process of translating the homosexual fiction because "the conception of homosexuality as a defining property of identity" (402-403). Social norms in a patriarchal world produce heterosexism and marginalize the identity of queer group. Patriarchy constructs the specific function of gender in that everyone must follow the same pattern as a husband and wife in gender-oriented texts and it is known that language can dominant and control people's ideology. Therefore, translators have to emphasize the identity and stance of lesbigay literature in the target text and not just shift the languages from source language into target language otherwise he or she is faithful to patriarchy rather than the original author. Translation should express the same concept in different language as naturally as possible in terms of the different cultural environment for spreading and continuing the cultural development. In a sense, cultural boundary performs as the dependent variable of different theories that limit translators' creation in the process of translation.

This is a circumscribed world with defined rules; living in the world means living within an original boundary which cannot easily be violated and which has been set up throughout human history. The usage-rules of society might tend to make any single person seem invisible where the individual is the secondary consideration in the overall social system. We become people who are formed in the process of history making and cultural development and in the terms of a dominant artificial system - patriarchy - a powerful center of human society for a long time. Generally speaking, it is most advantageous to be a heterosexual and socialized male. Everyone has to follow the social norms for fitting into his/her position, which as stated above, is given by normal society. Girls and boys have to become women and men, wives and husbands, who perform the so-called jobs of the woman-like and man-like. If anyone tries to violate the social boundary, he or she might become marginalized. In

this regard, homosexual groups hide their real self in the external world since the majority, the heterosexuals, holds most social resources. However, no one is a natural woman or man.

Oscar Wilde, the author of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, served two years of imprisonment because of his homosexual tendency in 1894. (Huáng Xīn Yǎ 37) Oscar Wilde expressed the conflict between the real self and the social norm through his works. The famous sentence of Oscar Wilde - “I love acting. It is so much more real than life” reveals his struggle and ongoing dilemma between his real self and the real world.

In the novel, the homosexual tendency of the characters, such as Dorian Gray, Lord Henry, and the Painter Basil, is observable in their relationships as they display their desires and love man-to-man according to their different social status standings. On the surface, which to the characters seemed unnatural and morbid, they rationalized and naturalized their unusual tendencies and behaviors with different masks. They utilized different masks to cover their sexual tendency. For instance, the marriage of Lord Henry, or the artistic purpose of Painter and the hidden picture of Dorian Gray were masks. In fact, there is another person who is limited and constrained in his or her mind; they have an unnatural life with fake behaviors in so-called normal world.

In the Eleventh Chapter of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the main character, Dorian Gray, unceasingly pursues youth; he would rather keep youth as a fake mask rather than accept the reality of his true life. The following text reveals that Dorian Gray indeed covers the reality of his life behind the pall:

“Upon the walls of the lonely locked room where he had spent so much of his boyhood, he had hung with his own hands the terrible portrait whose changing features showed him the real degradation of his life, and in front of it had draped the purple-and-gold pall as a curtain. (Oscar Wilde 11:153)
童年的閣樓裡，深鎖著一幅他親手掛上的畫像，紫金色布幕隱覆著畫像日漸衰敗的面容，那張可怕的臉洩露了他墮落的生活和真相。

The picture not only reveals serious secrets but also hints at the nature of the secrets that must be covered. It reflects the conflict between the beauty of Dorian Gray in his joyful life and the ugly picture of Dorian Gray in his evil soul. My Chinese version emphasized the image of the words in source text locked room and draped curtain that highlight the truth of his life as the ugly face in the picture. I translated the words into 深鎖 (shēn suǒ) and 隱覆 (yǐn fù) to link the image of 衰敗的面容 (shuāi bài), 墮落的生活和真相 (duò luò de shēng huó hé zhēn xiàng) in my Chinese version. In addition, I noticed that one definition of the purple-and-gold pall is a cloth spread over a coffin. The pall represents his determination to hide his sexual reality. Thus, I translated the longer source text into the succinct target text in Chinese version to shape as well as direct the imagination about the picture in a dark room with a coffin cloth for his hidden secret.

