FRAGMENTS AND LINKS: ORGANISATIONAL ACTOR- WORLD OF THE HARRY POTTER PHENOMENON

Author copy of the article published in *Culture and Organization* 2007:
13 (4), pp. 313-325

Dr Alexandra Bristow
Surrey Business School
University of Surrey
Guildford, Surrey
GU2 7XH
UK

+44 (0)1483 686349

a.bristow@surrey.ac.uk

http://www.surrey.ac.uk/management/people/alexandra_bristow/

Abstract:

The paper seeks to develop an Actor-Network Theory perspective on the relationship between organisation and literature by focusing on the Harry Potter phenomenon. The latter is seen as an example of how contemporary popular 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. When the contents of the literary texts are decentred in that they are taken as but one (however important) actor of the actor-world that comes to be known by their name, other actors become more visible that help to conceptualise Harry Potter as an organisational, as much as a literary, phenomenon.

Keywords: organisation, literature, fiction, Actor-Network Theory, heterogeneity, complexity

Prologue

Harry Potter barely needs an introduction; however, as an object of this paper he may need a justification. The aim of this text is to develop an Actor-Network Theory (ANT) perspective on the question of the relationship between organisation and literature, and there are several reasons for focusing on J. K. Rowling's creations in order to do so. One of the reasons is the current popular-cultural significance of the

wizard schoolboy. Harry Potter is part of a real craze of the moment, extended and perpetuated through extensive international media coverage; 'the Potter Magic' having, apparently, enchanted both children and adults around the globe (Lynch 2001). And it is the insistence on referring to this craze as 'the Harry Potter phenomenon' (eg Montan 2001; see also the eponymous ongoing *In Depth* feature on the BBC website¹) that constitutes another reason why it is highly relevant: its recipe is clearly about more than just the contents of the stories. Business-wise, it has been 'unquenchable' (Blake 2002: 1), proving an inexhaustible goldmine for all who chose to be on the right side of Harry. Take, for instance, the good fortune of Bloomsbury and Scholastic – the two formerly ailing publishers of children's literature who made the right guess on Rowling's writing – and, to a lesser degree, of the countless translators, distributors, sales and promotion specialists, bookshops and logistics companies: the Harry Potter books (six published and one more forthcoming – one per year of this school saga) have hit the 300 million copies sold worldwide mark in October 2005. Their foreign language translations keep mounting – the latest count (again, as of October 2005) is 63 languages: allegedly, only the Bible has been translated into more (Blake 2002). Or take the revenues generated by the Warner Brothers' productions of the (to date) first four Harry Potter films, and, more marginally, by the producers of the countless Harry Potter merchandise: toys (including Lego), video and computer games, websites, stationery, wand shops 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). These are just the innermost ripples of the Harry Potter phenomenon, and the list of persons, organisations and artefacts involved in it can go on. To put it

in the language of Actor-Network Theory, the Harry Potter 'actor-world' (the sphere of pervasion and influence of the 'phenomenon') is comprised of connections between impressively numerous and diverse 'actors' (heterogeneous participants like persons, organisations, artefacts etc); and it is the number and the diversity of these actors, one could say, that constitute both the extent of its popularity and the complexity of links between fictional literature and organisation that it embodies.

Over the recent years organisation scholars have begun to reassess the organisation/literature relationship. Prior to this reassessment fictional literature and organisational analysis had been predominantly seen as 'two solitudes' (Phillips 1995) or even an 'antinomy' (De Cock & Land 2006) – interpretations in keeping with the lines of demarcation drawn over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries between science and art, fact and fiction, scientific culture and popular culture. Yet the recent poststructuralism-inspired attempts to scale these conventional boundaries have produced a more intimate engagement between organisation studies and humanities (Zald 1993, 1996) and have allowed the inclusion of works of fiction among the 'transgressive' pursuits in organisational analysis. Nowadays, whether it is the conceptual tools of literary theory that are used for interpreting organisational discourses (eg Czarniawska 1997, 1999; Rhodes 2001), or, more directly, the contents of works of fiction that are mined for insights into organisational life (eg Czarniawska-Joerges & Guillet de Monthoux 1994, eds; Hassard & Holliday 1998, eds; Knights & Willmott 1999; Smith et al 2001), or, perhaps most radically, whether it is fictional writing that is employed as a style for exploring organisational theories and practices (eg Rhodes 1997; Starkey 1999; Watson 2000), the making of

connections to the realm of narrative fiction in organisation studies no longer comes as a surprise. On the other hand, it seems that this new level of intimacy with works of fiction – an intensified “perverse exchange of fluids with all its associated risks and dangers” (De Cock & Land 2006: 518) through the “porous surface of contact” (Phillips 1995: 626) between organisation studies and fictional literature – produces conceptual objects that defy easy categorisation by gaining a somewhat bastardly, monstrous quality as a result of the transgressive links that constitute them. As the certainties provided by the old lines of demarcation are left behind, the organisation/literature relationship itself becomes ambiguous and complex – a sort of Harawayan ‘more than one but less than two’ assemblage (Haraway 1991) that seems to oscillate between “moments of antinomy and equivalence” (De Cock & Land 2006: 518).

