Standpoints

The Disciplined Interdisciplinarity of Writing Studies

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Writing is a complex activity, influencing the orientation and activities of minds located in historical, social, and physical worlds; through the creation, distribution, and reception of signs through various technologies and organizational systems; and as a consequence establishing an archive of thought, action, and events for further social use. All these elements are at play simultaneously in each act of writing or reading, typically experienced as a unified meaning-focused event. Meaning is at the heart, but texts, language, materialities, society, minds, and histories are everywhere. The complexity of writing studies poses puzzles to the field that we need to address as we establish ourselves as a discipline. If we choose the path to disciplinarity of narrowing the acceptable data, method, or theory, we are in danger of misunderstanding or even distorting the processes, practices, and products of writing. Rather I argue on the basis of my experience that we should choose a path that finds discipline in our questions and goals, allowing us to draw on the resources of many disciplines. While this multi-dimensional task is hard, through reflective understanding of our goals, questions, and methods, we can still maintain a coherent disciplinary discussion, while maintaining respect for the complexity of writing, its impact on individuals and societies, the creativity of individuals, and the challenges of teaching and learning to write.

Literate activity is not a matter of free-floating subjectivity; it is carried out in the material world and engages socially oriented bodies, living in geographies and histories, who circulate signs among themselves, activating brains and neurochemical states through the interpretive activities of social and individual minds. Consequently, an understanding of what writing is and does and how people learn to do it must draw on the hermeneutic and rhetorical disciplines of the humanities along with the disciplines of the mind, society, history, and technology. Even more the understanding must integrate these perspectives into seeing writing as a unitary act. Even as seemingly simple a text as a shopping list invokes and relies

on personal and financial relations, means of transportation, financial and commercial and agricultural systems, as well as government regulation of produce and the economy. It relies on and invokes material means of conveyance of the information and the products. It sets in motion actions as well as interpretation and judgment (was that one or two gallons of milk, and would this alternate brand be acceptable?), histories and other information (which stores have been carrying which products at which prices?) and intertextualities (where is this week's supermarket advertising supplement?). And of course there are more immediate technological considerations of pen or pencil or PDA, small pad or large paper, pre-printed structured format or blank sheet, collaborative writing on the refrigerator whiteboard or sole construction at the last minute—and how these practices got that way. Yet shoppers do this all of a piece—focused on the products they need and the itinerary of their day's shopping.

This complexity of writing invites eclecticism and tolerance of difference in research along with mutual understanding of each other's procedures, theories, and ideas. Even more it invites integrating the multiple perspectives of data of differing disciplinary traditions in a single inquiry, and it invites new forms of conceptualization that bring together the insights of the disciplines in a common vision, reuniting those elements that were separated for analytic purposes, but which have since gone their own research ways. In making this call, I am not asking to wish away the disciplines, but rather I am asking for a much harder task of rethinking the relation of disciplines to each other, respecting the accomplishments and perspectives of each, taking seriously especially the evidence each makes available, and then developing a disciplined account that makes sense of these multiple perspectives within an integrative discipline—and finally developing new research questions and inquiries coming from integrated perspectives.

While calls for interdisciplinarity have been widespread in the last several decades (see, for example, Klein 1990), and go back almost since the social sciences began to form their separate identities and distinguish themselves from humanities (see Bazerman 2005; Wallerstein 1996), studies of writing and reading in practice largely still follow one specific disciplinary track or another despite some triangulation (Denzin, 1970) within multiple kinds of evidence in a single inquiry (Moss, 1992). People pursue rhetorical analyses, or historical tracing of forms or ideas, or ethnographic studies of classrooms and other sites of writing, or psychological experiments or linguistic examinations of forms (witness the numerous articles referenced in the various handbooks of writing research: Bazerman, 2008; Beard, Myhill, Riley, & Nystrand, 2010; MacArthur, Graham, & Fitzgerald, 2006; Smagorinsky, 2006)—often with great skill and subtlety, and often with the expense of long and rigorous training that helps keep their methods precise, their conceptualizations consistent, and their inquiries pointed. This rise of disciplined inquiry into writing sharpens our questions, methods, and reasoning—and makes

us accountable to systematically collected data. Yet each of these disciplines reduces the phenomena we are concerned with, providing monotonic accounts, and, even more seriously, monotonic approaches to the teaching of writing. If our research is narrow, our teaching and learning will follow on narrow paths. Some of the best teaching of writing has been informed by an intuitive eclecticism, addressing social, psychological, textual, and rhetorical issues as they come up in a practical way. As we claim a more principled and evidence-grounded understanding of the several dimensions of writing, we should not erase the rich practical wisdom of the field. Instead, our research should illuminate and enhance our practical wisdom, and our disciplinarity should be guided by the complexity of our subject rather than the limits of a small range of methods.

