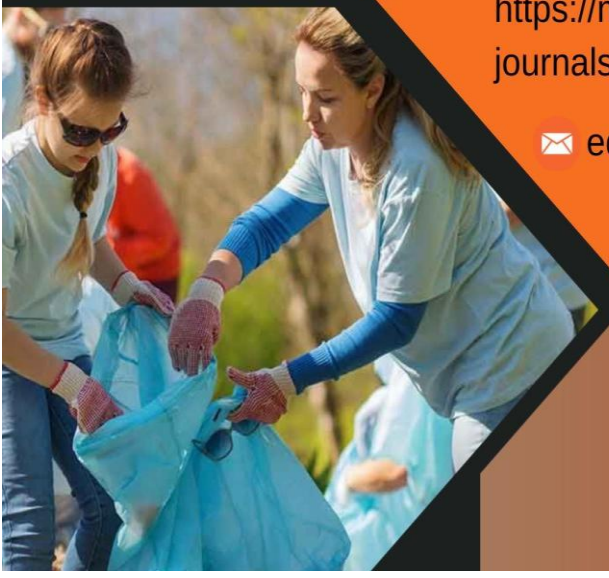

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The Importance of Skepticism: Integrating the Arts and Humanities into Management Curriculum

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Abstract

In this article, we argue that the humanities have much to offer in the field of management education and propose the idea of literacy as a means to that end. There appears to be a general agreement in the discussion of management education's future that the humanities should play a role in shaping it. However, there are misunderstandings regarding the humanities that make it hard to grasp the why and how of this, especially when it comes to how they should impart ethical values. Using certain historical features of their history, this study aims to clarify such myths up in the first stage. The next section delves into the definition of literacy and how it informs the Critical Management Literacy (CML) curriculum we developed to meet the demands of management students. Our working premise is that the humanities should help students develop the ability to question their own knowledge, or epistemological doubt, so that they may better navigate the complexities and uncertainties of the world and provide a foundation for ethical reflection.

Keywords Humanities· Managementeducation· Ethicalvalues· Epistemologicaldoubt· Critical thinking · Literacy

Introduction

Over the last few decades, there has been an increasingly loud cry for management schools to include the humanities, or liberal arts as they are often called in the United States, in their curricula. For managers and employers to comprehend the reality they are confronted with today, it is imperative that business education include the humanities, as stated explicitly in the 1994 introduction to Business as a Humanity by Donaldson and Freeman (p. vii). Rethinking Undergraduate Business Education is a Carnegie report. A growing number of business schools have started to incorporate humanities courses since the publication of Liberal Learning for the Profession (Colby et al., 2011), which analyzes how American business schools utilized the liberal arts, and the accompanying report on European business schools (Landfester & Metelmann, 2019). Despite lofty goals, neither report provides a clear picture of what the humanities are expected to accomplish or how management educators should go about achieving them. This is true even among cutting-edge institutions of higher learning. Hence, the worry expressed by Zald, who acknowledged "the turn to the humanities to be almost inevitable" (p. 260) in 1996, that "he opening to the humanities has occurred not according to some grand plan but as particular scholarly discourses" and was thus still "incomplete" (p. 253), remains relevant even now.

According to our paper's thesis, the value of doubt—and more especially, the worth of epistemological doubt—is what the humanities can contribute to management education, as stated in the first half of our title. Knowledge bases, such as the discipline knowledge passed down via management education, are subject to epistemological doubt, which means that their assumptions and preconceptions may be continually questioned for their validity in connection to reality. Consequently, it is necessary for evaluating the moral decisions that individuals make when confronted with the inherent irreducible indeterminacy of meaning in

reality (Gadamer 1989; Figal 1991). The importance of humanities-based epistemological skepticism, in other words, does not reside in the development of knowledge that prescribes certain moral or other values. In contrast, what Nesteruk calls the "morally vital dispositions of liberal education" (2012, p. 118) allow people to develop and uphold these values by consistently considering the unconscious assumptions that influence how they react to a world that is more and more defined by the famous Harvard VUCA acronym: Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity.

