



Fragments And Links: Organisational Actor-World Of The Harry Potter Phenomenon

Stream 3: Organization / Literature: Beyond Equivalence and Antinomy

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“However, what is the strangest, what is the least understandable of all, is how authors can take such topics, I have to admit, it is completely incomprehensible, to be sure...no, no, don’t understand at all” (N.V. Gogol).

Prologue

Harry Potter barely needs an introduction; however he may need a justification. There are several reasons for remembering J.K.Rowling’s creations when thinking about the relationship between organisation and works of fiction. One of the reasons is the current cultural significance of the wizard schoolboy. Harry Potter is part of a real craze of the moment, which has come to be referred to as ‘the Harry Potter phenomenon’ (eg Montan 2001) and ‘the Potter Magic’ (eg Lynch 2001) and has enchanted children and adults alike all around the globe. This popularity is closely related to another reason why the Harry Potter phenomenon is relevant: its recipe is clearly about more than just the contents of the stories. The general impression is that, as Andrew Blake writes in *The Irresistible Rise of Harry Potter* (2002), “the Harry Potter phenomenon is, it seems, unquenchable” (p.1) – it is, so far, an inexhaustible goldmine for all who choose to be on the right side of Harry. Take, for instance, the good fortune of Bloomsbury and Scholastic– two formerly ailing publishers of children’s literature who happened to make the right guess on Rowling’s writing – and, to a lesser degree, of the countless translators, distributors, sales and promotion specialists, bookshops and logistic companies: the Harry Potter books (four published, the fifth one to be released on the 21st of June this year, and two more forthcoming – one per year of this school saga) have so far sold over 190 million copies worldwide. Their translations keep mounting – the latest count is 55 languages (Tonkin 2003). Only the Bible has been translated into more (Blake 2002). Or take the revenues generated by the Warner Brothers’ productions of the first two Harry Potter films, and, more marginally, by the producers of the countless Harry Potter merchandise: toys (including Lego), video and computer games, websites, stationary etc. And, last but not least, consider the author, who on the back of her work, now being regularly compared to C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien, has risen from the humble situation of a secondary school teacher to that of the second richest woman in Britain (Ostling 2003).

The list of Harry Potter actants can go on. Like any really successful contemporary work of fiction Joanne Rowling’s literature does not stop at itself, but rather supersedes itself by spinning its own truly impressive organisational actor-network. This industrious industrial entanglement challenges what may be called the ‘disembodied’ conceptualisation of literature – the conceptualisation that is centred on the contents of works of fiction alone. The necessity of heterogeneous enrolment does not allow literature to stand on its own in analysis but contests its boundaries and its very concept. It re-opens the question of materiality and hence of the material organisation of contemporary literary phenomena.

The main aim of this paper is to re-problematise the relationship between works of fiction and organisation. It draws on ANT not as a theory but as a way of travelling (Latour 1999) in order “to talk about complexity, to appreciate complexity, and to practice complexity” (Law 1999, p.10). More specifically, I would like to simulate some of the complexity of the links between organisation and fictional literature by travelling a selection of passages of the tangled actor-network of the Harry Potter phenomenon. The text below is therefore an assemblage of links and fragments – not a complete collection of all potential connections. The impossibility of such collection is precisely the point, for, as it will transpire, each text that attempts to establish a list of connections is itself an intermediary that constitutes new links.

The following two sections are two simulations of possible translations of the Harry Potter stories into organisation studies. The first one establishes the relevance of fiction by drawing on the idea of mutual reproduction between fictional texts and organisation theory and illustrates it by weaving the latter together with an interpretation of the stories. The second one attempts to decentre the stories in order to follow the links made by some of the other actors of the Harry Potter actor-world. In both of these simulations Harry Potter transpires as an organisational phenomenon, the complexity of which does not allow for a final settlement of passages and links.