The Value and Cost of Disciplinarity

The modern academy's distinctive disciplines, with different epistemologies, strategies, procedures, and literatures, have created distance from other disciplines' ways of knowing and have reformulated the phenomena they study as disciplinary objects. Psychology, sociology, rhetoric, linguistics, anthropology, and other disciplines not only have different theories, but their theories address different sets of issues and serve different functional and intellectual roles in each; equally they not only have different data collection methods and different data of interest, but the data and phenomena of each may not even be visible to each other because there is no disciplinary way of viewing or thinking about the other phenomena, which seem just too complicated to study together or seem to belong to the domain of another discipline.

The strengths of the disciplines lie in the boundaries they have set around their knowledge-seeking tasks and the focusing of the tools to investigate the worlds within those boundaries. But those same boundaries have made it difficult to remember what they have set aside and to remake connections across boundaries. If we attempt to do so, we may no longer be following the traditional canons of psychology, sociology, linguistics, or history; moreover, the methods and evidence that exist on the other side of the boundaries may well be distrusted in one's disciplinary home, for each field has laid its bets on what it believes is the most important thing to know and the best way to know it.

Disciplinary Bets

In my career I also have laid my bets—at first on meaning through hermeneutic, humanistic disciplines, applying literary interpretive tools for investigating meaning to academic writing. While still committed to the teaching of writing, I laid some side bets on sociology to help understand the varieties of writing our students do within educational and career institutions. My move to sociology was self-

consciously a choice not to place bets on the cognitive psychology table that was getting lots of action in writing studies at the time, most notably in the attempt to create cognitive models of writing processes in the manner of Flower and Hayes (1981). Within the social world, I was still interested in language and rhetoric, but primarily as the means of social interaction—an interest that made problematic my use of both structural linguistics, which separated language from its purposes and instances of use, and classical rhetoric, which gave only advice for exclusively persuasive interactions rather than evidence-based investigation of the full range of what socially is accomplished through writing. An awareness that language forms and styles evolved and were tied to beliefs of the time, which I brought from literary studies, also put me into that small corner of sociology where social forms meet history, particularly in the social studies of science (see Merton, 1973; Shapin & Schaffer, 1985). Bringing linguistic, rhetorical, and historical evidence into sociology, and then bringing all four forms of evidence back into the study of teaching of writing in the U.S. composition tradition, all were difficult problems of translation and revaluing. The emergence of sociocultural activity theory (see Engestrom, 1987; Cole, 1996) provided an interdisciplinary theoretical basis for the integration of these various perspectives and became a site for developing sociohistoric genre theory. Having become somewhat clearer on that theory, I have now been able to return to meaning and knowledge as socially organized and located, and have also been able to consider cognition as similarly located.

But this path has not been easy. Knowledge, evidence, methods, and research questions from one theory and disciplinary tradition do not necessarily coordinate well with others. For example, in moving from textual studies to sociology, I was shown that projections and generalizations from the text were only hermeneutic hunches—and not based on material data of the social world. When I showed an early draft for my article "What Written Knowledge Does," which contained idealized accounts of disciplines, to a prominent sociologist of science, she rightly asked "How do you know these things about the disciplines?" She saw that I was telling just-so stories, not based in rigorous social inquiry and evidence. As a result, in the published version of the article (Bazerman, 1981) I stayed close to what I could find from the textual reading and what the authors constructed about their worlds within their texts. Further, I was careful not to suggest that the three texts studied were typical of their fields or that they indicated a typology of social arrangements. I offered the analyses as only points on a map, perhaps indicating the kind of terrain that might exist around each paper analyzed, but having no further geographic reach. The skepticism generated by sociological disciplinary criticism turned out to be well warranted, for as I investigated more cases, I found the map was indeed complex and variegated. Although genre as a concept provided a way to see some order, I found genre was so dynamic that its orders were not to be found in text form, but in social process. The growing awareness of complexity

meant that methodologically I had to integrate text analysis with historical and social inquiry to locate each text in its social and organizational situation as well as its particular historical circumstances (while this has been a theme of my work since the mid 1980's, my 1999 book on Edison develops this in its most elaborate and extended form).