Having been designed specifically “to talk about objects [...] that are more than one and less than many” in order “to *talk about* complexity, to *appreciate* complexity and to *practice* complexity” (Law 1999: 10, original emphases), Actor-Network Theory thus seems well suited for exploring the organisation/literature relationship.

Developed around the idea “that by following circulations we can get more than by defining entities, essence or provinces” (Latour 1999: 20), ANT is less of a theory than a method or a ‘way of travelling’ (ibid) – a way of learning to understand complex objects without the necessity of classifying them into the dichotomous categories of modernity. One aspect of this approach is embodied in the actual concept of ‘actor-network’, which ‘designates two faces of the same phenomenon, like waves and particles’ (ibid: 19). It refers to the possibility of conceptualising any entity or phenomenon – however grandiose or however mundane (Callon & Latour

1981; Latour 1983 & 1992) – both as an assemblage or a ‘network’ held together by means of relations between other heterogeneous entities or ‘actors’, and, simultaneously, as one such ‘actor’ forging connections as part of other ‘actor-networks’. As there is no *a priori* limit to the scope of possible connections or to the number or character of actors becoming ‘enrolled’ in (joining and forming) an actor-network, the latter’s spread and shifting configuration are subject to the ongoing politics of relations that makes connections possible. As part of these politics actors ‘translate’ and are ‘translated’ – they define and configure each other by means of local negotiation, and the connections between them hold to the extent to which these mutual interpretations can be maintained (Callon 1986).

Over the next two sections of this paper I would like to simulate some of the complexity of the links between organisation and literature by travelling a selection of passages of the tangled ‘actor-network’ or ‘actor-world’² of the Harry Potter phenomenon. The two parts of the simulation (itself a ‘more than one but less than two’ assemblage) represent the duality embedded in the notion of actor-network and stand in a relationship of ‘partial connection’ (Haraway 1991; Strathern 1991) to each other. Whilst Simulation 1 looks at some of organisational actors in Rowling’s stories (i.e. Rowling’s interpretation of organisation and organising), Simulation 2 attempts to decentre the texts of the stories by taking them as just one (however important) actor in the wider actor-world that comes to be known by their name. This shifts the emphasis to the spreading Harry Potter network constituted by organisational translations performed by other actors, which collectively elevate Rowling’s stories to the level of their current ‘phenomenal’ global success. From the perspective of Simulation 2, Simulation 1 (and this paper in general) becomes one example of the

many organisational translations that extend the Harry Potter actor-network to improbable places. Together, the two parts of the simulation reflect the difficulty of reducing the organisation/literature relationship to any single normalisation and present Harry Potter as a complex organisational, as much as a literary, phenomenon.

Simulation 1: Rowling's Organisational Translation

One of the images conjured up by the recent reassessment of the relationship between organisation and works of fiction is that of 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: 131), whilst Hassard & Holliday write that "ideology produces popular culture and popular culture produces ideology" (Hassard & Holliday 1998: 3). This is a transmutational view of the factual and the fictional, in which fictional organisations are seen, on the one hand, as reflections of 'real' organisations (where the factual is – partially – reproduced in the fictional) and, on the other hand, as organisational images which, being able to influence mass audiences, contribute to the shaping of attitudes and expectations of 'real' organisational actors and thus to the ways in which 'real' organisations are constructed (the fictional becomes – partially – reproduced in the factual) (ibid).

This image lends itself easily to the Harry Potter stories, in which the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry (a magical private boarding school attended by

Harry and friends) is the main setting of adventures, and which are densely populated by numerous and vividly detailed descriptions of other – mostly magical but also Muggle (non-magical) – organisations. This rich array of organisational presence can be interpreted as Rowling's translation of 'real-life' organisations – the translation which, whilst keeping these organisations immediately recognisable (as a traditional British boarding school, government bodies, shops, banks etc), also renders them slightly different by transporting them into Rowling's particular world of magic and by configuring them in specific ways in order to make them part of that world. Interestingly, this organisational translation primarily concerns two facets of the contemporary relationship between individual and organisation – that of an organisational member subjected to the disciplinary matrix of a total institution (in relation to the organisation of Hogwarts) and that of a consumer revelling in a shopping experience (in relation to most of the other organisations in the books).