Simulation 1: Harry Potter Stories and the ‘Real’ Organisations

Even though, traditionally, fictional literature has been excluded from the realm of organisation studies, nowadays its appearance is no longer a surprise. The study of organisations, it has been said, is on the move towards humanities (Zald 1993, 1996). Organisational scholars have begun to draw on fictional literature largely inspired by the wider societal phenomena that at various points have been named postmodernism, the cultural turn, the linguistic or rhetorical turn etc (see, for instance, Alvesson and Kärreman 2000). In doing so they have pointed to various ways in which organisation studies would benefit from such enrolment of monsters. For instance, it has been argued that the language of fictional literature is much better than that of traditional academic texts at expressing the richness of organisational life (Knights and Willmott 1999) and as such is indispensable in strengthening connections between organisational scholars and organisational members (Phillips 1995), that literary devices can be successfully applied to uncover the hidden aspects of organisation (Czarniawska 1997a, 1999), and that fictional writing can even be employed as a style of organisational analysis (Rhodes opted for a short story (1997, 1999), Starkey 1999 – for a one-act play). This appropriation of fictional literature into the study of organisations has been set against the background of the increase in awareness of the ‘fictionality of organisational life’ (De Cock 2000). The rise of organisational culture both as the latest normative wave in managerial discourse (Barley & Kunda 1992) and as an academic object (Linstead & Grafton-Small 1992) has been accompanied by the study of organisational symbolism (Turner 1990, ed; Alvesson & Berg 1996) and, more specifically, by a cascading range of studies undertaken into organisational language (Westwood & Linstead 2001, eds), discourse (Grant et al 1998), metaphor (Morgan 1997, Grant & Osrick 1996), aesthetics (Linstead & Höpfl 2000, eds), storytelling (Gabriel 2000), sensemaking (Weick 1995, 2000), belief and myth making (Pattison 1997) etc. Though it would be valid to argue that all of these inquiries have played a part in opening up the space for the study of fictional literature

in relation to organisation, the most crucial development in this respect has probably been that of organisational textuality (Linstead 1999). If organisations can be viewed as texts (Thachankary 1992, Czarniawska 1997b, Woodilla 1998, Thatchenkery 2001) and organisation studies as a collection of genres (Czarniawska 1999, Rhodes 2001), then an enrolment of alternative kinds of texts and genres suddenly becomes more feasible. The relation of the text of organisation to ‘fictional’ texts can be probed with a hope of finding the ‘factual’ in the ‘fictional’. One could argue that this deconstruction of the fictionality of the works of fiction completes the circle begun by the deconstruction of the factuality of scientific organisational accounts.

In organisation studies quite a few attempts have been made to draw attention to these transmutations of the factual and the fictional. They include the discussion of representation of organisation in popular culture (Hassard & Holliday 1998, eds), the enrolment of novels for teaching purposes by Knights and Willmott (1999), Starkey’s play about Oliver Stone’s *Wall Street* (1999), the special issue of *Organization* on organisation and science fiction (Parker et al 1999, eds) followed by a book on the same subject (Smith et al 2001, eds), and De Cock’s discussion of the fantastic visions of Jorge Luis Borges (2000).

On the whole, the general understanding of the relationship between organisation and works of fiction that characterises many of these publications is that of a mutual reproduction. For instance, Grey argues that not only “in reading fictional representations...we acquire an insight into organisational realities”, but also that there is an important role played by “fictional representations in the construction of organizational realities”, which is largely ignored in organisation studies (Grey 1998, p.131), whereas Hassard & Holliday write that “ideology produces popular culture and popular culture produces ideology” (Hassard & Holliday 1998, p.3). This is a view of the transmutations of the factual and the fictional as an ongoing reproductive work, where organisational actors reproduce themselves through the (involuntary?) enrolment of popular narratives, and where the popular culture reproduces itself by reproducing organisational actors. In this reproduction the factual and the fictional are dependent on each other for survival.

This particular representation lends itself very easily to anyone choosing to travel the Harry Potter actor-network. At the level of text – the text of the stories – one can discern more than a single apparition of the contemporary capitalist organisation. Not only is the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, which is the main locus of the adventures experienced by Harry and friends, a total institution in the best traditions of a British boarding school, but the books are also populated by numerous other – mostly magical but also Muggle (non-magical) – organisations. Equally, the Harry Potter stories are also stories of organising – both the mundane everyday organising that is the ongoing work of maintenance of the aforementioned organisations and the extraordinary acts of organising – the adventures per se – that go beyond the routine to combat what is seen as disruptively disorganising forces.