This concern for socio-historical dynamics and action within circumstances then put the issue of meaning on the back burner. Yet within the examination of circumstances, the projection of meaning by authors and readers (the hermeneutic of participants) was a persistent issue because, in writing, making sense of the meaning of texts was central to the activity. Concerns for meaning led me to a phenomenological approach (see Heritage, 1984; Schutz, 1967; Schutz & Luckmann, 1973) as well as a structurational one (see Bourdieu, 1984; Giddens, 1984). These approaches suggest that the patterned attribution of meaning by participants in a group is a means by which people reproduce and recreate social perceptions of situations by their repeated actions based on their understandings. Ultimately this phenomenological approach led back to meaning as locally created within socially created circumstances. The question of how texts shared meaning across time and space then became associated with understanding how social arrangements developed sufficient stabilization for meanings to spread with some degree of mutual orientation.

In such instances, of which there were many more, my interdisciplinary perspective grounded in the disciplinary problematics of writing studies created generative puzzles and problems. Solving these problems led to new perspectives and new inquiries. These puzzles and problems were of several kinds: 1) being tempted into the problematics and concerns of each of the disciplines I found of interest; 2) remembering and being disciplined by my own problematics from my own field of the teaching of writing; 3) trying to see how the approaches from these other fields could be brought to bear on writing in a disciplined way; and 4) integrating multidisciplinary knowledge into a theoretic framework for writing and for new inquiries. I share a few lessons and some experiences with these four puzzles in hope that they will be of use to others who undertake interdisciplinary journeys in pursuit of understanding the multi-dimensionality of writing.

Getting Caught in the Interesting Questions of Other Fields

First, as I engaged with various disciplines I soon learned that they had leading questions before them, and these questions directed their work, claims, and controversies. As I read the work that interested me, inevitably I got interested in their controversies, framed around the dynamics of their field, whether it concerned psychological mechanisms for problem solving, linguistic arguments over the universality of grammatical structures versus the local and indexical nature of language, sociological inquiries into the socially contingent nature of scientific

work, or educational struggles about the value of quantitative versus qualitative research. In order to understand the work I was reading in the disciplines in pursuit of these questions, I needed to understand the intellectual concerns that drove the authors and the dialogues they were engaged in. The theory, findings, and data I encountered carried baggage, very interesting baggage, which tempted me to rummage about and even play costume games. Further, bringing the resources of my own field I felt I had something to say on those issues, about the role of writing as a means of problem-solving or the kinds of problems writing poses, or about how scientific texts can be understood as part of the social process of organizing scientists and creating science. Indeed, as I talked with colleagues in those fields, if they became interested in my work, it was precisely as an ally and resource in their endeavors; they interpreted my work in terms of their field, and criticized my work in terms of the standards of their field, challenging me to meet those standards. If they did not find me as a direct ally, they placed little value in it. So the pressures to adopt the standards and problems of those fields were strong. But this left me as an amateur playing in the professional leagues of linguistics, sociology, or psychology, trying to solve the problems of those fields rather than the problems of writing. I learned much from their ways of work, but I was in danger of losing focus on the writing studies questions that brought me to interdisciplinary inquiry.

I particularly felt these pressures in the late 1970's when I became interested in the sociology of science to understand the context and dynamic within which scientists produced writing and how texts were located within the organized activities of their disciplines. My first substantial contact with sociology of science was through the founder of the field, Robert Merton (1973), from whom I learned enormous amounts, but he and his colleagues wanted me to help them address the question of the relation of the social structure of science to the nature of the knowledge produced. At that time, such a question was far beyond me. Further, their question was framed as a problem of science studies, not as a matter of writing. When decades later I did pursue some inquiries that might shed some light on the issue, those new inquiries were framed around the concerns of writing studies—in what kinds of documents within what kinds of social situations and communicative purposes did statements which embodied information appear, and what was the status of that information in those documents for the readers (see for example, Bazerman, 2001, 2005; Bazerman & Chavkin, 2003). In the late 1970's, however, there were strong rifts developing in the sociology of science, with texts being an important flashpoint (Latour & Woolgar, 1979). In what was soon to be called the strong program in the sociology of science, which then became the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge (Collins, 1983), the argument that scientific knowledge was all socially generated used as evidence a few studies of scientific texts, demonstrating these papers were rhetorical and carried forward the interests