Organisation of Hogwarts

Although the organisation of Hogwarts is a magical place that is not easily understood, organised and controlled (thanks, for example, to the resident poltergeist, ghosts and monsters, as well as magically appearing and disappearing rooms, secret passages and changing staircases), it is nevertheless a total institution where specific technologies of the self, power, knowledge, production and sign systems facilitate the minute disciplinary ordering (Foucault 1977; Martin et al 1988, eds.) of students and staff. For example, straight upon their first arrival at Hogwarts all new students must undergo the ceremony of sorting into houses, which is performed by the boastful Sorting Hat. During the ceremony, as the Hat is placed on each student's head, it

peers into their minds to determine what sorts of a person they are and in which of the four school houses they should therefore belong. Before this takes place, the Hat sings a song that effectively lists its criteria for the normalisation of 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: 88).

The Sorting Hat, one could say, 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).

The Sorting Hat, of course, only starts the disciplinary work performed on new Hogwarts students. Once they are sorted into houses, the students remain in them and are socialised into their distinct norms and values. A strong association between students and houses is achieved by linking students' individual performances and behaviours to the group performances of their houses through a system of house points. As the houses are also in competition with each other, they become a means of generating peer-based responsibility and pressure. In the words of Professor McGonagall spoken to the new students:

“While you are at Hogwarts, your triumphs will earn your house points, while any rule-breaking will loose 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: 85-86).

This peer-based pressure to behave and perform is boosted by the age and responsibility hierarchy into which the students are organised (in a manner that mirrors that of a traditional British boarding school) – going from, at the lower end of the scale, the ‘ickle firsties’ and up to Prefects, Head Boy and Head Girl, who can

award and take away house points from other students. This complements the (equally traditional) hierarchy of teachers, with the Headmaster, Deputy Headmaster and Heads of Houses presiding over the disciplinary action. A lot of the time the latter concerns the enforcement of school rules, which have a strong presence in Rowling's description of Hogwarts. Lessons are run according to timetables, being late for classes is an offence (not even a changing staircase provides a reasonable excuse), students are not allowed to walk around the school at night, banned from the Forbidden Forest and from certain parts of the school, and prohibited from doing magic outside the school premises or in the corridors during the breaks.

Yet the rules are there to be broken as well as kept. Most of the adventures in Rowling's books are based on rule breaking – yet not the 'irresponsible' kind that comes from resisting organisational control. Harry's and friends' disregard for rules does not arise from the necessity to survive organisational oppression or alienation. Instead, 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 that form part of the organisational agenda to 'govern the souls' of its members (Miller & Rose 1990; Rose 1991); for Hogwarts is first and foremost a factory of the self. Although many of the school's rules have roots in ancient traditions forged as part of its centuries-long history, headmaster Dumbledore – a benevolent, wise and strongly charismatic figure – seems fully aware that being a good wizard or witch 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 permits 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: 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!” (ibid: 208). It is interesting to note that this transformation also brings Hermione’s values and behaviour more in line with the norms of her house Gryffindor, where courage is prized above all else. As Harry’s and Ron’s disregard for rules already follows this pattern, Dumbledore’s policy to allow (and sometimes even encourage) the trio’s rule breaking should be seen not as a let-off but as a disciplining strategy that goes beyond rules to complement the governmentality embodied in other disciplinary technologies of the school (such as the houses).

The role of Hogwarts as a factory of the self is at its most apparent in relation to Harry himself, for whom the discovery of his past and his future destiny, as well as his gradual maturity into this destiny, occurs in the context of the school and under the watchful guidance of Dumbledore. For Harry is the Chosen One (Neal 2002), marked out to defeat a great evil, and disciplinary work has to begin on him whilst he is still a baby. Because his survival of a death curse cast by the dark Lord Voldemort that had killed Harry’s parents and Voldemort’s subsequent (but not final) 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: 15-16)

And so it happens that until an unexpected letter arrives from Hogwarts eleven years later, informing Harry of his place at the school, he grows up completely unaware of his own or his parents’ story (the Dursleys are determined to exclude any mention of magic from his and their own lives). Coming to Hogwarts therefore turns Harry’s universe upside down – it discloses to him a new self as well as a new world; and he has to live up to these if he is to overcome the dangers that lurk in the dark corners of the school and in the dark corners of his own soul. As Harry responds to these challenges by becoming fiercely loyal to Hogwarts, Dumbledore and his classmates Ron and Hermione, Hogwarts emerges as the hotbed of the battle between good and evil that increasingly engulfs the rest of the wizarding community and the Muggle world. Rowling thus develops Hogwarts into a locus of societally critical moral choices. In this representation, being a good citizen and a good person becomes inextricably linked to being a good organisational member, which in turn acts to lend further weight and legitimacy to the elaborate disciplinary machinery of the school.

