

# Interdisciplinarity, huh: What is it good for? (Absolutely nothing?)

Interdisciplinarity is a big thing in academia. The UK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) proclaims that 'many of the most pressing research challenges are interdisciplinary in nature'.<sup>1</sup> There are even whole books dedicated to the subject<sup>2</sup> – as well as numerous articles in world-leading journals such as *Nature*.<sup>3</sup>

And yet, for all the academic bluster about expanding our horizons and adopting new collaborative ways of thinking, the system as it stands today simply does not support interdisciplinary research. Indeed, some might say our system actively *discourages* it.

The reasons for this are many. In the fields of Business, Management and Marketing, these include:

- Faculty publishing requirements that focus on a narrow range of journals with limited scope
- Editors and Reviewers who are either unwilling or unable to judge interdisciplinary work based on its merits
- Academic promotions criteria that emphasise citation counts and H-index scores

All of these factors, and more, lead to a situation where academics are encouraged to adopt a selective approach to research that favours incremental work, self-citation and 'theory building', where the target publication is often picked long before putting the proverbial pen to paper.

## A tale as old as time...

As a relative late comer to academia, I have felt the burden of interdisciplinarity perhaps more than most. Prior to my life in one of the UK's leading™ Management Schools, I spent several years in industry, and didn't start my PhD until my 30s – and in a discipline that is *not* Marketing.

My interests are many and varied. As my university profile will tell you, my research sits at the intersection between literature, philosophy, history, technology studies and social science. I also conduct practice-based research relating to digital marketing and reflective practice / work-based learning.<sup>4</sup> Many of the journals I publish in tend to be in the arts and humanities – or at least, journals not described as 'world leading' according to the Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS) list.

But of course, this is not to say my research is without merit. Far from it. What makes me laugh (and sometimes, cry) is that I have four publications in two of the oldest journals in the realm of speculative fiction – two of the 'big' names in that particular field of study.<sup>5</sup> Were I sitting in an office a few hundred metres from where I am sat today, my work would be lauded as being highly worthy – a better output even than my former supervisor working at the same institution. And this isn't even to include my publications in other disciplines such as education, sociology, and film/media.

And yet according to my department, the vast majority of my work simply *does not count*. For anything. At all. As a result, I am often made to feel like a research outcast within my own department; someone who does 'nice things', but whose work isn't really taken seriously. This treatment is symptomatic of a much wider and more pervasive problem within academia, in which the system we work in prevents us from doing interesting research that makes a difference. Rather than crossing disciplinary boundaries and thinking outside of the box, we are encouraged to work in restrictive silos, as this is the most effective way to produce outputs that meet the restrictive criteria set by our institutions.

Let me give you an example...

## The academic chameleon

I was recently invited to collaborate on a project funded by the Wellcome Trust, exploring the Future of Human Reproduction.<sup>6</sup> As part of this project I have been working closely with a colleague in the field of Linguistics to analyse how people respond to ectogenesis – a concept where babies are grown *outside* of the womb in mechanical pods. To conduct this research, we have analysed more than 15,000 comments made in response to a YouTube video depicting a fictionalised vision of what ectogenesis might look like. In doing so we have drawn on insights from several different disciplines including linguistics, literary studies and technology studies to assess how people use science fiction as a way to make sense of the future and assess risk.

This research has some really quite interesting implications for science communication and how new technologies are marketed to the public. It's also – dare I say – really, really *cool*.

However, there is a catch here, and I suspect you know what's coming...

The outcome of my collaborative, *interdisciplinary* research, and many long hours spent analysing data and preparing it for publication, is an article that will appear in a special issue of a humanities journal that will come out in 2026.<sup>7</sup> While the publication itself is a good one, and well respected within the field of medical humanities, it does not appear on the hallowed list of publications valued by my Faculty. As such, I might as well not be doing it.

This, to me, is a problem.