of the scientific authors (see for example, Collins, 1985; Dear, 1985; Knorr-Cetina, 1981; and Latour, 1987). As the strong program adherents saw that I did not draw the same conclusions from rhetorical analysis, and that I pursued other questions in the analysis, they lost interest in my work. Further, insofar as I pursued the question of how empirical experience became represented in texts, they saw my work as part of the opposition's program. As the science wars erupted, when I spoke to those who defended science, I was characterized as a radical nihilist constructivist enemy of science, but the social constructivists rejected my work since I clearly to them was a naïve realist and apologist for science. Actually, for me the issue so heatedly argued only helped identify a research question to be investigated: within the clearly contingent, human communicative world of scientific writing, how did nature become represented so as to produce common understanding and reliable facts that achieved broad assent and that were useful in working with nature?

The more I continued the interdisciplinary journey, the easier it became to see what I wanted to learn from each of the disciplines, to keep myself from being caught up in their issues and work as an amateur. I did this by becoming more explicit and articulate about the commitments I had to solving problems of my own field.

Remembering and Focusing Fundamental Commitments

This brings me to the second issue, of coming to define my own research questions and holding to them, even when learning from others. This then helped set terms for selectivity and translation to identify what resources from other disciplines were useful for my own grounding issues. Once I started to see knowledge as located within the problematics and practices of disciplines rather than as generalized nuggets of truth, seamlessly transferable to all discussions, I came to see that the issue of translation is not trivial. The courts and the sciences, for example are very differently structured forums for producing knowledge and adjudicating differences of view, and the knowledge of one does not flow easily into the other. Scientific findings enter court considerations only when they have strict relevance as defined by the legal considerations, when they are presented according to the rules of evidence. Further, they must serve in deliberating a definitive judgment of criminality or culpability at the moment. Courts need to make decisions, although science can hold off decision until new evidence, theories, or methods come along (Bazerman, 2009a). Such examples indicate not only how difficult transfer of knowledge is from one domain to another, but how that transfer is shaped by the core goals and procedures of the receiving discipline.

Writing studies is at heart a practical discipline, no matter how far it wanders into arcane corners of history or psychology or sociology. As a field its motive comes from helping people to use written language more effectively, for both production and reception. It is also a discipline closely tied to making and interpreting meaning

of written signs within particular socio-historic circumstances, and is thus creative, hermeneutic, and contextual. Some of its research questions concern the tasks people write for, the forms of writing they produce, and the strategic and creative choices they make in those circumstances. Other questions concern how people go about producing those texts and what they need to know to produce effective texts. Still other questions concern how writers develop and how teachers and mentors can guide that writing development. Such questions often lead researchers to stay close to home, looking at students' texts or processes of writers in the middle of a task, or at classroom interactions and various forms of instruction. Yet, because writing practices have evolved historically and vary widely, the field is limited in its understandings if it limits itself to school and curricular settings, if for no other reason than students are learning to write not only to succeed at school, but to write effectively once they graduate. At the same time, as writing studies wanders beyond school settings, research questions may proliferate in ways that do not always keep the relevance to disciplinary concerns clear.

My path of inquiry took me into seemingly distant areas where the connection to teaching students and others to be better writers was not always obvious, and I did not always find it easy to state what my research questions were—but I needed to articulate them to keep me on a focused path of inquiry. As I engaged with sociology of science over time I realized I was looking specifically at how the social arrangements in disciplines organized the work of writing and established the rhetorical situation of writing. Even as that field showed an interest in writing as a site of social construction, I needed to keep my eye on how writers went about the business of social construction rather than getting caught up in demonstrating the rhetorical character of knowledge or in philosophical questioning of the status of knowledge. I had particular difficulty in articulating the purpose of my study of Otto von Guericke (Bazerman, 1993). I had previously been looking at the development of what became the features of mainstream scientific reporting—where I could see clearly I was unpacking the assumptions and purposes of contemporary scientific practices. But I began to wonder what empirical demonstration looked like by an early scientist who was outside the main line of development of modern science. In retrospect I can say I was beginning to inquire about how evidence was a construct of the rhetorical context and how evidence (and knowledge) varied from one knowledge-producing social system to another, and the ways meanings changed when knowledge moved from one system to another. Eventually this turned out to have quite practical consequences for understanding the challenges students had to face in writing in the sciences (Kelly & Bazerman, 2003; Kelly, Bazerman, Skukauskaite, & Prothero, 2009) and in the perspective on interdisciplinary research expressed in this article, but it took conscious effort and time to come to be able to express the value of my research questions for writing studies.