Wilhelm von Humboldt founded the Berlin model of the modern university with a focus on the humanities because, as we shall see in the first of our three parts of the article, epistemological uncertainty is valuable for the mature application of reason. Given his extensive knowledge in this field, he saw them as the bedrock of his Bildung vision and entrusted them with the responsibility of creating and upholding a logic that would unite all academic research via its common application. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, this use was marginalized by academia due to its exploratory and non-teleological nature. It was more suited to studying the intrinsic value of phenomena rather than directly contributing to the efficiency-driven value chain that modern economic thinking mostly favors. But it has recently been revived, particularly in the realm of narrative analysis within management and organizational studies (e.g., Czarniawska et al., 1994; Czarniawska, 1997; Hjort and Steyaert, 2004; Gagliardi and Czarniawska, 2006; see Steyaert et al., 2016). Given that "storytelling" is innate to the human condition, narratological analysis in organization and management studies can (re-)introduce epistemo-logical doubt into the economic narrative that continues to shape our modern understanding of management (cf. Krugman, 1998; Lovins, 2016; Pirson, 2020). (Rhodes and Brown, 2005; Beigi et al. 2019). However, this is only one of many areas where the humanities may provide valuable insights that business schools might use. Providing evidence that the humanities may play a special role in rectifying the situation by way of historical and systemic factors, We aim to demonstrate the idea of literacy as a more inclusive method of appreciating the humanities' contribution to academia, specifically to business thinking and management education, in order to mitigate the harm caused by what Ghoshal (2005) called "Bad Management Theories <…> Destroying Good Management Practices" (p. 75).

In the third and fourth portions of our study, we introduce a notion called Literacy to demonstrate the humanities' role in the "Human Turn" in management studies that Raffnsoe (2016; forthcoming 2021) prompted. Literacy as a theoretical framework is elaborated in the third part. Our conceptual framework was based on Hirsch's 1987 phrase "Cultural Literacy," which he used to advocate for a common corpus of cultural knowledge including facts about people, places, and things including names, dates, artwork, and technical advancements. However, we take it a notch farther than Hirsch by referring to Clifford Geertz (1973) and Richard Rorty (1979) and concentrating on cultural interpretation as a whole, or, to use Rorty's words, "anthropologizing the West." In doing so, we draw on the four pillars of humanities scholarship that the European Science Foundation has deemed essential: textuality, rhetoricality, historicity, and fictionality. What this means is that users' beliefs and expectations about reality influence the common bodies of knowledge among literates in Hirsch's meaning, which in turn influence the users' interpretive choices. Therefore, in our understanding, literacy is the ability to identify these bodies of information as meta-systems for interpretation and, more importantly, to account for the assumptions and biases about reality that form their basis when making decisions based on them. We proceed to demonstrate the operationalization of the epistemic uncertainty in the fourth portion. We begin with Deidre McCloskey's (1983, 1985, 1990, 2001) emphasis on economic theory and factual rhetoric and then turn our attention to the Western alphabet, which, unlike pictographic alphabets, for instance, is nourished by indissoluble ambiguity and openness to many interpretations. Conceptual Management Literacy, Cultural Literacy, Social Literacy, and Interactional Literacy are the four partial literacies that we use to ground our study on this foundation of not just European thought,

but also Critical Management Literacy as a whole. Part four concludes with anecdotes gleaned from a Master of Arts program's "Strategy as Cultural practice" course. There is definitely space for improvement on technicalities, both methodologically and otherwise, as we shall discuss in our final comments, but our results so far indicate that incorporating epistemological skepticism into management education seems to be effective in terms of value-building.