This rich array of organisational presence, when combined with the fact that the Harry Potter stories, like any children’s literature, convey particular moral messages (cf. Stephens 1992), turns the main characters into potential organisational role models. It is through this moralising potential that the particular societal and organisational orderings that have been reproduced in the fictional narrative acquire

the chance to be once again reproduced – this time in the organisations of the future. Grey took up this idea to argue that the hidden organisation- and work-related messages implicit in the children’s literature of 40s and 60s, have by now, albeit partially, constituted the mindsets and work-related expectations of many of those in high and low organisational roles (Grey 1998). With Harry’s current popularity, one could speculate, Rowling’s books could offer a sneak preview of what organisational future may look like – 50 years down the line when the young Harry Potter fans of today rise to positions of power (and powerlessness) in organisations. In this is the case, it may be significant that two stereotypical relationships of an individual to organisation transpire from the Harry Potter stories – that of an organisational member (a student or an employee) in relation to the organisation of Hogwarts and that of a consumer in relation to most of the other organisations within the books.

Organisation of Hogwarts

The organisation of Hogwarts is full of surprises. It is a space of both continuity and change (and of continuity of change). Here change is present in all its obscurity. For Hogwarts is not an enclosure that can be easily organised and managed – at least not in an ordinary and rational fashion. Even the architecture of the school resists attempts of control. Here the painted figures come to life (representations do indeed construct realities in a very vivid and literal sense) and poltergeist Peeves appears most unexpectedly (what is he – an embodiment of the uncontrollable environment, a constantly threatening reminder of our biological inadaptability, or the materialised uncontrollable from within the darkness of the soul?); here, although the school remains the same in its mysterious nature, the processes of change are continuous and ongoing, for even the staircases spontaneously change their locations at Hogwarts, suddenly making the most unexpected connections between floors, corridors and enchanted spaces, bridging the known and the unfathomable, and exposing the heroes to dangers and adventures. This is strikingly reminiscent of the romanticism of the recent strand of organisational change rhetoric, which insists that organisations change continuously yet this change cannot be arbitrarily controlled, that the world is routinised yet confusing and as a result prosaic processes may produce surprising and dramatic outcomes, and that adaptation involves an interplay of rationality and foolishness, playfulness and ambiguity (March 1981).

So, paradoxically, Hogwarts is also a space of structure and control. Here the magically powerful organisational change co-exists with the minute disciplinary ordering of space and time and with specific technologies that are required by such ordering (Foucault 1977). Technologies of the self, of power and of knowledge, of production and of sign systems (Martin et al 1988, eds.) abound at Hogwarts and are inextricably linked to each other in the processes of producing wizards and witches. Quite often these technologies are embodied in specific magical-technological artefacts that in the games of the magical discourse are more easily, if not to say *naturally*, anthropomorphised than they are in the games that follow the rules of academic texts in organisation studies. A magical artefact of Hogwarts is therefore a Latourian artefact (cf. Latour 1992). For instance, the control technologies of the ceremony of Sorting into Houses at Hogwarts are embodied in the boastful Sorting Hat. The song sung by the Hat in the beginning of the ceremony is effectively a list of its criteria for *normalisation* of the students: i.e. the criteria for differentiation,

hierarchization, homogenisation and exclusion (Foucault 1977) for each particular house:

*“There’s nothing hidden in your head
The Sorting Hat can’t see,
So try me on and I will tell you
Where you ought to be.
You might belong in Gryffindor,
Where dwell the brave of heart,
Their daring, nerve and chivalry
Set Gryffindors apart;
You might belong in Hufflepuff,
Where they are just and loyal,
Those patient Hufflepuffs are true
And unafraid of toil;
Or yet in wise old Ravenclaw,
If you’re a ready mind,
Where those of wit and learning,
Will always find their kind;
Or perhaps in Slytherin
You’ll make your real friends,
Those cunning folk use any means
To achieve their ends”* (Rowling 1997, p.88).

