

**Visiting elements thought to be “inactive”:** **Non-human actors in Arthur Waley’s translation of *Journey to the West***

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## Visiting elements thought to be “inactive”: Non-human actors in Arthur Waley’s translation of *Journey to the West*

This paper applies actor-network theory (ANT) to study the non-human agents that participate in the translation and publication process of *Monkey*, an English translation of the Chinese classic *Xi You Ji*. The materials used consist mainly of the letters exchanged between the publisher George Allen & Unwin, the translator Arthur Waley, and the jacket and title page designer Duncan Grant. Moreover, the “Preface” of the translation written by the translator himself and the publisher’s autobiography are referenced as additional sources of information. The research reveals two groups of entities which act as what ANT scholars term as “nonhuman actors”. The first group consists of texts, more specifically, the “Preface” to *Monkey* and some letters exchanged between Waley as a translator and Unwin as a publisher, which reveals the reasons of re-translating *Monkey* and the translation strategy used. The second group includes the Second World War and the influenza epidemic in the 1940s that impeded the reprinting of *Monkey*. The paper concludes that, in addition to human actors, non-human actors that have also actively exerted influences on both the process and the outcome of a major translation project deserve to receive more attention when looking at translation as a social activity.

**Keywords:** actor-network theory, literary translation, non-human translation actors, *Journey to the West*, Arthur Waley

### 1. Introduction

The application of actor-network theory (ANT) to study the production of translations has occurred only recently, and the field has developed relatively slowly when compared to studies that adopt sociological approaches such as Bourdieusian concepts and systems theories (especially Luhmann’s systems theory). There are fewer than a

dozen researchers who have considered the application of ANT to translation studies, and related publications include only a few articles (Bogic 2010; Buzelin 2005, 2006, 2007a, [2004] 2007b; Chesterman 2006; Haddadian-Moghaddam 2012; Kung 2009; etc.), a PhD thesis (Eardley-Weaver 2014), and two chapters in Tyulenev (2012, 2014).

That being said, it would be misleading to claim that nothing has been achieved in this approach. ANT-based translation studies have been extending in two directions. On the one hand, some research has sought to justify the applicability of ANT theoretically, for example, Buzelin ([2004] 2007b) and Tyulenev (2014). On the other hand, a number of empirical case studies have been conducted, with well-formulated hypotheses and implications. The majority of the publications fall within this latter category, including Buzelin (2006, 2007a), Bogic (2010) and Haddadian-Moghaddam (2012).

Hélène Buzelin's research acquaints the readers with such major concepts of ANT as *translation*<sup>1</sup> and actor-network (Buzelin 2005), and also contributes in a significant way to the practical application of ANT to translation studies. Her case studies on what active roles publishers may play in translation projects present activities and relationships that few earlier researchers had examined (e.g. Buzelin 2006). Moreover, the methods she used, such as interviews, gathering written materials, and participant observation, largely expand the outlook of translation studies.

Nevertheless, ANT has not been extensively applied to the study on translation

as a social activity. The concepts that have already been introduced can be explored and applied further, and there is still a wide range of useful concepts left unexplained. In terms of representing the empirical data collected from various translation projects, much effort is still needed to explore the connections between the data and the theory, and relevant ANT concepts need to be incorporated into practical translation activities to make the analyses more ANT-focused. Therefore, it is not surprising that to date, thorough studies that could explore the applicability of ANT in the fullness of its potential to translation research are still lacking.

This paper goes beyond the two types of applications of ANT to translation studies and attempts to combine the theoretical and practical potential of ANT. The English translation of the Chinese classic *Xi You Ji* by Arthur Waley, entitled *Monkey: A Folk-Tale of China*, is selected as the subject of study. Analysis will focus on non-human actors, one of the aspects of ANT that so far has been largely unexplored in translation studies. The goal is to understand from an ANT perspective how certain non-human actors contribute to the production of *Monkey*, a translation entirely different from the previous ones.