The struggle between the hidden tendency and unreal self is the most important factor for translators in the following text. Also revealed is the implication in the interaction between Gray's real fact and unreal life, a ugly person in the picture and a fake beauty in the real world:

“On his return he would sit in front of the picture, sometimes loathing it and himself, but filled, at other times, with that pride of individualism that is half the fascination of sin, and smiling with secret pleasure at the misshapen shadow that had to bear the burden that should have been his own.” (Oscar Wilde 11:153)

畫像前面，是進退維谷的他，是愛恨交織的他，有時候，他厭惡畫像，也厭惡自己。有時候，他滿足著源於罪惡的快感，也享受著源於私密的歡愉，戲謔的笑看著這暗處的醜惡正承受著原本他該領受的一切。

The “original sin” of Dorian Gray, his homosexual tendency, represents the ugly picture, which forces him to struggle between the real and unreal life because the social norms, traditional morals and the law during the Victorian generation did not allow his originality and difference. Similarly, translators are forced to make choices between being faithful and creative in the act of translation. Dorian Gray had to face

his homosexual reality although he hated the truth, which is hidden, behind his unfaithful life.

Equivalent translation interprets the other's works as Dorian Gray's unreal life with fake mask. Rewriting translation focuses on the writing purpose to transmit the main idea of the texts through translators' mother tongue. Although rewriting translation might be criticized on the perspective of faithful words and sentences, a writers' creativity is the most important element no matter the source writer or the target writer. Thus, I attempt to focus on the effect of the conflict between Gary's ugly reality in the picture and unreal person in real life in Chinese version. I translated the source text in Chinese sentence pattern, 進退維谷的他，...愛恨交織的他，...滿足著源於罪惡的快感，...享受著源於私密的歡愉，(jìn tuì wéi gǔ de tā...ài hèn jīh...mǎn zú zhe yuán yú zuì è de kuài gǎn..., xiǎng shòu zhe yuán yú sī mī de huān yú) to produce continual effect on his struggle between his loathing and pride to the picture because the conflict extends the plot of the story from the outer world to his inner reality. The hate and love of Dorian Gray provide the connections between the conflict and contradiction of his unacceptable reality and wonderful falsehood. Personal judgment and the tendency of interpreting a piece of literature are the original and hidden sin of translators, which are limited in the primary boundary, the original text and author, during the process of translating. The picture not only represents a secret, which cannot be known but also raises contradictory emotions - hate and love - because he is involved with both extreme emotions between reality and unreality.

In the case of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the original author had to compromise on his writing about the issue of homosexuality to fit for the ideology and judgment of that generation. However, in the current modern generation with the idea of multiculturalism, readers' reception has changed due to cultural developments and experiences. Moreover, translators are also more increasingly involved in two-pole emotions, fear and enjoyment, in the process of translating. Translators are always anxious about being too faithful in reproducing a piece of good production, or too

creative in translating a piece of faithful translation. Therefore, there is a writer in a translator with a covered mask by translation theory and strategy. Oscar Wilde had been tried in court of his homosexual tendency in Victorian time. Although he experienced an unfair trial and jail for two years, he still says, “The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it”.

Overall, society regards homosexual relationships as a kind of unnatural desire even though people cannot choose their sexual tendency. Marriage is the only life for everyone; certainly, the husband-wife is also the only choice for people in marriage. This is the view of patriarchy. Therefore, gender becomes a natural boundary to the queer group.

The short story *Brokeback Mountain* has been revised into a movie with the same title by Taiwanese Director, Lee Ang. The story describes two young men, uneducated cowboys who unexpectedly fall in love during the summer of 1936. Suppressed by the bias of traditional society towards homosexual tendency, their love cannot be complete. Unfortunately, destiny befalls the two young men who spend their whole life questing for their full love.