It is easy to see that the Hat embodies technologies of production (it permits to (re)produce and manipulate the houses), technologies of sign systems (it partially establishes a meaning of what it is to be in each particular house), technologies of power (since the minds of the students are completely transparent to the Hat, it can objectify each individual student and normalise by classifying them as belonging to a particular house), and, of course, technologies of the self (by matching a student with a house the Hat begins the process of constructing the students in respect of what they are and of what they should become, and it also begins to construct their relationships with the rest of the school – both within and without their own houses).

There are, of course, loci of control other than the Sorting Ceremony at the School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The Houses themselves, being in competition with each other, are a means of generating peer-based responsibility and pressure. As Professor McGonagall tells the new students:

“While you are at Hogwarts, your triumphs will earn your house points, while any rule-breaking will lose house points. At the end of the year, the house with the most points is awarded the House Cup, a great honour. I hope each of you will be a credit to whichever house becomes yours” (Rowling 1997, pp.85-86).

Also, like a traditional British boarding school Hogwarts has a well-defined hierarchy of teachers, going up to the Heads of Houses and culminating in the Headmaster – the benevolent and powerful Professor Dumbledore – and, at the lower level, an hierarchy of students, starting from the ‘ickle firsties’, as Peeves calls them, going up to Prefects and Heads of Houses and culminating in the Head Boy and Head

Girl. Furthermore, there is also a strong presence of the system of rules. Lessons are run according to timetables, being late for classes is an offence (not even a changing staircase provides a reasonable excuse), the students are not allowed to walk around the school at night, banned from the Forbidden Forest and from certain parts of the school, and not allowed to do magic outside the school premises or in the corridors during the breaks.

Still, paradoxically, the rules are there to be both kept and broken. Most of the adventures in all of the four books are based on rule breaking – yet not the ‘irresponsible’ kind that comes from resisting organisational control. Rowling-style rule breaking is neither resistance nor consent, it does not arise from the necessity to survive organisational oppression or alienation like it has been said to do in contemporary organisations (Noon & Blyton 1997). Rather, it is the type of rule breaking that comes from the values placed on the entrepreneurial self, on the rhetorics of self-actualisation and empowerment. For Hogwarts is first and foremost a factory of the self. Despite the rule by tradition, Albus Dumbledore is a strongly charismatic leader who seems fully aware that being a good wizard means more than being a rule-obedient and diligent student, and, unlike many other teachers, he allows students to break school rules in order to achieve higher goals. It is learning this lesson that allows Hermione to fully join Harry and Ron in their adventures. Hermione starts at Hogwarts by being fanatical about studying, keeping the rules and being efficient. Her star line near beginning of the first book is “we could have been killed – or worse, expelled” (Rowling 1997, p.120). Yet just a hundred of pages later she says to Harry: “Books! And cleverness! There are more important things – friendship and bravery and – oh Harry – be careful!” (p.208). As for Harry, he is clearly marked out as the Chosen One (Scott & Shulman 1999, Neal 2002), and work has to begin on him whilst he is still a baby. Because his survival of a death curse cast by the evil Lord Voldemort that had killed Harry’s parents and Voldemort’s subsequent disappearance made Harry famous throughout the magical world, Dumbledore has to protect the boy’s character by leaving him with his bullying Muggle uncle, aunt and cousin (the Dursleys):

“Famous before he can walk and talk! Famous for something he won’t even remember! Can’t you see how much better off he’ll be, growing up away from all that until he’s ready to take it?” (Rowling 1997, pp.15-16)

Indeed, as Harry joins Hogwarts, he seems to need all the humility he has gained by spending 11 years with the Dursleys. However, he also has to continue to work on his self – especially where confronting his past and the lost love of his parents is concerned – in order to overcome the dangers he encounters and achieve his full and yet unknown potential. In this sense the ethic of Hogwarts, despite all the references to magic, remains grounded in that of secularised Protestantism, which, as Weber has famously shown, constitutes the very spirit of the modern capitalist organisation (Weber 1930).