These non-human actors include objects that have usually been regarded as passive and being manipulated by human participants, a very typical example is the letters exchanged between the translator and the publisher. Interestingly, these letters also serve as the key source from which this article draws data, thanks to their property of mobility and immutability that ensures their travelling through space and time without substantial change (e.g. Latour 1986). In this paper, however, the range

of non-human actors is greatly expanded and they are considered as active agents: firstly, they vary, not only in forms of existence and the roles they play, but also in their ways of affecting the process and the outcome of the translation; secondly, not all of them are translation tools but they are so indispensable that translation activities could not be carried out without them; and thirdly, some of them seem detached or dependent to others, yet are significant enough to affect the translation process and change the final product.

## **2. Actor-network theory and non-human actors**

Emerging as an approach developed by social scientists conducting their research in the field of science and technology studies (e.g. Callon 1986a, 1986b; Latour and Woolgar 1986; Law 1992), ANT considers social causality in a way similar to that of microsociology. Unlike macrosociology, which sees the social as imposing on individual actors, microsociology considers actors as constantly (re)negotiating their relations and thereby weaving the very fabric of the social. In other words, microsociology views the social as growing out of actors' interactions. Thinking of society in a macrosociological way, for example, as systems, is referred to by the ANT scholars (jokingly aka "ants") as "sociology of the social", while ANT is regarded as the "sociology of associations", considering it sees society as consisting of various associations formed by actors (Latour 2007, 8-12). ANT scholars disagree with prioritising systems over actors, as simplifications ignore how uncertainties, innovations and various heterogeneous facts converge to make society. In brief, ANT

regards society as the result (effect) of networks evolving from actors' interactions.

Actor-network theory, as the name suggests, is a theory that studies networks of actors. What is an actor? The answer that ANT theorists give cannot fail to strike us as very unusual. An actor, they say, can be either human or non-human (Latour 1988). Non-human actors can be any independent entities, other than humans who are conventionally regarded as the constitution of 'society', that actively contribute to the development of an actor-network (cf. Latour 1987, 1988, 2007). Generally speaking, researchers have devoted to identifying and analysing a wide range of non-human actors including but not limited to, microbe (Latour 1988), animals (Callon 1986a), machines (Callon 1986b), plants (Hitchings 2003), and objects such as artefacts and inscriptions (Latour 2007). A classical example is how Michel Callon (1986a) factored in sea scallops as prominent actors in a social network. Non-human agency is theorised by ANT as equally important as human agency, which is not only indicated by the definition of actor but is also re-emphasised in, for instance, the *principle of generalised symmetry* proposed by Callon to guide and regulate practical studies.

The principle of generalised symmetry requires that both human and non-human agents should be taken into consideration and be described using the same terms when an actor-network is examined (Callon 1986a). Non-human actors are endowed with the ability to act or be made to act and share an equal probability to perform in the networking process, but they have hardly been discussed in translation studies so far.

A brief digression is called for here. In translation studies, there has been

research into non-human phenomena. The most prominent of these is text, for example, the source text, target text, peritext and paratext. There are also studies on computer-assisted translation tools, machine translation, and interpreting equipment. But all these studies have regarded these phenomena as more or less inert objects, whereas in ANT, they would be considered as active participants in translation activities. This is exactly the approach adopted in the present paper.

### **3. *Xi You Ji* and the *Monkey Project***

*Xi You Ji* (《西游记》 in Chinese) is widely known to English readers as *Journey to the West* or *Monkey*. As the original, the book is one of the Four Great Classical Novels of China, which is widely accepted as having been written by Wu Cheng'en in the sixteenth century. It depicts the adventures of four monks, the Tang dynasty (618 to 907 AD) Buddhist monk Xuanzang and his three disciples Sun Wukong (Monkey), Zhu Wuneng (Pigsy) and Sha Wujing (known as Sandy, or Friar Sand), in their legendary pilgrimage to the “western regions” (central Asia and India), which are considered as the birthplace of Buddhism and thus the home of the sacred texts they seek. During the pilgrimage, the four monks encounter demons and ghosts, and have to suffer numerous trials and ordeals before they obtain the sacred texts and return to China.

*Xi You Ji* has been circulating widely for hundreds of years both in China and abroad, not only in the form of books (including versions adapted for children and juveniles), but also as TV series, films and operas. The Chinese original has been

translated into many languages, among them English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Korean. The history of its translation into English, albeit not a long one, is rich and dynamic. *A Mission to Heaven: A Great Chinese Epic and Allegory*, translated by Timothy Richard; *The Buddhist Pilgrim's Progress*, translated by Helen M. Hayes; *Monkey: A Folk-Tale of China*, translated by Arthur Waley; *The Journey to the West*, translated by Anthony C. Yu and *Journey to the West*, translated by William J. F. Jenner – these are just a few among many English versions.