Jack’s reaction to Ennis leads to the climax of the plot in the following text. He plays the more courageous side in their relationship. He does not resist their natural desire although the dominance of the presumably natural society does not allow their relationship:

“Try this one,” said Jack, “and *I’ll* say it just one time. Tell you what, we could a had a good life together, a fuckin real good life. You wouldn’t do it, Ennis, so what we got now is Brokeback Mountain. Everthing built on that. It’s all we got, boy, fuckin all, so I hope you know that if you don’t never know the rest. Count the damn few times we been together in twenty years. Measure the fuckin short leash you keep me on, then ask me about Mexico and then tell me you’ll kill me for needin it and not hardly never getting it. You got no fuckin idea how bad it gets. I’m not you. I can’t make it on a couple a high altitude fucks once or twice a year. You’re too much for me,

Ennis, you son of a whoreson bitch. I wish I knew how to quit you.” (Annie Proulx 41)

那好，你聽清楚，我也只說這麼一次，看你懂不懂。我們本來可以一起打混過著他媽的好生活。是你，恩尼斯沒種過，現在我們就剩斷背山。什麼狗屁都在這山裡，這座山是他媽的我們的一切，我們就只有它了，如果還有什麼是你不懂的，我希望這一點你要搞清楚。你他媽的給我數一數，二十年來我們該死的才在一起幾次，掂量你有多少份量拴著我，再來問我有沒有去墨西哥、去風流快活，再說一次你要殺還是要剛，為了那個我需要卻從來都得不到的東西。你他媽的不會知道我有多痛苦，我不是你，我沒辦法靠這座山就這麼躲著、藏著，我沒辦法靠一年就幹三、兩次的野砲過下去，我頂不住。你佔據我太多，卻給的太少，恩尼斯，你這婊子養的雜種，真希望我知道該怎樣戒了你。

In the source text, Jack expresses his love in an emotional way complete with vulgar language. The grammatical and spelling mistakes in the source text are translators' first challenge. Those mistakes might cause similar faults in the translated production in a different language if translators do not notice them and if the original text is the only criterion in the process of translation without other considerations and adjustment. Translators might be tempted to change the original text in some degrees by over-polishing the language into smoother or even more beautiful language style.

However, the grammatical and spelling mistakes are intentional, representing the original author's purpose to reveal their social status and educational background. Thus, I translated source text into a kind of lower-class language but in correct grammatical structure and words to keep the target text on the same readable level for target readers. In this case, translators might make many different choices to fix the coarse language in the source text, but in doing so, they might change the original purpose of the author and/or obstruct the target readers' acceptance of the cultural experience. Therefore, I attempted to re-create their expressions in Chinese without any embellishment. If the quality of language is one of the factors in the writing arrangement of the original author, then translators should not sacrifice it by polishing

the language into target text.

The original author characterized the main protagonists, Ennis and Jake, in contrastive reflection. Jack is a typical character who has enough courage to fight for his homosexual tendency. On the contrary, Ennis follows the socialized criteria and traditional standard of daily life at that time. However, Ennis has a different life in the mountain, which is hidden in his mind and cannot be admitted. Therefore, *Brokeback Mountain* provides the initial and final tracings of their love.

The identity of queer group in the book/movie is the invisible factor but also the most vivid component as a kind of cultural experience. Equally, the literary quality reveals the artistic expression and cultural experience that also represents the uniqueness of each text even in different languages.

IV. Conclusion

There are three main points, translation practices, in the following section: the strategies of revealing the gay identity, outstanding the queer reality and recovering the lost voice of homosexuality in rewriting texts. First, homosexual people must hide their natural sexual tendency among the people because the traditional ideology and social norms treat the gay tendency as a kind of unusual sickness or psychological aberration that cause the queer group to lose their identity of sexuality. In the beginning of translating the source text, translators have to arrange the stance of sexual identity to highlight it as a critical factor with equal right and position in the target text. Secondly, patriarchy defines gender as a concept either a woman or a man in terms of the dualism of physiology. The lesbian literature reveals reality, which even the queer group believes is biased and makes their natural tendency invisible in order to fit the prevailing social norms. Translators should highlight the reality of this bias to re-create the identity of the queer people and lead the target reader to experience the so-called gay culture. Lastly, people ideologies can be changed and improved through cultural development and the progress across generations. The target readers' acceptability of texts is oftentimes more important than the source readers' acceptability. In this case, translators can improve and make some

adjustments to complete the unfinished works and recover the lost voice of queer group in target texts.