The Value and Benefits of Work from Other Fields

As I developed research questions different from those already framed within the disciplines I was visiting I then was in a better position to ask what the specific value of that field's findings and theory was for my work. I was no longer tied to the default value or meaning of their findings and theories in their own terms. That put me in a tougher spot in not being able to rely on well-established assumptions and practices in those disciplines, but also gave me freedom to look at the disciplinary work of others in a fresh way. So just as I was driven to history of science in order to investigate how the forms and situations of scientific writing evolved as modern science was being formed, I entered that field with an attention to changing text structures and communicative situations. This attention differed from the more typical orientations of the history of science that put the developments of specific ideas or the actions of individuals in contingent situations at the center of the inquiry. Contingent histories of actors within situations were important to me, but not as heroic stories of discovery or recovery of historical states of mind. Rather, I was looking for how actors refigured the rhetorical opportunities, resources, and stances of the field; reformulated discursive expectations; or modified forums for discussions. This orientation elevated what were considered relatively minor scientific actors (because they made no major discoveries) into major ones, such as the editors of journals. This orientation as well looked at major actors, such as Isaac Newton or Joseph Priestley, from a different perspective, as writers making choices within specific rhetorical circumstances. This then led me to consider lesser texts or even non-scientific texts in order to understand their rhetorical thinking and practice. Even more radically, I aggregated actions of many individuals, not in the manner of the group portraits of prosopography, but as reflected in changing practices revealed in texts, and I elevated genres into historically significant structures, equivalent to institutions.

On occasion, this work arising out of the problematics of writing studies was of some interest to some members of the disciplines I engaged in, particularly when it helped with critical discussions already going on in the field or helped them understand their own histories and directions (as in psychology, Bazerman, 1987). At times those fields felt challenged to visit the same topics that I offered from their own perspective (see for example, Dear, 1991). In a few instances I had the good fortune to contribute directly to discussions of the research questions of other fields (particularly educational fields that intersect in interest with writing studies). But more often my work was of little interest or even notice to them, as it aimed to solve different problems and highlighted different phenomena and evidence. While I was at first puzzled and hurt by why the various disciplines were not interested in the fresh perspective and evidence I brought, I eventually recognized this was as it should be and that they had their own fish to fry. This reconfirmed my commitment to the projects and problematics of my own field.

Reframing Inquiry and Theory in an Interdisciplinary Space

As my interdisciplinary experiences distanced me from the conventional perspectives about writing, I saw things differently and saw different things. The research challenge then became to bring those new things into focus and to produce systematic evidence of their existence, the way they worked, and their consequences. That research needed to be so robust that other people in writing studies could come to see and respect the phenomena made visible through the evidence, even if they were not familiar with or did not accept the ideas and perspectives that drove the inquiry. I needed methods that forcefully captured the kinds of evidence I was looking for, but I could not simply adopt the methods wholesale of the disciplines I had been visiting, for the methods did not keep in focus those kinds of phenomena I was interested in. If the history of textual forms is not significant to historians, their methods are likely to fall short in helping make that history visible. Yet my methods do need to draw on the knowledge that historians have developed about gathering historical evidence to tell historical narratives. Thus my methods needed to respect both the interests of writing studies and the methodological wisdom of other fields I worked with.

Even the theory of intertextuality that we share with our near neighbor of literary studies looks very different in the two worlds and leads us to gather evidence of very different phenomena through different methods (Bazerman, 2004). Similarly, although we share ethnographic research with a number of social scientific fields, writing studies requires a rethinking of both methods and theory. Ethnography usually keeps face-to-face personal interaction and the accomplishment of immediate social ends centrally in focus. In writing studies, however, texts are both a significant means of interaction (which then travels across time and space) and the focus of core activity, redirecting attention of participants away from immediate interaction into an elaborate set of meanings at a distance.