Magical consumerism in Rowling’s 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: 71).

In contrast to the dark seriousness that characterises Rowling's translation of the relationship between the organisation of Hogwarts and its staff and students, her vividly articulated portrayal of the wizarding world's magical consumerism presents shopping as an experience that is more akin to a merry festival of life, in which the characters can seek temporary respite from their lives' dramas. It seems symbolic that Harry's first journey into the wizarding world comes in the shape of a shopping trip, during which he is taken to Diagon Alley in a secret part of London in order to stock up on everything he would need for his first year at Hogwarts. The Gringotts Bank (his parents, Harry discovers, have left him some wizard's gold, so he can attend Hogwarts and no longer needs to wear his cousin's shabby hand-me-downs), the bookshop Flourish and Blotts, Ollivanders (the makers of fine wands since 382 BC, for his wand), the magical pet emporium the Magical Menagerie, and Madam Malkin's Robes For All Occasions, are just some of the Diagon Alley businesses meticulously described by Rowling. Similarly detailed are her descriptions of the magical industry and consumption beyond the Diagon Alley, including the sweets trolley on Hogwarts Express and the bustling businesses of the village of Hogsmeade (neighbouring Hogwarts), with its shops, inns, cafes and the Honeydukes candy store, which sells a large and copiously depicted range of merchandise. Wherever they are in the magical world, it seems, Harry and his friends cannot escape desiring and consuming. And it is at this point of pervasive consumerism that it becomes particularly difficult to limit the Harry Potter phenomenon purely to the contents of the stories.

Simulation 2: The Harry Potter Phenomenon: Organisational Translations of Rowling's Translation

In his analysis of the 1940s-1960s children's literature, Grey argues that the implicit organisation- and work-related messages of the books he surveyed have, albeit partially, constituted some of the 1990s organisational mindsets and expectations (Grey 1998). From an ANT-informed perspective it is not necessary to wait for the growth of a generation in order to see some of the ways in which the fictional becomes reproduced in organisational realities. As the contents of fictional stories become decentred in relation to other numerous actors that are required to raise and maintain contemporary literature at the level of global popularity such as that currently enjoyed by the Harry Potter stories, it is difficult not to see the Harry Potter phenomenon as an organisational, as much as a literary, assemblage – an actor-world that has grown and keeps growing through the ongoing addition of new heterogeneous translations of Rowling's stories. These multifarious translations have in common their partiality (both in the sense of subjectivity and in the sense of incompleteness (Haraway 1991; Strathern 1991)), their organising function (in the sense that each interpretation involves a re-ordering of the material that is being interpreted and organises new links between actors), and their reliance on 'powers of association' (Latour 1986) with the Harry Potter stories (sometimes via links to other translations of the stories). However, the degree and the focus of their partiality, the way in which their organising function is performed, the closeness and the politics of their association with the stories, as well as everything else about them, varies considerably.

Some of these translations of Rowling's translation involve quite complex multiple transmutations of the fictional and the factual. This is particularly apparent where certain artefacts of the magical consumer world invented by Rowling become produced 'for real', as is the case with broomsticks, wands and some sought-after sweets of the Harry Potter stories – eg Bertie Bott's Every Flavour Beans and the Chocolate Frogs that include collectors' cards. Translations of Rowling's fictional consumerism into this world's (f)actual 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, contains an element of fiction, for they fall short of the magic they represent (broomsticks do not fly, wands do not cast spells, Every Flavour Beans are much more limited in the taste range than their fictional counterparts, Chocolate Frogs cannot jump and get away, and famous witches and wizards stay on the collectors' cards instead of disappearing to go about their own business). On the other hand, the toy industry's production and marketing of Harry Potter toy models, computer and card games involve translations that are more obviously partial and associate with Rowling's stories in a slightly different way. Instead of realising Rowling's fictional products, they turn other elements (eg characters and parts of plot) of the Harry Potter books and films into sellable artefacts. In part, this transformation is an extension of the translation achieved, in the first place, by Bloomsbury and Scholastic, whose acts of publishing Rowling's work have helped to turn the author's work of fiction into a (f)actual product yielding real-life capital. Translations involving both the 'realisation' of Rowling's fictional products and the 'commodification' of her characters and elements of plot also build on the globally-recognised visual imagery that is the

product of the Warner Brothers' visual translation (itself an instant of 'commodification') of the Harry Potter stories.