Other Organisations in the Harry Potter stories

As Blake succinctly puts it:

“Even when, wizard-cloaked and wand in hand, he is defeating monsters, Harry Potter is a contemporary boy. [] He therefore shops” (Blake 2002, p.71).

There is an amazing detail in Rowling’s description of industry and consumption. The Diagon Alley – the Oxford street of the magical world – is teeming with business: the Gringotts Bank, the bookshop Flourish and Blotts, Ollivanders – the makers of fine wands since 382BC, the magical pet emporium the Magical Menagerie, Madam Malkin’s Robes For All Occasions are just a small part of the great shopping experience that so far has played a part in every one of Rowling’s stories. Apart from the Diagon Alley there is the Honeydukes candy store in a village of Hogsmeade adjacent to Hogwarts, and the sweets trolley on Hogwarts Express, both of which sell a large and well described range of merchandise. Wherever he is in the magical world, it seems, Harry Potter can’t escape desiring and consuming. And it is at this point of pervasive consumerism that it becomes particularly difficult to limit the organisational relevance of the Harry Potter phenomenon purely to the contents of the stories.

Simulation 2: Organisational Actor-Network of Harry Potter

The parable of the mutual reproduction acquires sharper outlines at the level where the stories become decentred in relation to other seemingly insignificant actors in the network. At this level it is impossible to consider Harry Potter outside of the world of organisations – rather it is easily seen as an organisational assemblage, an actor-network made of partial connections between numerous allies that are required to raise and maintain literature at the level of its global popularity – the allies that rely on the powers of association in their mutual translations (Latour 1986). At this level the transmutations of the factual and the fictional run out of control. This is particularly evident where the artefacts described in the stories get produced ‘for real’ as is the case with broomsticks, wands and some sought-after sweets of the Harry Potter stories – the Bertie Bott’s Every Flavour Beans and the Chocolate Frogs that include collectors’ cards. Instances of the reproduction of the fictional consumerism into the factual consumerism at the first glance, they go well beyond this, for the newly *realised* brands serve as agents of further extension and perpetuation of the fiction of Harry Potter. Their own factuality, too, is a fiction, for they fall short of the magic they represent (broomsticks do not fly, wands do not cast spells, the Every Flavour Beans are much more limited in the taste range than their fictional counterparts, the Chocolate Frogs cannot jump and get away, and the famous witches and wizards stay on the collectors’ cards rather than disappearing to go about their own business).

These mechanics of transmutation and mutual enrolment also transpire in more obscure and partial connections. Such is the case with the toy industry’s production and marketing of the Harry Potter toy models, computer and card games. Clearly an instance of translation of representations into new representations, this construction of associated commodities cannot separate itself fully from the webs from which it is derived. Lego’s act of purchasing the right to “*the eponymous building bricks*” (Brown 2002) is therefore simultaneously an act of acquiring an obligation to move through particular passages, as is Coca Cola’s multimillion sponsorship a bet on the powers of association between the two globally travelling brands. In contrast to that, the recent trend in the candy industry for sweets that change colour or texture, pop or

fizzle and are wrapped in magic-themed packaging (Fetto 2001) is more remote, for it relies on an association with the general *theme* of the phenomenon. The relative insignificance of this connection is marked by the price-free enrolment and association.