And it's not just a problem confined to a small group of people. A good friend and colleague of mine does research on salmon farming and is working with a group of fellow-researchers in the Natural and Environmental Sciences. I have seen some of the work they have been doing and it really is excellent. However, the way our system is organised means that she and her fellow co-authors are forced to produce *several* articles from the same piece of research in order that their work be recognised within their respective departments. Not only does this mean duplicate workload, but it also means that the quality of work gets diluted. Instead of writing one excellent interdisciplinary piece of work that is judged based on its merits, they are forced to think strategically about how they might extract the most 'value' from their work in order to support their own department's agenda.

The problem here, is that we are trying to rationalise something that cannot – and should not – ever be rationalised. The result is a system where only *outcomes* matter; what we produce isn't really important at all. Rather, it's all about *citations*, *marketability*, *keywords* and *search engine optimisation*. As such, the role of the modern-day academic is not so much to produce *research* per se, but rather to produce *publications* – a very specific form of academic production. This production is not concerned with anything so radical as knowledge, innovation, or collaboration. Rather, it is a system with very specific measures of work, output and perceived excellence, where quality is judged based on *where* something is published, rather than what is actually said.

Welcome, my friends, to the Academic Game™.

## The quest for excellence

At the heart of the Academic Game™ is a system of prestige built on several key indicators that university managers have decided are pre-determined markers of success. Typically, these relate to the perceived 'quality' of the publication (i.e. the journal it's published in), and the number of citations it receives.

But of course, 'quality' is very much a loaded term, and one that can never quite be separated from the academic and institutional politics of the time. To avoid any confusion, many Business and Management Schools make use of a journal list in order to guide staff on where they should publish their work. In my own Faculty, this is the Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS) Academic Journal Guide – currently in its 2021 edition, and soon to be updated to 2024.<sup>8</sup>

The list itself is quite instructive. It takes a range of journals that are (supposedly) within fields that relate to the activity of Business Schools and ranks them on a scale of 1–4, with 4\* being the best and 1\* being the worst. If I'm to stay in my job, I need to publish in the 3\* and 4\* journals. This requirement is stated very clearly in my academic job contract. If I don't meet it, I am out of work. Fact.

Given these strict requirements, and the many limitations imposed upon my time, the 'best' solution for me would be to concentrate on writing for those journals that meet with the pre-determined approval of my Faculty. No good looking at the 1s and 2s – it's 3s and 4s all the way. If it doesn't appear on the list, then it's not even worth considering.

But of course, a great many journals don't appear on the CABS list, some of which are really very good indeed. *Nature*, for example, does not appear on the list; nor does *Science* – and you wouldn't expect them to either as they're not related to business. And yet there are also many excellent journals that *are* related to business that don't appear on the list either. Take the *Journal of Consumer Culture* for example. You literally couldn't design a journal more suited to the field of Marketing. It even features the work of George Ritzer as one of its regular contributors.<sup>9</sup>

A few years back, I published a paper said journal, exploring the relationship between science fiction, social media and modes of prosumption.<sup>10</sup> However, it was only after publication that I was informed that the journal does not appear in the CABS list. When I emailed the editor to ask about this, I was told that the journal team had made a clear decision *not to be included* in the CABS list. According to Editor Steven Miles, 'the benefits are not perceived to outweigh the downside, and specifically how [...] the identity of the journal may be affected.'<sup>11</sup>

So, this leaves me in a strange situation. On the one hand, I have written a paper that clearly relates to Marketing, and for a journal that our former Research Director claims should be worth a 3\* were it to appear on the CABS list. And yet, according to other senior voices at my institution, it would seem I have again fallen into the trap of doing more research that simply *doesn't count*.

It really makes you wonder why you bother.

## Playing the Game™

Alongside journal ranking, another important measure of 'research quality' is the number of citations that a piece of work receives. In principle, the concept is a good one. After all, the best work should (in theory) receive the most citations. However, in practice, the system is open to exploitation by those who play the Academic Game™.<sup>12</sup>

We all know the types. Business Schools are full of them. Colleagues who exclusively publish in a small number of journals; journals where their friends and co-authors also publish, and where their work gains undue prominence. In playing the Game, so these colleagues will regularly cite themselves and the work of their friends (who are also often their Reviewers), in order to inflate their citation scores and make bold claims about the impact of their work. And so, one 'high quality' citation leads to another, and another, and the same small group of authors climb the ladder of academic success.