Great Expectations: A Short Historical Note on the Humanities` Morality

Charles Dickens wrote and published a book between 1860 and 1861 called Great Expectations. The plot is typical Dickens in its intricacy: Pip, the protagonist, is in love with Estella, the wealthy benefactress's beautiful but heartless daughter, and he expects her to give him her inheritance and marry him. After his benefactress betrays him by apprenticing him to a blacksmith and marrying her daughter to another man, he secretly inherits a large fortune that he assumes she left to him. However, it turns out that the money really belonged to a criminal he had helped out when he was a kid. After Pip loses his riches once again due to the execution of this criminal, he meets the recently widowed Estella, who has grown mellow from the cruelty of her late husband, and the two of them leave the story-telling scene together, holding hands. Even with the return of Pip and Estella, Dickens manages to send readers on a twisted journey of misinformation about the novel's true plot. has several ambiguous interpretations: Even though the happy ending wouldn't have happened without the immense sums involved, the committed capitalist Dickens finds that money isn't what makes Pip happy in the end; rather, it has caused great pain for everyone involved.

The tale of the expectations now launched at the humanities unfolds in a field of tension defined out by two, at first seem, antagonistically opposed problems; this is why we are alluding to Dickens' book in this context. One view holds that the humanities will "augment the competitiveness of organizations in the next century" by examining "the relevance of a liberal education to future career success" (Bobko and Tejeda, 2000 pp. 1-2). Another view holds that the humanities will aid modern businesses in coping with the difficulties caused by "globality, blurring boundaries, and messy real-world conditions" (Waddock and Lozano, 2013 p. 267), and ultimately improve "a range of managerial capabilities from creative, critical thinking to integrative problem framing and solving that would enhance the basic knowledge of business and analytic skills" (Thomas et al. 2014 p. 11). The humanities are seen as useless unless they lead to graduates' successful careers, which is a reflection of the current "marketized education system" that uses "a presumed link between educational choice and the (more or less) guaranteed transition into the labour market" to sell students "the exchange value of a specific education" (Perriton and Singh, 2016 p. 82). This viewpoint is clearly based on the efficiency maximization emphasis of the economic narrative.

Meanwhile, economic thinking has usurped humanity in the most emphatic sense of the word, and the humanities are being urged to undergo a "Moral Transformation of Business Education" (Nesteruk, 2012) in order to put humanity back where it belongs, "as the core value of political discourse" (Hendry, 2006 p. 23). The hope is that the humanities might offer "a moral rearmament against the harsh instrumentality that serves outright greed" (Guillet de Monthoux, 2015, p. 1), since business schools, according to Ghoshal (2005), have actively liberated their students from any moral responsibility by adhering to this narrative and "propagating ideologically inspired amoral theories <…>" (p. 76). On the surface, proclamations of "moral armaments provided by the humanities against "outright avarice" seem to imply that the humanities possess an inherent morality that must be countered by the economic

story, which also has an inherent immorality.

But the tale of the hopes placed in the humanities is much more nuanced than that, suggesting a complicated equilibrium to be discovered in the end, much like the storyline of Dickens' book. According to studies that support incorporating literary narratives into management education, there is a developing realization that the humanities teach students to make interpretive choices and own up to those choices through literature, which is the foundation of the humanities and a source of ethical values (Czarniawska et al., 1994; Westerman and Westerman, 2009; Younkins, 2014; Shepard et al., 1997). As Czarniawska et al. (1994) pointed out in the foreword to Good Novels – Better Management, novels, especially those written during the period of nineteenth century Realism represented, among others, by Dickens, can not only supplement the corpus of reliable case studies used in management education; rather, and possibly even more important, students who are used to regarding texts as mere carriers of information to be harvested are guided to treat them as artefacts in their own right, which prevents them from developing “into humanoid word processors without judgmental skills” (p. 6). In a similar vein, Michaelson (2016) linked the Carnegie report's need for more interdisciplinary collaboration to his research on novels' use in management education (p. 591), Great novels, according to Michaelaelson (2016), "elicit empathy for nonfinancial value" and are "written primarily as intrinsically valuable art works that make life worth living" and "manifest the value of art for art's sake." As a result, reading these novels can be "instrumentally valuable at helping business ethics educators to develop better persons and more responsible professionals" (pp. 602-603) by exposing them to the uncertainty of meaning that comes with aesthetic experiences.