All of the above translations are mediated by copyright and licensing agreements that serve as regulatory and stabilising actors in this highly organised and managed, as well as highly profitable part of the Harry Potter actor-network. These agreements help to map out and keep fixed the 'geography of obligatory points of passage' (Callon 1986: 26) of the Harry Potter phenomenon – i.e. the geography of specific trajectories which all actors must follow in order to be able to make certain connections. The obligatory passages of the Harry Potter actor-network reinforced by the copyright and licensing agreements are particularly designed for those Harry Potter translations that involve the movement of capital (another important mediating actor that figures prominently in the politics of the more significant Harry Potter links). On the other hand, the agreements are themselves translations that require the movement of capital, as well as the movement of relevant actors through specified passages. For example, Lego's production and sale of Harry Potter sets had to be preceded by the movement of relevant actors (eg legal and commercial teams, documents, capital) through the obligatory licensing passages connected to Warner Brothers, who had already made a seven-figure copyright mega-deal with Rowling (Brown 2002). According to Brown, between 1998 and 2002 alone Warner Brothers have "granted 46 licenses to all sorts of corporate supplicants" (ibid: 129), as well as signing a \$150 million sponsorship agreement with Coca Cola, which can be seen as a bet on the powers of association between the two globally travelling brands.

As important actors in the Harry Potter actor-world, the copyright, licensing and sponsorship deals point to an aspect of “how power emerges through organizing” (Czarniawska & Hernes 2005: 10) – in this instance, how power emerges through organising literary phenomena. The agreements play a stabilising and regulatory role and contribute to the building of stronger, longer-lasting Harry Potter connections not only because they mediate links between other actors of the Harry Potter actor-network, but also because they build associations between aspects of the phenomenon and the wider, longer, more stable actor-networks of the international intellectual property and contract law, and thus to the sprawling actor-networks of law enforcement. This creates an even larger number of potentially allied actors that can be brought into play should a particular obligatory passage point need to be protected or should a particular illegitimate translation need to be disrupted. In such instances, courts can be used to assemble the extra actors in order to make the weight of their aggregate force coerce the other party (which hopefully has fewer allies held together by weaker associations) into taking a desired action. Warner Brothers, for example, have instigated legal processes against hundreds of fans (many of them teenagers) that had created Harry Potter websites in various corners of the globe. In one case a total of 107 Internet addresses were ordered to be transferred to Warner Brothers as a result. Elsewhere, Rowling’s victory of a court case has prevented the translation of Tanya Grotter books into Dutch and thus the entry of the competitor stories into the Western market. (The books had originally appeared in Russia as a parody of Rowling’s writing, yet had soon proved as popular as the British original.) Other recent Harry Potter disputes have included the court cases over the leaks of the book six contents prior to its publication, the ongoing eBay dispute over the numerous sales

of fake signed merchandise, and the closure of a website over the sales of fake electronic Harry Potter books to name but a few.

Despite a potentially large number of actors whose alliance can be secured through the use of legally binding agreements, and a large number of other actors that can be coerced into obedience through the use of legal action, many translations of the Harry Potter phenomenon remain outside the network of control that is assembled by such means. Some of such translations are performed in places where the reach of international law networks is weakened, making the movement through the obligatory passage points less enforceable. In China, for example, a high number of pirated Harry Potter books resulted not in a legal action but in bringing forward the release date of the authentic ones (Montan 2001). Similarly, although Rowling managed to stop the Dutch publication of the Tanya Grotter books, she has not stopped their production and circulation in Russia. Other translations, although they still draw financial benefit from some association with the Harry Potter actor-world, are too peripheral, partial and obscure to be controllable. For instance, 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) relies on associations with the general *theme* of the phenomenon rather than with particular characters or artefacts of the stories and as such avoids the copyright-policed passages. Still other translations are allowed to proceed freely because they do not involve the movement of capital. For example, Harry Potter fan fiction websites see daily additions of texts that engage very closely with the contents of Rowling's stories and often translate them in quite surprising ways, yet Rowling has confirmed that as long as these texts are not produced for

commercial benefit, they are exempt from financial obligation or stringent ordering and control.

Fan fiction is just one kind of the many Harry Potter translations that take a primarily textual shape. (Whilst any contemporary actor-network is virtually unthinkable without textual translations, the role of the latter in the Harry Potter phenomenon is made particularly apparent by the literary character of the Harry Potter stories to which these translations refer.) Textual translations tend to have the advantage of being easily transportable around and beyond their actor-networks, and are thus conducive to extending the latter to further-flung, remote locations (Law 1986). In the case of the spreading Harry Potter connections, this sort of extension work is performed not only by the foreign-language translations and global distribution of the books themselves, but also by the sheer weight of international publicity surrounding the Harry Potter phenomenon. Interestingly, as well as enjoying the ongoing media coverage by the 'regular' press, Harry Potter has also been noticed by academic publications. The latter shuffle together aspects of the phenomenon and selected academic theories or models for transportation to more 'serious' spheres. Even more interestingly, some of these texts make connections between aspects of the Harry Potter stories and aspects of organisation and organising. Like all other translations of Rowling's translation these texts are inevitably partial – some in more obvious ways than others.