This behaviour is now so prevalent that even the metrics companies have been forced to take notice. In one recent incident, the journal *Marketing Theory* (3\*) was exposed for gaming the system when analytics company Clarivate noted 34% self-citation within the journal in 2022.<sup>13</sup> As you might expect, the Editors took a rather bullish stance to being called out in this way. In an article dripping with irony, the Editors claimed that they were being unfairly treated and that their supposedly 'radical' research was in some way being suppressed.<sup>14</sup>

Of course, we are still awaiting to see how this extraordinary turn of events will play out in the next iteration of the CABS Journal Guide, due at some point in 2024. While the Impact Factor of *Marketing Theory* may now have been reinstated, one can't help but feel the journal has been tainted by the behaviour of a few individuals keen to make their name in the Academic Game™.

## Consequences for research

I should be very clear at this point to stress that I do not have a particular agenda against *Marketing Theory*, or against any of the individuals implicated in the citations scandal. In many respects, they are products of a system that encourages this kind of behaviour. While I certainly don't endorse it, I can at least understand it. However, this issue goes far beyond the actions of a small group of individuals as it has implications for everything we do as academics, from what we research to who we research with and where we decide to publish. Critically, it also informs decisions around interdisciplinarity, as the system actively discourages academics from taking their work outside a small group of prescribed journals.

Part of the reason for this is the narrow view Business and Management schools have about prestige in academic publishing. Not all disciplines view things the same way. In the world of Arts and Humanities, citation metrics are far less important than they are in the realms of Business, Management and Marketing. This is because the research is often speaking to a much smaller specialist audience. For example, if I write a paper about the work of science fiction author Ursula K. Le Guin, then I am typically only speaking to other Le Guin scholars, plus those few who may be writing about the book(s) that I happen to talk about. I am not speaking to all researchers within the discipline. I therefore wouldn't expect the vast majority of literature scholars to cite my work.

There are some other disciplinary differences that are also worth noting. In the Arts and Humanities, papers tend to be single or dual authored. It is very rare to see a large multi-author paper as you do in the likes of Business and/or the Natural Sciences. By their very nature, these multi-author papers tend to attract far more citations than single authored works. This is mainly due to power of network effects, and the fact that each author can add to the article's citation count in any future piece of work that they may publish. Again, this is an important disciplinary difference. As a literature scholar, I am never going to amass hundreds of citations for my solo-authored paper about the (fairly obscure) work of Bernard Wolfe, no matter how good (or bad) it may be.<sup>15</sup>

Referencing systems also play a major role in shaping how various disciplines assess quality. Arts and Humanities journals tend to use different citation systems to the Business and Management disciplines. These systems, such as Chicago or MHRA tend to favour a more in-depth analytical approach to writing, rather than the broad brushstrokes of Harvard where we are encouraged to show *breadth of reading*, rather than depth of insight. As such, the citation metrics for even some of the most prestigious journals in the Arts and Humanities can be in the low single figures – sometimes, even less than 1.<sup>16</sup>

Of course, this is not to say that research in the Arts and Humanities is any more or less worthwhile. However, what these examples go to show is just how difficult it can be to even *justify* engaging in interdisciplinary research, given the immense pressures to publish work of a certain prestige. As a consequence, interdisciplinary research tends to be an 'added extra' rather than a core part of what we do. If we want to engage in topics outside of our Faculty's approved criteria, then it must be done *in addition to* our 'proper', 'serious' research. And this isn't to even consider the challenge of actually *doing* the research itself. From the emotional and intellectual labour of code switching to the challenge of getting a finished piece of work past an overworked and sometimes quite hostile team of reviewers...