A historical simplification that minimized the humanities' contribution to the formation of ethical principles led to the widespread belief in moral essentialism, which may persist to this day. This function did not become more apparent until the German Enlightenment movement at the tail end of the 18th century. A precondition for holding any political office in ancient Rome was a study of the artes liberales, which "implied both civic commitment and a striving for personal virtue or excellence" (Arenas, 2006, p. 115). This tradition eventually gave way to this more modern one. In the Middle Ages, when Europe's first universities were established, the emphasis shifted from the arts and sciences to the liberal arts and sciences as a whole, with the goal of creating a common corpus of knowledge for future theologians, doctors, and lawyers. When Humboldt established the first modern university in 1810 in Berlin, the artes liberales continued to play a significant role, shaped by Enlightenment ideals. However, from this point on, everything had to be executed in accordance with specific directives in order to establish a common knowledge base and an inherent moral code.

Humboldt firmly believed in the arguments presented by Kant in his three Critiques. These included the following: that morality is based on reason applying epistemological doubt; that reason is both the right and the duty of humans in their pursuit of truth; and that this last argument, which culminated in Kant's influential essay "What is Enlightenment," was central to the university that Humboldt envisioned at the behest of Prussian King Frederick William III. (Kant, 1784; cf. Pinker, 2018). For these reasons, Humboldt founded the University of Berlin with the goal of fostering in its pupils what Readings (1996) called "the ennoblement of character" (p. 65). The memorandum which accompanied his application for funding for the new university to the Prussian king, dated July 24, 1809, explicitly stated “that institutions of higher scientific education are the summit where everything converges which is done for a nation’s moral culture rests on them being ordained to work on science in

its deepest and widest sense, and to deliver them as a material which is <…> in itself purposive for the application of mental and moral education" (Humboldt, 1990 / 1809 p. 273). Until this day, the humanities have been associated with ethics because, according to Humboldt, they were the primary providers of the rationality that he saw at the heart of the university, in the fields of philosophy and philology in particular. This relationship developed out of the medieval studium generale idea, but it wasn't because of any premise or even desire that they created normative orientational knowledge prescribing moral and condemning immoral activity. The way they reasoned, which the Carnegie study described as "Analytical Thinking, Multiple Framing, and the Reflexive Exploration of Meaning" (Colby et al., 2011 p. 9), was what really gave them their moral standing. "The subject learns the rules of thought, not a content of positive knowledge," the instructors hoped, adding that this would help students "become part of the subject" and make thinking and learning more independently possible. <…> What is thus taught is not facts but critique – the formal art of the use of mental power, the process of judgment." Referring to Readings (1996), page 67.

In the tug of war amongst academic fields over who might lay claim to the best form of knowledge creation, positivism, which had long dominated the natural sciences, eventually won out.

The methodology of the humanities gradually lost its grip on education towards the end of the nineteenth century, coinciding with the entrance of business schools into academia at the same time as the natural sciences were being used to establish their growing field (cf. Clegg et al., 2003; Ghoshal, 2005). After publicly and obstinately rejecting the idea of Homo sapiens as Economic Man, they ended themselves on the wrong side of the split that Snow (2001/ 1959) would later describe as "two cultures" in the field of academia. A still-ongoing "standoff between liberal humanism and utilitarianism" that has "shaped academics, disciplines and institutions" has resulted from their once-beneficial reputation as morality's procurators being reduced to normative self-righteousness and the significance and role of epistemological doubt in enabling moral practices slipping from memory (Parker, 2016 p. 497). Meanwhile, universities were compelled to view their operations through the lens of markets and products as higher education embraced utilitarianism. This shift led to a number of negative consequences, such as reduced funding for the humanities and "the removal of the critical warrant in management education" (Perriton and Singh, 2016 pp. 81-82).