According to Latour, the ability to build longer and stronger networks is one of the few things that distinguish the moderns from the non-moderns (Latour 1993). This is certainly true where the contemporary literary phenomena like Harry Potter are concerned. Long networks, however, have problems of their own. The complexity and heterogeneity of the organisational network of Harry Potter are such that the enrolment of many of the less significant actors is almost arbitrary – translations produce translations in an almost unaccounted for way, and the boundaries of free association must therefore be a matter of constant negotiation and policing. This is reflected in the number of copyright disputes and product counterfeiting instances that have become part of the Harry Potter phenomenon. Action at a distance against actors that try to avoid the passage obligations required of faithful allies is brought about by enlistment and mediation of even more allies, the most significant of which are the representatives of the legal profession. Warner Brothers, for instance, have instigated legal processes against hundreds of fans (many of them teenagers) that had created Harry Potter websites in different corners of the world. In one case a total of 107 Internet addresses were ordered to be transferred to Warner Brothers as a result. In China the release of the Harry Potter books had to be brought forward due to a high number of pirated copies being sold (Montan 2001), whilst the recent challenge in Russia has been the appearance of the adventures of Tanya Grotter – a series of books that were initially conceived as a parody of Harry Potter and that have proved as popular as the British original. Joanne Rowling has just won the case preventing the translation of Tanya Grotter into Dutch. As can be seen from these examples, the extension of the network often has to proceed by acts of hostility towards unfaithful actors – by preventing them from travelling the established links and/or by confiscating from them other unlawfully constructed actants.

It has been argued that assembling heterogeneous allies into texts makes them easier to transport to other sites (Law 1986). The significance of textual assemblage is perhaps particularly obvious where literary phenomena like Harry Potter are concerned. It is hardly surprising, then, that much of Harry Potter network extension occurs by enrolling other texts as allies. The most obvious aspect of this enrolment of texts is the sheer weight of publicity surrounding the phenomenon. Apart from the ongoing attention of the ‘regular’ media, Harry Potter has also been noticed by academic publications. The latter (the present text included) assemble various aspects of the phenomenon together with academic theories or models and in this way transport it to more ‘serious’ spheres. For instance, the extensive consumerist webs grown around Rowling’s creations were soon to be explored by marketing academics. A common pattern in marketing publications is the translation of the cultural success of Harry Potter as a demonstration of validity of particular marketing models and explanations. For instance, Lynch interprets the ‘Potter magic’ in terms of the books’ ‘authentic origins’, ‘shared experience’ for young and old readers and ‘target insight’ (Lynch 2001). On the other hand, among the more sophisticated assemblages is that of Brown (2002). He begins by pointing to representations of marketing in the Harry Potter stories. He is ecstatic about the great marketing spin and polish received from Rowling by individual products, shops and servicescapes of the magic world. He

notes the detail of advertising, pricing, value-added, logistics, monetary system, consumption-rich anniversaries and holidays, as well as lessons of marketing morality implicit in the books, with disreputable marketing types represented by Vernon Dursley, who is narrow-minded, nitpicking and lacking imagination, and Gilderoy Lockhart, a Defence against the Dark Arts teacher who is handsome, vain and cares for nothing but seeking publicity as a celebrity author. Brown then mentions in passing the fact that 'Harry parlance' has already entered the marketing sphere. A 'Marketing Muggle', apparently, "is an advertising executive who lacks the all-important creative spark or suffers from imagination deficit disorder" (Brown 2002, p.127). Having thus established Rowling's books as a marketing authority, Brown proceeds with his ultimate translation. His breathtaking conclusion is that the books "hold the solution to an ancient marketing mystery" (ibid.), which is, apparently, mysteriousness itself; that "marketing, then, moves in mysterious ways, in magical ways, in mysteriously magical ways" (ibid, p.132), and that:

"mystery has its place, that intrigue is necessary, that riddle-me-ree is right and proper, that secrecy is the secret of the universe. As the twenty-first century dawns, perhaps Harry Potter should replace Karl Popper as the cynosure of our field" (ibid).

The enrolment of Harry Potter into marketing academia is complete until it is next challenged.

Though such translations of Harry Potter may seem like a free ride, as well as far fetched, they do extend the network to sites it would not otherwise reach (after all, to participate in a discussion of Harry Potter literature one ought to have read it or at least to have heard of it). On organisational map there seem to be all kinds of obscure routes that take Harry Potter to unusual places. This travelling is often a duty of intermediation, where "*the intermediation work carried out by the text*" (Bloomfield & Vurdubakis 1997, p.89) of the Harry Potter stories is that between the working environment of a particular company and wider management and cultural trends.