## A modern-day dystopia

Anyone who has ever tried to publish research in the last few years will be well aware that the academic publishing system, as it stands today, is a bit of a mess. Many of the largest publishing houses make profits in the millions. All the while, the actual researchers, editors and reviewers are not paid at all.<sup>17</sup> In many respects, the academic publishing model mirrors that of social media. We (the academics) produce and manage 'content', while the 'platforms' (Elsevier et al) earn profits from the things that we produce. This in much the same way that Facebook, Instagram and the like don't actually produce any content as such, but rather profit from the things that their members produce.

The main difference being that in the case of academia, we are *required* to create content under the terms of our employment, whether we have anything useful to say or not.

There are just so many issues with the system I cannot hope to cover them all in the space left to me. However, I would very much like to draw attention to a few key areas of concern that impact upon the quality of outputs that make it to final publication. These include:

- a) Quality of reviewers
- b) Accountability in the review process
- c) Experience of the editorial team

There are also many issues associated with the unpaid nature of academic publishing that mean that it is a system stacked against early career researchers and junior members of staff. These colleagues typically have much higher teaching workload allocations. They also often have to contend with issues of precarity and short-term contracts that make publications a risky business. Meanwhile, those at the top tend to have much less teaching and admin to do, and so have far more time to do the things that are seen as markers of success. They also have access to greater financial resources, more contacts, and (often) friendly editors and reviewers. Nor did they ever have to face the same hurdles facing junior colleagues these days, with words such as *engagement* anathema to many senior members of Faculty. And this isn't even to mention the issue of research papers hidden behind paywalls that exclude people who either don't have institutional affiliations, or perhaps whose institution can't afford the fees for access.

## The triumph of nonsense

If the disparity between the 'haves' and 'have nots' in academia is not bad enough already, the sad fact is that many of the papers that *do* make it to publication simply aren't that good. Even some of our most highly regarded journals are full of low-quality articles that are poorly written and almost meaningless in the context of the real world. Certainly not the sorts of things that can be used for the purposes of teaching, or by our colleagues in industry.

If any evidence is needed of the backwards system we have created for ourselves, I strongly encourage readers to look up the work of Dennis Tourish, who has written two outstanding critiques of the system as it stands today. The first, *Management Studies in Crisis: Fraud, Deceptions and Meaningless Research* (2019) sets the scene for how we have got ourselves into this extraordinary mess; while his article, 'The Triumph of Nonsense in Management Studies' (2020) serves as useful gateway into his work, offering scathing critique of the nonsense that fills so many of our top tier journals.<sup>18</sup>

One of the key issues Tourish highlights is the 'fetishisation' of theory by many top tier journals who seem intent on theorizing for its own sake. As such, authors will often present work that isn't really 'theory' as such, but rather an *illusion* of theory – an artificial construct that is all but meaningless when applied to the real world.<sup>19</sup> This leads to a situation where 'if you use an existing theory to explain an interesting phenomenon, your work will be rejected because it "doesn't develop new theory," however suitable it is'.<sup>20</sup>

Of course, this would seem to be the complete opposite of what research is supposed to be about. In the realm of the 'proper' (natural) sciences, confirming an existing theory is just as important as coming up with something new. The problem here, is that in our incessant collective desire to rationalise everything we do – and justify our position as a serious discipline – so we are compelled to produce work that is *marketable* rather than work that is actually useful or interesting.

This valorisation of nonsense has been led in no small part by editors and reviewers who have been institutionalised within a system that promotes outcomes above good quality work. In many respects, reviewers are the gatekeepers of our realm, holding far too much power given there is no way to check what they say or hold them to account. If one gets outright rejected, there is not even a right to reply. This leads to a situation where 'Authors try to anticipate every possible demand

from every conceivable reviewer; reviewers are asked to suggest improvements, whatever the quality of the paper in front of them so they do'.<sup>21</sup> This can also lead to a form of indirect self-censorship in order to meet the perceived research 'fashion' of the time.<sup>22</sup>

What doesn't help here is that all too often the editorial team won't necessarily vet their reviewers adequately – or even look at their feedback to check that it is a) factually correct, or b) written in a fair and professional manner. Anyone who has ever submitted a paper for review will be familiar with the sorts of things I'm talking about. The sorts of rude, unprofessional comments that have no place in any sort of setting, yet seem commonplace in academia, where anonymous reviewers turn into internet trolls empowered by their anonymity to write whatever they like – whether justified or not.