This shift is to blame for what many see as a dearth of ethical considerations in management curricula, but which is really just a failure to question established facts. Moral law, according to Dewey (1929), is not something to be sworn to and adhered to in all circumstances, but rather a prescription for how to behave when certain situations arise. It is not its inherent essence that gives it power, but rather the absolute need of the issue that must be addressed. on page 278 The ability to evaluate a situation, consider its consequences, and choose suitable actions is therefore not a normative approach but rather the capacity for epistemological doubt (cf. Statler and Salovaana, 2016). For example, when it comes to the criticism leveled at business schools following the recent financial crises, there is an assumption that morality and economic thinking are at odds. However, epistemological doubt suggests that this assumption is a byproduct of the crises themselves: "Rather than being seen as a systemic issue within capitalism, the crises have been attributed to the absence of ethical or moral behaviour of individuals" (Perriton and Singh, 2016 p. 83), providing a convenient outlet for righteous

indignation in order to avoid a more difficult issue. Meanwhile, "what is obscured in a purely negative moral interpretation of 'business' is perhaps its most important character" (p. 515), according to Costea and Amiridis (2016), because "since the dawn of modernity it has <…> been the domain claimed by the modern subject for the expression of its freedom."

In conclusion, individuals who want to rewrite or reject the economic narrative in management education must thoroughly investigate these points before settling on solutions that have a significant impact, rather than just restating previously made arguments under other labels. Simplistic reductions fool readers of moralist narratives and economists into thinking that reality follows binary logics; in reality, however, reality necessitates situated synthesis of multipolar experiences and, consequently, multipolar grounds for interpretive choices, such as the ones that lead to Pip and Estella's happy ending (John 2003). In order to salvage what Perriton and Singh (2016) refer to as the "critical warrant in management education" (p. 81), which is where the idea of literacy enters, the humanities can help ensure a positive conclusion to the tale of their incorporation into management education by establishing or expanding the groundwork for such syntheses.

In Quest of Shared Knowledge: The Concept of Literacy

Our conceptual framework places the meaning of the word "literacy" on a tertiary level, meaning it builds on two layers of meaning that came before it historically and methodically. The term originally meant the ability to write using the Roman alphabet, but it is now used to describe the ability to write using other systems, such as Chinese script, and its origins are in the Latin word littera, which means a written letter representing one of the 26 phonemes that make up the alphabet. The second level of the term's meaning has developed from its origins in the plural litterae, which the Romans used to refer to written texts in general, typically encompassing the entire body of literary or academic works that made up Roman culture's knowledge repository. Processing, storing, and disseminating information encoded in conventional patterns is included by the word on that level. To take the concept to this level of meaning, we go back to what Eric D. Hirsch introduced as "cultural literacy" in 1987, which is where our conceptual framework was built. This is in contrast to the early research on literacy, which was mainly focused on reading and writing skills, which emerged with the seminal work of Eric Havelock (1976). The term "cultural literacy" was first used by Hirsch Jr. (1987) to characterize what he believed was lacking in the modern United States. The American school system. The ability to access and use "the network of information all competent readers possess" (p. 2), a collective knowledge base that all members of a community (in his example, the United States of America) have, allows for more efficient and honest communication, is what he means when he says that literacy is essential. In order to give a concrete definition of this body of knowledge, he included a list of the pieces of information that make up this network. This list, in his 1988 revised book, fills 63 double-columned pages, beginning with "Aaron, Hank" (p. 152) and ending with "Zurich" (p. 215). It covers almost every possible cultural expression, from artwork and literature to technical and political acronyms, locations and buildings, proverbs and disease names. In their study Literacies, Kalantzis and Cope (2012) differentiate between two "multiliteracies" (p. 2), expanding on this line of thinking. The first level, "modal" multiliteracy, refers to the first level's emphasis on various codes of communication (e.g., written, visual, spatial, tactile, gestural, auditory, and oral signification). The second level, "contextual" multiliteracy, expands their concept to encompass organizational structures such as community settings, social roles, identity layouts, and interpersonal relations (ibid., p. 49). "Communication increasingly requires that learners are able to figure out differences in patterns of meaning from one context to another and communicate across these differences as their lives require" (ibid. p. 1) is the argument that supports this approach; it is already vaguely apparent but still implicit in Hirsch's concept. Our own conception of literacy is based on Hirsch's (1987) expansive view of culture and his idea that any community's functioning depends on its members sharing a body of cultural knowledge, which is elaborated upon by Kalantzis and Cope (2012). However, our definition of literacy goes beyond this comprehension by moving the emphasis from the memorization of facts to the relationships between the many pieces of information that comprise the body of knowledge. Since this is an ethnographic method, we follow the lead of works like The Interpretation of Cultures, a collection of essays by Clifford Geertz (1973). "That man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun," according to Max Weber.