Arthur Waley's translation has been regarded as one of the most popular ones, and has attracted the attention of a number of researchers in translation studies. Studies have been carried out on linguistic, textual and cultural aspects, on subjects such as Waley as translator, his translation strategies, the language and style of the translation, the interpretation of theme and the representation of the image of the monkey (e.g. Liu 1984, Yang 2008 and Wong 2013). However, little research has considered the translation of *Monkey* as an outcome of social activities, let alone the application of ANT to the investigation of the non-human elements involved in the practical translation process as active participants, which is the focus of this article.

#### **4. On collecting and screening data: plausibility of the research**

The data in this research are mainly of a paratextual nature. They come from three sources: (1) the "Preface" to the translation written by the translator, Arthur Waley. It provides the translator's understanding of the original and his comments on the previous translations, along with the explanation on the translation strategies applied

in his own translation. (2) *The Truth about a Publisher: An Autobiographical Record* written by Stanley Unwin, who led the publication process of *Monkey*. It is cross-referenced as supporting data to describe, for example, the situations that the publisher encountered during the production process. (3) The historical archive of the publishing firm George Allen & Unwin Ltd, which has been preserved at the University of Reading, Special Collections. The records that are used in this article are letters exchanged before 1943. The archival information can be separated into two groups. The first group contains the letters exchanged during the period when the first impression of *Monkey* was under production between 1941 and 1942. The second group includes, but is not limited to, letters exchanged between the publisher and two external publishing agents, where the latter managed to gain the rights to publish their own versions of *Monkey*. This group of data extends the timeline to 1943, the year that witnessed the greatest success of the translation, when it was awarded a prize and the market for it started to expand both at home (in the form of re-printings) and abroad (in foreign language versions).

Multiple actors were presented. Those actors again brought in many more actors who may or may not be related directly to the translation project. This process went on with too many actors so that the question of drawing a boundary for the research project arises: which actors to include and which to exclude? A typical example lies in the communication, or the networking, between the translator and the publisher: should the postmen and the transportation devices that delivered the letters also be included in the list of actors? A simple way to address the question is to

include only the actors that are directly connected to the final product – the translation. “Directly connected” here means having direct impact on the translation. Thus, the letters between the translator and the publisher which can be shown to have influenced the resulting translation (standing only “one step” away from the translation) are included in the study, while the transportation devices which delivered the letters might have had only indirect influence, and are disregarded. In other words, the relevance of the actors to the translation should always be examined and the complicated associations between actors and other elements should be cut where necessary in order to keep the list clear. Thus in this article, only the non-human actors that were related directly to the production of *Monkey*, i.e., those that were mentioned in the files under study as having actually affected the practice of production, will be analysed, and particular attention will be paid to how associations between the actors progressed and developed.

##### **5. Visiting the non-human actors in the *Monkey* project**

Five major parties participated in the correspondence, namely the translator Arthur Waley, the jacket and title page designer Duncan Grant, the publisher George Allen & Unwin (represented throughout the correspondence by Stanley Unwin), the American publisher John Day Company and the Readers Union. Prior to the *Monkey* project, Waley had already been working with Unwin, acting not only as a translator, but also as an advisor, consultant, reviewer, and proofreader.<sup>2</sup> He recommended that Grant, rather than a Chinese artist, should design a jacket and a title page for the book,

although the latter had been the publisher's initial plan. Grant accepted Unwin's offer and started to design the jacket and the title page of *Monkey* while Waley proofread his own translation.<sup>3</sup>

The translation was finally published in late July 1942, and less than three months later, in October, Unwin was already arranging a re-print of *Monkey* and had approached John Day Company in the hope of selling the rights to the American version. As John Day Company was negotiating with Unwin for subsidiary rights and altering the original format for the American version, the news broke that *Monkey* had won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize, which both sides viewed as a welcome publicity boost. The third impression of the translation came out shortly in Britain and the American version achieved good sales as well. Hence, the two sides furthered their co-operation, planning a juvenile adaptation of the book. Almost at the same time, back in Britain, *Monkey* caught the attention of the managing director of the Readers Union, who offered to produce a Readers Union version and succeeded in acquiring the rights. Finally, the *Monkey* records of 1943 end with Unwin's explanation to Waley as to why the reprinting process was delayed, and his expressing the hope that stocks would be available again in a few weeks.