In one of my most recent rejections, one particularly snarky reviewer made comment about one of the theorists I used and suggested I didn't know what I was talking about. The tone was quite antagonistic, and laden with sarcasm, suggesting that I was in some way stupid. Only... they were wrong. In this case, I searched out the book the reviewer made reference to in their comment and found the precise source that they had used to justify my rejection. They had misremembered it! Their mistake was so glaringly obvious that I took a photo of the reference and sent it to the editor, drawing attention not only to the fact that I was rejected on flawed grounds, but that the reviewer was incredibly rude and condescending.

Did the editor decide to send my paper back out for review? Of course not! Rather, I received the proverbial shrug of the shoulders and was told that 'this kind of thing happens to all of us' – as if it should just be accepted as standard practice in academia, and that I should just move on. As a consequence, many weeks of hard labour were wasted and the reviewer was able to bat away my submission without so much as a second thought. Eighteen months have passed since that fateful review, and still I haven't had the time to return to it and send it elsewhere...

## Have we forgotten how to write?

In my life prior to academia I worked as a professional journalist and copywriter. As such, I do tend to take writing quite seriously. It always surprises me then just how bad some academic writing can be. As you might imagine, Dennis Tourish pulls no punches on this one: 'The quality of much academic writing is [...] terrible today. Most papers in mainstream journals are formulaic, cautious, dull, and unreadable. Writing by critical management scholars is little better, and indeed is often worse.'<sup>23</sup> And he's not alone in saying this. There are numerous authors out there making a similar point, including, notably, one Stephen Pinker.<sup>24</sup>

Certainly, this is born out in my own experience. So many papers (and even books) are so dense as to be indecipherable. Indeed, many contain an array of garbled sentences contorted to cram in as many concepts as possible. This is because the system compels us to show breadth of ~~knowledge~~ *awareness* rather than critical or analytical skill. This is also not helped by our referencing system of choice – Harvard – a system that discourages writers from engaging directly with the content of a source. However, this issue is further exacerbated by the review system already discussed, and the fact that so many reviewers are themselves quite bad writers. Sometimes it seems they don't even bother to read what they have been sent. 'Improve the quality of English' one of my (anonymous) reviewers said to me recently; 'If English is not your first language you should get someone to proof read your work.'

One of the (many) problems here – aside from the fact that I *am* a native English speaker – is that the rules of the Game™ mean that I am required to follow reviewer feedback to the letter, no matter what it is they happen say. This leads to crazy situations where you can receive feedback from two (or sometimes, three) reviewers that will give feedback that is often quite contradictory, with no solution offered by the editor. For example, when one reviewer says how well structured your article is, and how easy it is to follow, only for the other reviewer to claim it is badly organised and needs significant further work. Which one is right?

Again, this comes back to the imbalanced power relationships in the review process, where anonymous, unaccountable reviewers have too much power, and all too often, editors are not in a position to make a clear decision on the matter – either through lack of experience, lack of expertise, or just sheer lack of time.

All of which means we are in a situation now where good quality writing and research is being eroded in favour of citation-laden, *politicised* works of great breadth but hardly any depth at all. It's not so much about what we say, but rather that we say the right things and in a way that our anonymous reviewers approve of.

And the problem is, we're all caught up in the same system. Editors want more citations for the journal they edit; reviewers want more citations for their own publications. Meanwhile, authors just want to get published. And so we have this constant cycle whereby authors are encouraged to cram in as much as possible in order to meet the citation criteria of editors and reviewers. The end product of which is a piece of writing that in some cases is barely readable. However, what it is, is *marketable*. It is no wonder then that Tourish observes: 'One might imagine that they [journal articles] are written by a computer rather than a human being.'<sup>25</sup>

## What is research really for?

In this paper I have argued that 'interdisciplinarity' as we know it, doesn't really exist in academia. While the system valorises interdisciplinary working and makes it an important – nay, essential – part of job adverts and funding applications, the actual act of working in an interdisciplinary way is incredibly difficult and does not really fit with the pressures of the neoliberal university system.