Earlier in this paper I have created my own example of such a partial Harry Potter/organisation connection. Whilst Simulation 1 purported to present 'Rowling's organisational translation', Rowling's stories contain many more (and more complex

and contradictory) organisational images than I was able to consider. This was partially due to the constraints of space, but also because my attention was focused on those aspects of Rowling's stories that I found particularly translatable into a critical reading of organisational practices. In addition to this, the Harry Potter stories are clearly about more than just organisations and organising. In making connections between selected aspects of Rowling's organisations (extracted out of the overall context of her stories) and selected aspects of organisational theory, I simulated a new translation of Rowling's work which, like all translations, was also a *betrayal* (Serres 1974; Callon 1980) of her stories. (Likewise, it was also a translation/betrayal of the theories with aspects of which I have connected Rowling's organisational images.) It would have thus been more correct to call Simulation 1 'my organisational translation of Rowling's translation', but in labelling it 'Rowling's organisational translation' I wanted to simulate a strategy that is often employed when fictional literature is mined for insights into organisational life – namely, that of strengthening organisational translations of fictional literature by creating an illusion of translator's non-interference (i.e. that there has been no translation). As Callon writes, '[s]uccessful translation quickly makes us forget its history' (Callon 1986: 28), and substituting translator's voice with the voice of the translated party is one of the ways to make that happen. On the other hand, this strategy also means that aspects of the complexity of the organisation/literature relationship are inevitably ignored as the visibility of certain translations that add to that relationship is reduced.

Simulation 1 is thus both an imitation of a particular kind of organisation studies/literature translations and an imitation of the textual academic translations of the Harry Potter stories that become part of the Harry Potter phenomenon. Just as

Simulation 1 has been shaped by a particular theoretical slant, other academic translations that link Rowling's stories with aspects of business and organisation are also formed by theoretical and/or methodological perspectives that contribute to their partialities. Marketing academics, for instance, have been particularly quick to make connections between the Harry Potter phenomenon and the validity of particular marketing models and explanations, with a view of making the latter more authoritative. Like in Simulation 1, the interpreters' voices in many of these translations are kept in the background, so that it is Rowling (legitimised by the phenomenal success of her books) that appears to authorise these connections. Among such marketing translations are, for example, Lynch (2001), who interprets the 'Potter magic' in terms of the books' 'authentic origins', 'shared experience' for young and old readers and the 'target insight', and Brown, who has to rely on a detailed analysis of the abundant marketing representations in the Harry Potter stories for his bold attempt to cast the books as the leading authority in the academic field of marketing (Brown 2002). Brown notes enthusiastically Rowling's great marketing spin and polish of individual products, shops and servicescapes of the magic world, her detail of advertising, pricing, value-added, logistics, monetary system, consumption-rich anniversaries and holidays, as well as the 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 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" (ibid: 127). This allows Brown to proceed

with his ultimate translation: the books, he writes, “hold the solution to an ancient marketing mystery” (ibid), which is, he argues, mysteriousness itself, meaning that “marketing [...] moves in mysterious ways, in magical ways, in mysteriously magical ways” (ibid: 132). Fittingly, he concludes 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).

Translations of Harry Potter organisational expertise have not been confined to the exploration of consumerist webs in marketing, but have also extended to other areas of business literature. This has included entrepreneurship, where Rowling’s depiction of the organisation of Hogwarts has been woven together with business practice in a distinctly functionalist manner. *Entrepreneur Magazine*, for instance, has posted an article deriving 8 business lessons, as well as entrepreneurial profiles of Rowling’s main characters, from Harry Potter-themed interviews with a number of business gurus and consultants. In the article, 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), employ the right people (Harry’s best friends), reward initiative (Harry’s positive rule breaking), create a nurturing work environment (the organisation of Hogwarts), network (Harry as ‘the networking king’), abandon business plans when necessary (spontaneity and surprises in Harry’s adventures), not be afraid to compete with big corporations (Harry versus Lord Voldemort), and invest wisely (Harry’s wizard gold) (Williams 2001). Harry has not

yet left school, but, apparently, he can already “teach us a lot about [...] the trials of growing business” and “the rewards of independence and ownership” (ibid: 1). What will happen when he finally graduates?