Then finally, I needed to mobilize methods into systematic searches for particular phenomena, that may in themselves be multidimensional. As I drew on more and more varied disciplinary resources, even though I tried to keep my problematics focused on issues that would help us understand what writing was, the framing questions for individual studies became increasingly different than those typically pursued in writing studies. No longer was I asking questions about what kinds of writing students had to do in their undergraduate courses (a very early version of my problem formulation), what kinds of writing scholars in their discipline did (a slightly later problem formulation), or even how the standard genres of a field evolved (an even later one). As I developed theories of the social locatedness of writing and the textual production of knowledge embedded within particular social groups, I began asking such odd questions as how closely related but distinct disciplines consider the evidence from each other, or how knowledge translates from the scientific literature into the courts. Other questions arose as I

combined this kind of view with the writing-to-learn literature (Bazerman, 2009b), to consider what the cognitive consequences were of participating in these socially located knowledge genres.

Theory development and new inquiries went hand in hand, scaffolding each other. This meant then articulating the developing theoretical positions throughout all the newly emerging research. At first I tried to stay very close to the evidence and not strain to impose theories on the material, but gradually I found I needed theories to understand, organize, and direct the empirical research. Within empirical papers I started to articulate theoretical views about genre, social organization, and historical emergence. Then I found it useful to write theoretical pieces that would aggregate my various pieces of work and then lay out general theoretical positions, particularly when I drew several investigations together in books such as Bazerman, 1988, 1994, and 1999. I needed these theoretical essays as much to explain these ideas clearly to myself as to explain them to others. The more I was able to articulate the theory, the more new kinds of inquiries I pursued. Thus I moved from genre theory to investigations of genre systems, and then activity systems. Within those literate activity systems, I found intertextuality taking an ever increasing role, because it was the way sociality was expressed within organized disciplinary discussions and the mechanism by which knowledge was aggregated, evaluated, and made continuingly relevant for further work. Even more, intertextuality was useful for considering the educational processes by which students come to engage with the thinkers of a field and come to develop position and voice with respect to them. Others problems I began to worry about as a result of the theoretical positions I was adopting were not even problems for people who were not engaged in those theories. For example, only if one were to see that meaning and knowledge were constructed by co-orientation in groups mediated by texts, would one begin to wonder how meaning became constructed across time and space though texts, rather than taking for granted that the meaning resided in the texts (Bazerman, 2003).

The point of this is not to promote my own theory or problematics, but only to point out the consequences of interdisciplinary work. Interdisciplinary work is likely to shake up assumptions, concepts, methods, and inquiries one brings from a home discipline. One then may be pressed to reconsider core concerns and how they look in light of the new perspectives offered by the interdisciplinary work. This then requires one to think about what one really wants to know, what the project of the discipline is, and what theories can incorporate interdisciplinary knowledge, while still staying grounded in disciplinary concerns. Then one may be led to further inquiries as well as to new perspectives on the world and practice.

Hard, but Not Impossible

In 1989 Stanley Fish published an article with the clever and true title "Being Interdisciplinary Is So Very Hard to Do." I agree with much of what he said, but I have some differences. He was addressing a late-twentieth century movement in the humanities for an interdisciplinarity that erased disciplinary boundaries to undo the historic biases built into existing humanities disciplines. He argued that disciplines (though socially constructed and historically contingent) needed to rely on taken-for-granted assumptions that became invisible to practitioners, in order to be able to carry out their work of building knowledge. He did recognize that disciplines might sometimes need to be critiqued and rethought, but he pointed out that new disciplinary formations would soon arise with their own blindness to their assumptions. In his eyes, interdisciplinarity that moved beyond disciplines to a place of pure critique was so very hard to do that it was nigh unto impossible. That may well be true. But I disagree that self-knowledge and interdisciplinarity are therefore so hard to do that they cannot be done seriously, and that if pursued energetically they necessarily undermine the basis of disciplinarity. If one takes the end of interdisciplinarity not to wish away the disciplines, but rather to pursue disciplinary ends at greater depth, then one can continue to evolve a disciplinary core problematic while engaging with the learning and perspectives of other disciplines. The discipline is to be found in core commitments and problematics. Interdisciplinary engagement then can help make visible the home discipline's core assumptions as well as the core assumptions of the other disciplines one engages with. Such interdisciplinarity deepens inquiry and makes possible a more comprehensive understanding of one's objects of concern. Such interdisciplinarity may even provide findings of some use to the other fields if they are also willing to engage in that self-knowledge and rearrangement. So we do not need to remain blinded to who we are and what we do, nor should we stay blinded to the work of other disciplines. Rather, when we see an intersection of concerns or when the other discipline might provide a resource, we have an intellectual obligation to learn what the other discipline knows and how it knows it. We might even learn something useful for our own disciplinary projects. Hard to do, but not impossible.

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