The result, then, is that we have an academic publishing model that prioritises outputs above all else; a system where 'impact' is measured based on citations, and where people can become very successful by saying very little – but just so long as they say it in the right places and cite the right people along the way.

For me, then, the question is one of identity. Just what is the purpose of academic research? Who is it serving? Why should anyone care? If we can agree collectively on these three things, then I think we would go a long way to starting on the road to recovery from the terminal sickness known as the Academic Game™.

While my arguments in this paper go far beyond the confines of mere interdisciplinarity, I believe it is an excellent example of how we have become habituated to adopt neoliberal doublethink in every single thing that we do. This is how we can hold two equal and opposing views at the same time. For example: interdisciplinarity is a good thing to do, but doesn't really count; we need to be seen to be doing it, but to do it is to sacrifice other, more productive outputs that will benefit one's career.<sup>26</sup>

In many ways, it's a bit like how so many colleagues claim to be doing things with 'digital'. So many academics talk a good game when it comes to research in the digital space, and even in realms such as cybersecurity. Some will even claim to have published on the subject. And yet when you actually come to talk to them about digital technology, its uses and its applications, you quickly find it's another case of Emperor's New Clothes. Some of my 'digital' colleagues can barely switch on their computer without calling IT. These people would get found out in all of 5 minutes were they to work in the 'real world'.

And yet this is the great paradox of academia. We have to be seen to be excellent in all we do, yet in truth, very little of we do is actually excellent. It's all style and very little in the way of meaningful substance. Indeed, very little of it is even very useful. We have a situation then where so much that is deemed 'publishable' by the top tier journals is absolute rubbish – and yet people get promoted on the back of it. It's a form of institutionalised gaslighting of the absolute highest order.

## A call to arms

At this point, we really need to tear up the system and start again. Personally, I would call for a moratorium on journal lists and metrics to measure impact. I would also de-couple promotion criteria from anything that can be easily gamed, and remove specific publishing requirements from academic job contracts.

In an ideal world I would make editorial posts paid positions where editors are appointed based on their competence as editors (and not merely the number of publications they have). I would also insist on professional training and regular reviews. I would also aim to make the review process more transparent, with reviewers held accountable for their feedback. To this end, I would provide a mechanism by which rude, offensive or unprofessional comments are made public and are also sent to the reviewer's Head of Department. It may sound drastic, but this sort of thing needs to be eradicated from academia if we are to be a fair and equitable profession.

There are just so many things that need to change, I barely have space to even get started in the few words that are left to me. Needless to say, the system needs fundamental root-and-branch reform. We simply cannot go on the way we have been. After all, we live in a world now where so many people question the role of 'experts'.<sup>27</sup> If we are to be taken seriously as researchers – as academics – then we need to do good meaningful work. Work that has genuine impact in terms of changing behaviours and shaping people's lives. Theory alone is never going to change the world.

By limiting ourselves to a few small silos we are stifling ourselves as researchers. We are also stifling ourselves as human beings. There is a whole world of new knowledge and new ways of thinking out there if only we have the courage to grasp it. I would encourage everyone then, to think about themselves not as 'Marketing' scholar, or a 'Management' researcher, but rather as an *interdisciplinary* researcher, who does research because they are curious, and interested in the world around them, and not because it might help them in the next round of promotions.<sup>28</sup>

This is one of the reasons I so admire the *Journal of Customer Behaviour*. As Business, Management and Marketing scholars, we could learn so much from the other disciplines, especially the Arts and Humanities. If we can all just take a step back and open our minds to the possibility of doing things a little bit differently – drawing on lessons from other disciplines besides our own – then the world of academia would be a much better place to do research, and certainly a much nicer place to work.