There are numerous non-human actors involved in the *Monkey* project during 1941-43, but, as is explained above, only some of them will be discussed here. The first group of non-human actors includes texts, that is, the "preface" to *Monkey* and some of the letters exchanged between the translator and the publisher. They help to understand, from the translator's own point of view, why the novel was re-translated

and how the translation was done very differently this time and in a very conscious way. The second group of non-human actors is related to the historical context, which made the printing and re-printing of *Monkey* particularly difficult. These two groups of non-human actors, although they cannot represent all of those that participated in the process, consist of the most crucial and typical types of non-human actors that affected the translating, printing and re-printing of *Monkey*.

### ***5.1 Why was the novel re-translated?***

There has been little direct discussion of the reasons why Arthur Waley decided to re-translate the Chinese novel, yet reviews of *Monkey* have shed some light on the subject and mentioned aspects such as the background of the Second World War and Waley's political leanings and attitude towards the war (Yang 2008). These aspects constitute some of the reasons, but fail to answer the question why any other piece of Chinese literature that fitted in the war background and might also interest Waley, was not (re-)translated. Moreover, researchers have approached the phenomenon of re-translation from their own personal stances, observing the subject as "expertised" by-standers. But since it is the participants that act according to their own understanding of the circumstances, which are real and practical, it is necessary to reverse the course, changing the starting point and looking at the problem from the perspectives of the participants.

When ANT is used to study the phenomenon of re-translation, its *principle of agnosticism* would require researchers to remain ignorant instead of presuming that they could explain or predict, and to respect what the actors say about the social.

Researchers who apply ANT should not assume their own professionalism and relegate actors' comments on the social to the unprofessional and inappropriate (Callon 1986a, Latour 2007). In other words, researchers should not censor any of the actors' comments on the social in general or their actions in a particular situation, their descriptions of background information or their working experience<sup>4</sup> (Callon 1986a, 200). Abiding by this principle, the following discussion bases on the "Preface" to *Monkey* and the letters exchanged between Unwin and Waley as important non-human actors that functioned in presenting the translator's expertise and revealing the translator-publisher relationship in Waley's and Unwin's own words, which in turn affected the decision to re-translate and publish *Monkey*.

The "Preface" to *Monkey*, written by the translator Arthur Waley himself, is a non-human actor that provides much information on Waley's deliberations and his strategies in re-translating the novel. Though the preface was initially intended to provide the readers with information on the cause of the translation and translation methods, it was meanwhile part of both the process and the product of translation. Thus, the "Preface" as a non-human actor is concrete and independent though closely connected with the translator's (human actor's) intentions, actions and translation ideas. Generally speaking, the preface tells, from Waley's perspective, what affected his re-translation action: the source text, existing translations, and his expertise.

First, as a sinologist, Waley understood perfectly well the source text and its value, more specifically, the centuries-old history of the novel, its prestige in Chinese literature and culture, its popularity among Chinese people, the history of Tripitaka

which became part of the story, the four major characters with their distinct personalities, the diverse elements such as folklore, religion and poetry that are mixed in the novel, its uniqueness in combining “beauty with absurdity” and “profundity with nonsense”, and also the insinuations it makes about hierarchy and bureaucracy (Wu 1953, 9-10). All these aspects of the original perceived by Waley already make it a book worth translating.

Second, as a translator, Waley was well aware of the unsatisfactory translation status of the book. Previous translations were either abridgements or “very inaccurate account” of the original (Wu 1953, 10). Current studies on the history of English translation of *Journey to the West* show that, prior to 1941, when Waley undertook its translation, certain parts of the book had been edited, adapted and translated by people such as Herbert Allen Giles (Giles 1901, which is mentioned by Waley himself in the “Preface”). However, these extract translations were included in anthologies of Chinese literature, and were so radically changed that they could hardly be called translation. Timothy Richard’s *A Mission to Heaven* and Helen Hayes’ *A Buddhist Pilgrim’s Progress* were the only two translations published as independent books, the former categorised by Waley as the same kind of “extracts” as those produced by Giles and the latter as “a very inaccurate account” of the original (Wu 1953, 10). Thus, the lack of a satisfactory translation of such a famous book demanded a new attempt to render it into English.