Moreover, translations of Harry Potter organisational expertise have not been limited to business press publications, but have also become part of organisational practices. For example, Deploy Solutions Inc. – an HR tools software company in Massachusetts – has been running a team-building program incorporating aspects of the Harry Potter stories. Deploy Solutions employees have been sorted into the four Hogwarts houses and have since been participating in various Harry Potter-themed competitions. This 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: 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: 23). The company, it seems, has taken certain aspects of the fictional disciplinary technologies designed and used to produce transformational and disciplining effects upon the students at Hogwarts (see Simulation 1), and blended them into its business practice in order to achieve (f)actual transformational and disciplining gains. Given a recent surge of interest in organisational spirituality as a tool for business transformation and the background of the revival of paganism³ as part of the New Age movement (Heelas 1991, 1996; Roberts 1994), one can see some of the other Harry Potter connections that might have facilitated this particular instance of the partial reproduction of the fictional in the factual.

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 make their version of translation final.

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. From this perspective it becomes especially obvious that the process of the mutual reproduction of the factual and the fictional is not an exchange relationship between 'the two solitudes' of organisation and literature (Phillips 1995), but rather an ongoing transmutation that accompanies the addition of heterogeneous connections into a web of partial translation that involves both the literary and the organisational. 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, and the potentialities of its organisational configuration are a matter of speculation just like Harry's future adventures. In this evolving configuration the notions of organisation and literature refuse a fixed demarcation of boundaries. They can neither be fully separated out nor reduced into one. In various ways and in various guises they remain – stubbornly, teasingly – 'more than one and less than many' (Law 1999; Haraway 1991).

NOTES:

1. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/entertainment/2002/harry_potter/default.stm
2. As Callon writes, 'the terms actor-world and actor-network draw attention to two aspects of the same phenomenon' and can be used interchangeably (Callon 1986: 33). Throughout this paper, I am using 'actor-world' to emphasise the spread and extend of the phenomenon built around Harry Potter, and 'actor-network' to emphasise that its configuration is complex and 'susceptible to change' (ibid).
3. 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).

REFERENCES:

- Blake, Andrew (2002) *The Irresistible Rise of Harry Potter*, London: Verso;
- Brown, Stephen (2002) 'Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone/ Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets/ Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban/ Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire', *Journal of Marketing*, 66(1): 126 (start page);
- Callon, Michel (1980) 'Struggles and Negotiations to define what is Problematic and what is not: the Sociology of Translation', in *The Social Process of Scientific Investigation: Sociology of the Sciences Yearbook*, edited by Karin Knorr, Roger Krohn & Richard Whitley, Dordrecht and Boston, Mass.: Reidel;
- Callon, Michel (1986) 'The Sociology of an Actor-Network: The Case of the Electric Vehicle', in *Mapping the Dynamics of Science and Technology: Sociology of Science in the Real World*, London: Macmillan;
- Callon, Michel & Latour, Bruno (1981) 'Unscrewing the Big Leviathans: How Do Actors Macrostructure Reality', in *Advances in Social Theory and Methodology: Toward an Integration of Micro and Macro Sociologies*, edited by Karin Knorr & Aaron Cicourel, London: Routledge;
- Czarniawska, Barbara (1997) *Narrating the Organization: Dramas of Institutional Identity*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press;
- Czarniawska, Barbara (1999) *Writing Management: Organization Theory as a Literary Genre*, Oxford: Oxford University Press;
- Czarniawska, Barbara & Hernes, Tor (2005) 'Constructing Macro Actors According to ANT', Chapter 1 in *Actor-Network Theory and Organizing*, edited by Barbara Czarniawska & Tor Hernes, Liber & Copenhagen Business School Press;

- Czarniawska-Joerges, Barbara & Guillet de Monthoux, Pierre (1994), eds: *Good Novels, Better Management: Reading Organizational Realities in Fiction*, London: Routledge;
- De Cock, Christian & Land, Christopher (2006) 'Organization/Literature: Exploring the Seam', *Organization Studies*, 27 (4): 517-535;
- Elvin, John (2001) 'Hope for Those Majoring in Witchcraft', *Insight on the News*, 17(35): 35;
- Fetto, John (2001) 'What's New With Candy?' *American Demographics*, 23(10): 24;
- Foucault, Michel (1977) *Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan, London: Penguin Books;
- Grey, Christopher (1998) 'Child's Play: Representations of Organization in Children's Literature', Chapter 7 in *Organization-Representation: Work and Organizations in Popular Culture*, ed. John Hassard & Ruth Holliday, London: Sage;
- Haraway, Donna (1991) 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialism-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century', in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, London: Free Association Books;
- Hassard, John & Holliday, Ruth, eds (1998) *Organization-Representation: Work and Organizations in Popular Culture*, London: Sage;
- Heelas, Paul (1991) 'Cults for Capitalism: Self Religions, Magic, and the Empowerment in Business', in *Religion and Power, Decline and Growth: Sociological Analyses of Religion in Britain, Poland and the Americas*, edited by Peter Gee & John Fulton, London: British Sociological Association;
- Heelas, Paul (1996) *The New Age Movement*, London: Blackwell;