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- <sup>1</sup> Economic and Social Research Council, 'ESRC Research Funding Guide', 18.
- <sup>2</sup> Frodeman, *The Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity*.
- <sup>3</sup> 'Why interdisciplinary research matters'.
- <sup>4</sup> Ryder, 'Staff Profile'.
- <sup>5</sup> I have two articles published in *Foundation: The International Review of Science Fiction*, and a further two (one of which is forthcoming) in *Extrapolation* – the oldest journal in the field. *Foundation* and *Extrapolation* are cited as being two of the most important journals in the field. See: Baker, *Science Fiction*, 5–6.
- <sup>6</sup> 'The Future of Human Reproduction'.
- <sup>7</sup> A long way off, I know, but such is the nature of academic publishing.
- <sup>8</sup> Chartered Association of Business Schools, 'Academic Journal Guide'.
- <sup>9</sup> George Ritzer came up with the concept of McDonaldization – a subject often referred to in Marketing literature.
- <sup>10</sup> Ryder, 'Lessons from Science Fiction'.
- <sup>11</sup> Steven Miles, Email to author, July 19, 2022: 'This is an issue that those connected with the journal have long discussed. There is no plan at present to pursue such an application given that the benefits are not currently perceived to outweigh the downside and specifically how it is the identity of the journal may be affected.'
- <sup>12</sup> This explanation is very much akin to the early days of the web when unscrupulous individuals would seek to manipulate search engine results through the use of link farms and the 'dark arts' of SEO. In many respects, collecting citations in academia is just the same as collecting links in the early days of the world wide web. In this case, the way we judge research quality today is very similar to how the search engines of the late 1990s and early 2000s were ranking website quality and relevance.
- <sup>13</sup> Chatzidakis, Kerrigan, and Varman, 'Academic integrity, quality scholarship'.
- <sup>14</sup> Chatzidakis, Kerrigan, and Varman, 'Academic integrity, quality scholarship'.
- <sup>15</sup> Ryder, 'EMSIAC Wars'.
- <sup>16</sup> According to Scopus, *Extrapolation* – the oldest journal in the field of speculative fiction – has a CiteScore of 0.6 in 2023. Meanwhile, some other journals, such as *Foundation* and *Science Fiction Studies* aren't even listed at all, as they are not published with any of the major publishing houses. For more details on *Extrapolation's* CiteScore, see: [https://www.scopus.com/sourceid/21100202733?dgcid=sc\\_widget\\_citescore](https://www.scopus.com/sourceid/21100202733?dgcid=sc_widget_citescore).
- <sup>17</sup> See for example: Mayoni, 'Scientific publishers'; Yup, 'How scientific publishers' extreme fees'.
- <sup>18</sup> Tourish, 'The Triumph of Nonsense'; Tourish, *Management Studies in Crisis*.
- <sup>19</sup> Tourish, 'The Triumph of Nonsense', 99.
- <sup>20</sup> Tourish, 'The Triumph of Nonsense', 100.
- <sup>21</sup> Tourish, 'The Triumph of Nonsense', 103.
- <sup>22</sup> Smyth, *The Toxic University*, 102.
- <sup>23</sup> Tourish, 'The Triumph of Nonsense', 101.
- <sup>24</sup> Pinker, 'Why Academics' Writing Stinks'.
- <sup>25</sup> Tourish, 'The Triumph of Nonsense', 102.
- <sup>26</sup> While interdisciplinary research is often lauded, it is also recognised that 'research that transcends conventional academic boundaries is harder to fund, do, review and publish — and those who attempt it struggle for recognition and advancement'. See: 'Why interdisciplinary research matters'.
- <sup>27</sup> Reed and Reed, *Enough of Experts*.
- <sup>28</sup> We should also remember that we are all to some extent funded by the public – whether it be through student fees, or by funding grants. We therefore owe it to our 'funders' to take their investment seriously, and not to treat research as a Game™ to exploit for our own personal ambitions.