Rather from being an experimental science seeking laws, Geertz (1973) views culture as "those webs, and the analysis of it therefore not being an experimental science in search of meaning" (p. 311). This approach contends that Western scholars' traditional understanding of knowledge is fundamentally flawed because, as Rorty (1979) put it, they seek "foundations" to cling to, frameworks beyond which they must not stray, objects that impose themselves, and representations that cannot be denied (p. 315). Put simply, this "desire for constraint" has the effect of eliminating any room for epistemological doubt by

giving the assumptions and preconceptions that underpin it the status of natural laws. To challenge these assumptions and preconceptions and test their validity, a completely different approach is required: "We need to anthropologize the West: show how exotic its constitution of reality has been; emphasize those domains most taken for granted as universal (this includes epistemology and economics); make them seem as historically peculiar as possible; show how their claims to truth are linked to social practices and have hence become effective forces in the social world" (Rabinow 1986 p. 241). Among these activities, the employment of the phonetic alphabet is perhaps the most consequential. It developed in Greece from the consonantal alphabet that was introduced to the Greek mainland by Phoenician merchants at the turn of the first millennium BC. Numerous practical features of the phonetic alphabet enable us to anthropologize the West by tracing their impact on the ideas that constitute its cultural identity; these features are historically distinctive, to be sure. One practical aspect, and likely the most well-known, is the system's apparent simplicity; it only uses 26 letters, five of which are vowels, to represent units of information in a way that anyone, regardless of their native language, can decipher. One of the many reasons the phonetic alphabet became "a writing which changed the world" (Powell, 2012, p. 227) is its relative ease of learning and application, which allowed it to spread rapidly from the Mediterranean to the rest of Europe. However, this is far from the only reason. The influence of the Greek alphabetic system on the development of Western scientific and philosophical traditions has been recognized by neuroscientific research on gene-culture-coevolution (Lumsden, 1988) and other sources, and alphabetic writing is now known to be more than just a tool for processing, storing, and distributing information; it also influences the content laid down in it. (Jones and Aoki, 1988, p. 318). By analyzing cultural technologies through the lens of the functional aspects that influence the patterns of interpretive choices they allow, demand, limit, or even exclude, our concept of literacy anthropologizes what Geertz (1973) calls the "webs of significance" that human cultures generate. In our context, literacy is defined as the ability to read and write, specifically referring to the alphabetic writing system. We believe that this system is fundamental to Western cultural practices and the ideas they promote, and thus, the ability to read and write is crucial for navigating the uncertainty of meaning in the real world. That being said, this idea fits well with what Tsoukas (2005) calls "poetic praxeology": “Knowledge is the outcome of an active knower who has a certain biological structure, follows certain historically shaped cognitive practices, and is rooted within a consensual domain and sociocultural practice. The practitioner, according to a poetic praxeology, is both influenced by and a product of the sociocultural practices in which he or she is immersed; yet, this impact is mutually shaping. has unanticipated results, lacks clarity on its goals and objectives, operates in a fixed manner without reflection, yet is intrinsically open to self-reflection and reflexivity, making it vulnerable to long-term transformation. The complex human intentions, the role of chance, influences, and feedback loops are all recognized in a poetic praxeology, which also embraces the inevitable temporality and contextuality of human activity (Tsoukas, 2005, p. 5). In order to provide the groundwork for this kind of praxeology, our understanding of literacy is based on the 2013 European Science Foundation (ESF) policy document Cultural Literacy in Contemporary Europe. The ESF's Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH) members tasked with defining the fundamental features of knowledge generated by the humanities wrote it. This study argues that the four primary areas of competence within the humanities—textuality, rhetoricality, historicity, and fictionality—are crucial to our epistemic knowledge of the dynamics of social interaction via cultural objects. It argues that any artefact, material or immaterial, is textual in nature in that it is built along the lines of a logic which may have little to do with the subject it deals with but everything with the context it is used in; that any artefact uses rhetorical devices to manipulate its recipient according to its underlying norms and