A. Which Study Approach is Priority: Cultural Study or Translation Study?

How can I focus upon and effectively reveal the significance of cultural factors and imagery rather than simply the written form of texts (source texts and target texts) in this study of gender issues within the application of Translation Studies? This is always the final question in the research process, the key question often asked, “So what?”

To answer, this study did not compare my Chinese versions with other versions for two reasons. First, a comparison is not the goal of this study. In other words, this study did not attempt to demonstrate that rewritten versions based on feminist translation theory are better than other translations. Comparing my translation with others would lose sight of this study’s research position, and therefore, be unnecessary. After all, each text is both a unique text and a translated production that exhibits its own unique expression albeit through a certain cultural reinterpreting of the reality of the world. Secondly, feminist translation theory inherits the primary aim of Feminist Studies; it is embedded with and focuses upon the writing project as an activity to accomplish certain political goals. Each feminist translator is the writing-partner of original author so as to extend the feminist task by rewriting the text in another generation and space. In addition, queer theory demands that upholding the gay identity requires a pursuit and stance similar to feminist theory. The goal of gender-oriented texts is to accomplish a core value via the texts no matter what language or whatever may be the given culture.

The next section in the conclusion attempts to discuss the images in gender-oriented texts and the invisible culture in lesbian literature. Translators should notice the meanings and functions in these images in order to renew the ideas in target texts.

B. Images and Invisible Culture of Gender-Oriented Texts

Gender-oriented text provides the best translation examples to reveal the reality of

traditional norms in a writing project. My study found four sets of symbolic images in the selected texts, *the Awakening*, *the Yellow Wall Paper*, *the Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Brokeback Mountain*. The third set of images was the hidden tendency of the picture and mountain in the *Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Brokeback Mountain*. Authors used these sets of symbolic images to express a specific stance and thought.

Oscar Wilde used the ugly picture and beautiful Dorian Gray to hint at the hidden tendency and fake surfaces coexisting in the same person. Annie Proulx created a paradise, Brokeback Mountain, for two young people. However, the mountain represented their hidden love and struggle, which were marginalized in the general world. These images challenge translators' capabilities not only with having to master languages (source language and target language) but also with experiencing cultures (source culture and target culture).

According to the above mentioned examples, I encountered two predicaments during the process of translating these gender-oriented texts: One is losing Chinese features in the translation if I insisted upon original format, while another was that the target language system does not have similarities in structure when compared with English. Hence, I had to re-structure the source text into the target text in order to draw out the core meaning and purpose of source text. I used many and varied adjustments in my translation, such as reordering the words and sentences for the purposes of emotional effect by re-describing the picture of the text. This posed an interesting point in the process of adjusting the texts. How can translators translate the invisible factor in visible text?

Culture factors, the invisible components in texts, not only reveal social realities beyond their era but also transmit native expressions within literary works. Literary authors create and re-present the specific imagination, resonance, and artistic sense with specific cultural style for their readers. That is the reason why some pieces of literature are worthy to be eulogized for generations. In fact, any valuable work should be appreciated multi-culturally and globally without limitations.

Yet, Translation Studies in Western countries have their own origin; originating

cultures are artificial and cultural boundaries are produced by the human experience. Inescapably, this is the parcel that comes with the translator's *job* and it is his/her *original sin*²⁶⁶—acceptance by audience, faithfulness to text, and capability of translating—which make up the omnipresent cross-generational, cross-cultural puzzle of Translation Studies.

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²⁶⁶ Original Sin, a metaphor from Bible expresses translators' faithfulness to original author and texts as humanity's original sin to God.

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