Third, as both a sinologist and a translator, Waley had a particular way of rendering a literary work as unique as *Journey to the West* into English. He noted in

the “Preface” that one of the Japanese translators who had translated the novel lacked knowledge of colloquial Chinese (ibid.), which indicates that Waley valued the translator’s expertise, in this particular case, the knowledge of Chinese conversational language and the skill to render it in a target language. In terms of translation strategy, Waley developed a new way to balance the length, the content and the style by selecting 30 chapters out of the 100 of the original and retaining most of the content of the selected chapters, especially the conversations, while dropping most verses that “would go very badly into English”, an approach which he considered quite opposite to the methods used in previous translations (Wu 1953, 9). This is something special that Waley wanted to contribute by re-translating the novel.

Thus, inferring from the preface, Waley’s expertise as a sinologist made him value the source text, his expertise as a translator made him understand the defects in existing translations, and his expertise as both made him expert at adjusting the content and length of the text and adopting a translation strategy for it. This is what preface as a non-human actor tells about or helps to disseminate faithfully the translator’s (as a human actor) explanation on how the expertise, the source text and the existing translations worked together in producing a translation entirely different from previous ones.

Furthermore, examining the rest of the non-human actors in the first group that consists of texts, i.e. letters exchanged between the translator and the publisher, reveals the previous associations between the translator and the publisher that helps to answer the question of why Waley published *Monkey* with George Allen & Unwin

rather than with another publisher. To put it simply, the previous successful and close connections superimposed and accumulated through letters as media, which enhanced the solidarity of the translator-publisher relationship. Although solidarity cannot prevent unpredictable actors or guarantee an absolutely stable relationship, it does attribute some inertia, and this facilitated the co-operation of Waley and Unwin in the publication of *Monkey*.

For example, one can infer from the letters exchanged between Waley and Unwin that, before *Monkey* was first mentioned in late September 1941, Waley had been working as a reviewer, consultant and translator with the publisher. He was commissioned to read some transcripts and return them to the publisher with his views on publication. Moreover, he had already successfully published works with the publisher, e.g., Unwin's letter of 24 April 1941 brings Waley up to date with the news about reprinting his *The Way and Its Power*. Another letter, a few days earlier, again proves the solidarity of the translator-publisher relationship:

It has always seemed to me [Unwin] a great pity that we could not publish a complete volume of your TRANSLATIONS FROM THE CHINESE. In view of the fact that we publish practically all your other work, do you think it is possible that you could persuade Constables to transfer the agreement for the 170 POEMS to us, ...<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, if there was no accident (i.e. in ANT terms, if no actor appeared unexpectedly), and in fact there was not, it was only natural that when Waley mentioned to Unwin his undertaking the translation of *Monkey* to Unwin, the latter immediately showed immense interest, although at the time he did not even know the title of the Chinese original.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the superimposition of the previous

associations in the correspondence between Waley and Unwin, as a non-human actor, helped in persuading Unwin to initiate the translation project. After that (the initiation), Unwin took series of actions to recruit other actors such as a designer and paper, and meanwhile, all the actors that joined the project interacted to achieve the publication of the translation (examples will be given in section 5..2). This corresponds respectively to the stages of *intéressement* and *enrolment*, when certain actors are interested in joining the project and then are coordinated to move the project forward (Callon 1986a, 207-214).