The intermediation work of the Harry Potter stories is precisely the process that deconstructs the boundary between literature and organisation, for it is the work of organising, in which heterogeneous material from both realms is reshuffled and reassembled in order to make new enrolments possible. As such, it is invariably a production of hybrids (cf. Latour 1993). It is an organising of partial inclusion and exclusion of aspects of the stories that could be profitable for a particular translation. For instance, in the previous section I have discussed aspects of organisation of Hogwarts that I found particularly translatable into aspects of organisational theory. Similarly selective interpretations serve to build networks shared between aspects of Harry Potter stories and business practice.

Entrepreneur Magazine, for instance, has posted an article by Geoff Williams, who had interviewed several business gurus and consultants on the subject of Harry Potter, from which he has derived 8 business lessons for entrepreneurs, as well as entrepreneurial profiles of the main characters of the books. On the basis of Harry's adventures at Hogwarts entrepreneurs are reminded of the need to understand the various cultures in one's company (the four Houses of Hogwarts), to reward initiative (Harry's positive rule breaking), to abandon business plan when necessary (change

and surprises in Harry's adventures) etc. (Williams 2001). Harry still has not left school, but, apparently, he already has something to say about "the trials of growing business" and "the rewards of independence and ownership" (ibid, p.1). What will happen when he finally graduates?

Even more interesting, perhaps, is the incorporation of Harry Potter into a team-building program undertaken by Deploy Solutions Inc. – a software company that creates HR tools in Massachusetts. The employees of this company have recently undergone a random 'sorting' ceremony to determine a placement in one of the Hogwarts Houses and since then have been participating in various Harry Potter-themed competitions. This Harry Potter strategy was said to build team spirit, "to spark a positive transfiguration in the workplace", "to reach out and make a difference in the community" (Rodgers 2001, pp.1-2) and, in the aftermath of September the 11th, "to cope and rebuild, but it's also increasing productivity and strengthening relationships" (*Innovative Harry Potter Competition Builds Team Spirit* 2002, p.23). Given a recent surge of interest in organisational spirituality as a tool for business transformation and the background of the revival of paganism¹ as part of the New Age movement (Heelas 1991, 1996, Roberts 1994), one can begin to speculate some of the reasons why the intermediation of Harry Potter could be attractive in instigating a transformational change program.

Epilogue

I have tried to offer some insight into the complexity of the relationship between organisation and works of fiction. The purpose of travelling two very partial, fragmented and incomplete simulations of organisational actor-world of Harry Potter was to demonstrate that it is difficult to reduce the nature of that relationship to any single normalisation. The lines of demarcation drawn by attempts at such settlements merely add to the lines that had been drawn before. They in turn become subject to normalisation. New texts merely co-construct the network – they cannot escape their dependency on other texts they translate – whether the initial purpose of translation was to support or reject them – and neither can they keep their version of translation fixed.

The purpose of travelling the second simulation in particular was to trace some of the heterogeneous network construction at the level where the Harry Potter stories are decentred though still active as obligatory passage points. At this level it becomes especially obvious that the process of the mutual reproduction is not an exchange relationship between 'the two solitudes' of organisation and literature (Phillips 1995) – rather it is an ongoing process of interestment and enrolment of allies into a web of partial translation. As such, it is an ongoing work of organising of links, where the work of separation and boundary-making co-exists with the work of mediation and hybrid production (Latour 1993). The global span of contemporary literary phenomena is at once a global span of organisational links – the links that are not fixed, but rather are made and disappear as opportunity or necessity arises. The Harry Potter phenomenon, in particular, is still very much an actor-world-in-the-making,

¹ There are over 40,000 pagans in today's Britain, with an estimated 15 covens in Glasgow and 20 in Edinburgh, and, according to a story in the London Sunday Mail those who aspire to a diploma in Wicca can now apply for government grants (Elvin 2001).

and the potentialities of its organisational configuration and transmutations are a matter of speculation just like Harry's future adventures. In this play of potentialities the notions of organisation and literature refuse a fixed demarcation of boundaries. They can neither be fully separated out nor reduced into one. One can argue that in various ways and in various guises they remain – stubbornly, teasingly – ‘more than one and less than many’ (Haraway 1991).

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