- 'Innovative Harry Potter Competition Builds Team Spirit' 2002: *Association Management*, 54(3): 23-26;
- Knights, David & Willmott, Hugh (1999) *Management Lives: Power and Identity in Work Organizations*, London: Sage;
- Latour, Bruno (1983) 'Give Me a Laboratory and I will Raise the World', in *Science Observed*, edited by Karen Knorr-Cetina and Michael Mulkay, Beverly Hills: Sage;
- Latour, Bruno (1986) 'The Powers of Association', in *Power, Action and Belief: a New Sociology of Knowledge?* Edited by John Law, London: Routledge;
- Latour, Bruno (1992) 'Where are the Missing Masses? The Sociology of a Few Mundane Artefacts', in *Shaping Technology/Building Society: Studies in Sociotechnical Change*, edited by Wiebe E. Bijker & John Law, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press;
- Latour, Bruno (1999) 'On Recalling ANT', in *Actor Network Theory and After*, edited by John Law & John Hassard, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers/The Sociological Review;
- Law, John (1986) 'On Power and Its Tactics: a View from the Sociology of Science', *The Sociological Review*, 34: 1-38;
- Law, John (1999) 'After ANT: complexity, naming and topology', in *Actor Network Theory and After*, edited by John Law & John Hassard, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers/The Sociological Review;
- Lynch, Dick (2001) 'The Magic of 'Harry Potter'', *Advertising Age*, Midwest region edition, 72(50): 26;

- Martin, Luther H.; Gutman, Huck & Hutton, Patrick H., eds (1988) *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press;
- Miller, Peter & Rose, Nikolas (1990): 'Governing Economic Life', *Economy and Society*, 19(1): 1-31;
- Montan, Nils V. (2001) 'The Harry Potter Phenomenon', *Managing Intellectual Property*, 108 (April);
- Neal, Connie (2002) *The Gospel According to Harry Potter: Spirituality in the Stories of the World's Favourite Seeker*, Westminster John Knox Press;
- Ostling, Michael (2003) 'Harry Potter and the Disenchantment of the World', *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 18(1): 3-32;
- Phillips, Nelson (1995) 'Telling organizational tales: on the role of narrative fiction in the study of organizations', *Organization Studies*, 16(4): 625 (start page);
- Rhodes, Carl (1997) 'Playing With Words: Multiple Representations of Organisational Learning Stories', *EJROT*, Volume 3, Number 1, published electronically:
http://www.mngt.waikato.ac.nz/Research/ejrot/vol3_1/Rhodes.asp
- Rhodes, Carl (2001) *Writing Organization: (Re)presentation and control in narratives at work*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company;
- Rodgers, Anni Layne (2001) 'The Hogwarts Masterclass: How to Make Your Team Fly', *Work Matters*, posted in December 2001, published electronically by fastcompany.com, available at:
<http://www.fastcompany.com/articles/2001/12/deploy.html>
- Roberts, Richard H. (1994) 'Power and Empowerment: New Age Managers and the Dialectics of Modernity and Postmodernity', *Religion Today*, 9(3);

- Rose, Nikolas (1991): *Governing the Soul: Shaping of the Private Self*, London: Routledge;
- Rowling, J.K. (1997) *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, London: Bloomsbury;
- Serres, Michel (1974) *La Traduction, Hermes III*, Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit;
- Smith, Warren; Parker, Martin & Lightfoot, Geoff, eds (2001) *Science Fictions and Organizations* (Routledge Studies in Human Resource Development), London: Routledge;
- Starkey, Ken (1999) 'Eleven Characters in Search of an Ethic, or The Spirit of Capitalism Revisited', *Studies in Cultures, Organizations & Societies*, 5(1): 179-194;
- Strathern, Marilyn (1991) *Partial Connections*, Savage Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield;
- Watson, Tony J. (2000) 'Ethnographic Fiction Science: Making Sense of Managerial Work and Organizational Research Processes with Caroline and Terry', *Organization*, 7, 3: 489 – 510;
- Williams, Geoff (2001) 'Harry Potter and...' *Entrepreneur Magazine*, posted in February 2001, published electronically:
<http://www.entrepreneur.com/magazine/entrepreneur/2001/february/36346.html>
- Zald, Mayer N. (1993) 'Organization Studies as a Scientific and Humanistic Enterprise: Toward a Reconceptualization of the Foundations of the Field', *Organization Science*, 4(4);
- Zald, Mayer N. (1996) 'More Fragmentation? Unfinished Business in Linking the Social Sciences and the Humanities', *ASQ*, 41: 251-261;