## 5.2 “*Amidst war and ’flu, we need luck*”

Actor-networks hardly ever appear smooth and regular. One of the reasons is that actors may (dis)appear and actions may occur unexpectedly in every phase of network formation. The process of producing the jacket and the title page for *Monkey* experienced detours that resulted from the dis/appearance of a series of unexpected actors and actions. The block-maker’s late suggestion of photographing the rough design obliged the publisher to ask the designer Duncan Grant to send the rough version back again; and when later Grant refused to allow the engraver’s artist to redraw his design, the publisher had to explain that the redrawing had been done “entirely contrary”<sup>7</sup> to their instructions, before it was finally decided that offset lithography was the best method to produce the design. To frustrate the printing process further, the binder failed to supply the lilac-coloured cloth that Grant had chosen, so the publisher had to ask Grant to select another colour instead. Perhaps the publisher never anticipated that so many problems would occur with the printing when earlier he had not given a time limit to Grant and did not ask for the design until

all (corrected text) proofs and printers were ready for printing. The result was that the printing process was delayed for months before *Monkey* was finally published.<sup>8</sup>

Besides unexpected actors/actions, there are also actors that perform as adversaries impeding the process of translation production. What follows will be an analysis of the non-human actors that countered the enrolment of other actors needed in the production. Below is an excerpt describing the situation when *Monkey* was out of stock and the fourth impression was under production:

A substantial reprint was put in hand the day we secured a special allowance of paper for it, ... but things move slowly these days and, although it has been given priority, there is little likelihood of the reprint being completed ... because the printers have a lot of their machines covered up for lack of people to run them, and have in addition been devastated by 'flu. They have had a personal letter from me emphasizing the importance of the book in present circumstances, and I shall see to it that, as soon as the sheets are ready, it goes on the binders' priority list. With luck, stocks should be available again within four or five weeks. (An excerpt of the letter from Unwin to Waley on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1943)

The major non-human actors that have left traces in the letter are the Second World War and the influenza. From the completion of the translation typescript in the autumn of 1941 (the translator should have started translating before that time) until the fifth reprint came out in 1945, the timespan of the publication of the five impressions of *Monkey* roughly overlapped that of the Second World War. The war was a non-human actor neither invited/*interested* nor welcomed in the translation production network. Nevertheless, it acted persistently, competing with other actors,

especially the publisher, by bringing in certain actors that were unfavourable and driving out those that were needed.

The most conspicuous of those that were brought in were a group of actors including restrictions on the use of paper for book publishing, bombing and enemy action (Unwin 1960, 252-258), which together resulted in a paper shortage. Another group of actors recruited by the war mainly consisted of calling-up notices from the army that led to the shortage of staff in the publishing company. To make the situation worse, influenza broke out in the winter of 1943. The influenza virus as another non-human adversary kept excluding workers from the few that were left. The fact is, in the winter of 1943, the publisher was experiencing severe paper and staff shortages just as the need to re-stock *Monkey* arose.

On the other hand, although the war drove away important actors such as paper and staff, the publisher managed to maintain the production process by securing paper supply and prioritising the book in both printing and binding. The succession of actions taken by the publisher again brought in new actors (e.g. the special allowance of paper) and might renew old ones (e.g. a priority list, if there were a previous one). Another example is that although the publisher was forced to hand over foreign rights due to lack of paper to produce versions for overseas markets (Unwin 1960, 258), this conduct enrolled foreign publishers and many more actors that formed the overseas production networks of *Monkey*. Therefore, in many cases, to compete with adversary actors, certain other actor(s) are recruited to maintain network development.

## **6. Discussion and Conclusion**

Although this article focuses on different non-human actors and some different associations between them, this by no means suggests that the ways that these non-human actors connected have been exhausted, or that they and the human actors or any actors in the network can be segregated. Meanwhile, the connections between the actors are definitely not uni- or oligo-dimensional ones that can be fully explored in the short space of this paper. For example, Mr. Unwin certainly not only led the *Monkey* project but was also involved in other publishing projects, fought against paper shortages, escaped bombings, fulfilled his duties as a fire warden, a husband, a father, a son, and so on. (Unwin 1960). In other words, an actor's role in a network can be multiple, and the actor must at the same time participate in more than one network. Third, actors change, as do their connections, and some change more frequently than others. An obvious example would be that while the war extended throughout the production and the reprints of *Monkey*, the stocks of the book kept running out, and hence it was reprinted four times during the war.

Actors can be human and non-human, and both should be treated equally in ANT-guided research. What actors themselves said and did should be respected, their identities should not be pre-assumed and their diversity and their multiple connections should be described without being reduced to "social explanations". In what has been discussed, the human actors mainly include Stanley Unwin from the publishing company, the translator Arthur Waley, and the designer Duncan Grant. There may have been a few more humans who can also be defined as actors but have not been identified from the letters alone. However, in general they are still far outnumbered by

their non-human counterparts, which include the “Preface”, the letters, the war, the influenza, paper, the printing machinery, and the binder, to name just a few of the most conspicuous that are presented in the sources used in this article.

