

NCBI Bookshelf. A service of the National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health.

Callard F, Fitzgerald D. Rethinking Interdisciplinarity across the Social Sciences and Neurosciences. Basingstoke (UK): Palgrave Macmillan; 2015.

## Epilogue

### Coming clean

We have been rather tight-lipped, it's fair to say, about the interdisciplinary collaboration whose contours we arguably have greatest access to – namely, the collaboration between the two of us. This book marks a distinct moment in a collaboration that is, as we write these words, five years old. We have, during those years, developed, contributed to, and found ourselves caught up in many kinds of experiments. They include experiments of thinking, writing (articles, chapters, now this book), applying (for grant funding), visiting (other laboratories), presenting (at conferences, at workshops), collecting data (of very different kinds), organizing (of workshops, of panels), and vacationing (after those conferences and workshops). And through those experiments has come, additionally, the experiment of friendship. The interdisciplinary has been, throughout, an object of shared enquiry, a descriptor of our own collaboration, and the butt of many of our jokes and frustrations.

When we met, in the rain, at the residential workshop with which we opened the book, we shared two things. First, we were (and are) both interpretive social scientists, and that cross-disciplinary descriptor felt increasingly salient as we slowly worked out that we were the only two in a room filled, largely, by psychologists, philosophers, and neuroscientists. Second, we both felt alienated by – if unable, at that point, fully to understand – the dominant logic of interdisciplinarity that was consolidating around us. So, we identified with one another both *vis-à-vis* our broad location within the academy, and *vis-à-vis* our shared unease with how we were being drawn into topologies that made us – though we knew not quite why, exactly – wary. It is tempting to imagine that the coming together of a geographer and sociologist is unremarkable as an interdisciplinary collaboration – not least given that each of us is an interpretive social scientist. But what has been one of the most surprising facets of our working with one another is coming to realize the enduring legacy of the overlapping, yet undoubtedly heterogeneous disciplinary histories, investments, and networks of citations that each of us brings to our conversations and our joint writing. The labour of understanding and working creatively with our differences from one another – in terms of epistemologies, politics, rhetorics, and the different texts, theoretical formulations, and arguments to which each of us tends to turn most readily – is arguably the foundation for much of the thinking that we have outlined here.

The words within this volume have been wiped clean of the profound moments of disorientation, of disagreement, of irritation, and of feeling fuzzy that each of us has experienced in attempting this joint work of theoretical, empirical, and pragmatic writing. We are aware of the trickiness (if not tricksiness) of a first-person plural narrative voice – by turns distancing, intimate, heavily deliberate, strangely unsettling. The 'we' leaves opaque the nature of the ties between those elements that make up the 'we'. The reader always already knows that 'they' can't really think and feel the same. Our narrative 'we', then, as it covers over the friction of the elements that make that 'we' up, comes to perform much of what we have alluded to previously – tongue-biting and compromise. There is, then, just as much to say about subjugation and incorporation in relation to our own practices of working together as there has been to say about those other collaborations we have discussed. But there is, as we have insisted throughout this volume, simultaneously the pleasure that comes from *giving one's self up to something and taking the consequences*. New things emerge in the world when one inhabits the other's arguments, when one is led down the paths of the other's preoccupations, and when one is absorbed by the other's milieu.

Every paragraph of this book has been written with the two of us sitting, side by side, on a long table, looking out at several of our collaborators who are sitting and standing and moving in front of us, in the large open-plan space that is the home of Hubhub. This strange geographical intimacy – and the equally strange dynamics of exhibitionism and surveillance that characterized the scene that joins our dyad both to our collaborators and to members of staff employed by our funder (who have been able to watch the affectively fraught scene unfolding in front of them) – has made us more proficient and less anxious about finishing each other's sentences and subjecting each other's paragraphs to stringent revisions. If we have argued for a logic of experimental entanglement in our approach to the scene of interdisciplinary research surrounding the brain and mind, then such entanglement animates, too, our own experimental scene of thinking and writing. Entanglement complicates – it can act as a snare, or embarrassment, or hindrance. We have experienced all of these. But these complications and obstructions have not simply stymied us but

opened new paths, new plots, new modes of being in relation – with one another, and with the other people, entities, and objects with whom our interdisciplinary enquiries are concerned.

© Felicity Callard and Des Fitzgerald 2015.

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>

Monographs, or book chapters, which are outputs of Wellcome Trust funding have been made freely available as part of the [Wellcome Trust's open access policy](#)

Bookshelf ID: NBK333555