Actors always appear in a swarm (Latour 2007). Every move of an actor-network is achieved by the association of various actors in different manners. On some occasions, certain actors go through others in order to establish new connection, e.g. Unwin recruited Grant as the designer on Waley’s recommendation. In other cases, certain actor(s) perceive and recruit actors into a network so as to induce an/other actor(s) or to create new one(s), e.g. when Waley evaluated the existing translations and published his re-translation of *Monkey* with George Allen & Unwin, the publisher. Furthermore, the sum of previous connections between actors influences the solidarity and the course of a network, e.g. the readiness of both the translator and the publisher to co-operate on the *Monkey* project, based on previous favourable experiences. There are also times when some actor(s) may appear unexpectedly while another/others impede/s the development of a particular network, as illustrated in, for example, the unexpected delay in the printing process for Grant’s design and the frustrated fourth impression of *Monkey*.

In addition to what has been discussed in this article, there are many more actors and connections within the production network waiting to be explored. A simple example is those that were involved in producing *Monkey* in domains outside the UK. When a project is viewed as an actor-network, not only are there actors appearing in different times and spaces, producing detours, zigzags, remote branches

and nodes crowded with all kinds of humans, non-humans, figurations and non-figurations, but at the same time these actors generate causes and effects in superimposing spaces and across time, metabolising and connecting in unexpected multiplicity. It is when we look back after examining some of the connections that constitute the production network of *Monkey* as a re-translation that we understand why ANT has been rejecting “social explanations” and insisting on reversing causality, that is, as Harold Garfinkel believed, “sociology could be a science accounting for how society is held together, instead of using society to explain something else or to help solve one of the political questions of the time” (Latour, 2007, 13). This applies to studies of translation as social activities as well.

To conclude, applying actor-network theory to the study of translation production broadens and deepens understanding of a translation project. It helps to bring in a wider range of agents that affect the final product in different ways and to discover more connections between these agents. It can also investigate how a translation gradually becomes, in real and practical circumstances, the text presented in front of the general reader. Moreover, non-human elements, most of which are either neglected in previous studies or have been regarded as somewhat inert and isolated, actually not only affect translation production by impeding or accelerating the process, but also transform the outcome in significant ways. Imagine, for example, that if the previous translations had been good enough or had taken the colloquial language seriously, Waley might not have chosen to re-translate *Monkey* or would not have focused on Chinese colloquial when he undertook the re-translation; or if the

binder had been able to supply the lilac cloth that Grant initially chose, the jacket and title page would look different; and if there had been plentiful supplies of paper, the foreign versions of *Monkey* would have been published by George Allen & Unwin itself and distinct in both the content and the book cover. All these are aspects that could not have been explored by studying the linguistic, textual, or even cultural aspects of the translation alone.

## Notes

1. “*Translation*” in the sense used in ANT is italicised in order to differentiate it from the term “translation” as used in translation studies.
2. See correspondence between Waley and Unwin, in the Records of George Allen & Unwin Ltd, University of Reading, Special Collections.
3. Refer to correspondence relating to the *Monkey* project during the period from October 1941 to January 1942 between Waley and Unwin, and Grant and Unwin, in the Records of George Allen & Unwin Ltd, University of Reading, Special Collections.
4. The principle of agnosticism consists of two major points. To put it simply, first, what the actors say about the social should be respected, and second, the identities of the actors and the roles they play should not be pre-assumed or pre-fixed. What has been introduced here is the first requirement.
5. The capitals are in the original letter. It is an excerpt from the letter from Unwin to Waley on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1941.
6. From Unwin’s letter written on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1941. The letter reads: “We should be most interested to learn some time what progress you have been able to make with your translation of JOURNEY TO THE WEST or whatever the Chinese novel is called upon which you are now at work.”
7. 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1942 letter from the Production Department of the publisher to Duncan Grant.
8. See letters between Waley and Unwin and those between Grant and Unwin, from January to April 1942.

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