frameworks of value; that any artefact has a historical dimension impacting on the meaning it transports, and finally, that any such meaning has fictional components, as each communication through artefacts is as such intrinsically fictional in structure. The ability to differentiate between structural fictionality and the inclusion of extra fictional features for polemical purposes is crucial, since both may be used to deceive readers (European Science Foundation (ESF), 2013 p. 6). Literacy, as we understand it, thus premises both the basic meaning of the term as describing the technical capacity to read and write and the broader meaning developed by Hirsch Jr. (1987) describing the capacity to access and navigate the shared body of knowledge which represents cultural identity or, as Kalantzis and Cope (2012) have it, cultural identities in the plural. Expanding on this, our idea mandates a common understanding of encoding's textual, historical, rhetorical, and fictional components, going beyond its purely technical and organizational features by also taking into account the conceptual impact of the latter. The ability to differentiate between these elements in order to evaluate how they affect the information conveyed through them is what we mean when we talk about literacy in our sense. In the next and last section of our paper, we will try to explain how this concept can be operationalized, particularly in management studies.

Putting Epistemological Doubt into Practice: The Importance of Literacy

Advocated by Kant (1784) as being both the logical consequence of rational thought and as such the precondition of moral judgment, and in that role established by Humboldt as the overall core mode of the modern university's use of reason, epistemological doubt is the capacity to question the preconceptions and assumptions about reality which underlie inter- pretative choices made in response to reality's indeterminacy of meaning. Research on making such choices in behavioural economics has shown that most people "do not understand how they actually make decisions" (Bazerman and Moore, 2009 p. 5), so that "the vast majority of unethical behaviours occur without the actors` conscious decision to behave unethically" (ibid. p. 123), , habitually following conventionalized patterns of interpretation rather than questioning their validity as to its premises. Disbelief in one's own knowledge undermines such routines of arriving at rational and, by extension, ethical, judgments by incorporating such inquiry into the decision-making process. However simple this may sound, in the realm of the economic narrative this mode appears to meet some determined resistance, as illustrated by some of the reactions to McCloskey's (1983, 1985, 1990, 2001) spirited attempt to lay out the extent to which economists employ rhetorical devices like metaphors to explain their findings to their students (cf. also Morgan, 1986; Oswick and Grant, 2015), their peer group and the clientele potentially paying for their expertise. For daring to suggest that economists' arguments may be infused with an element of fiction via the use of metaphors, McCloskey's work in this area has been regarded with a cynicism that verges on contempt. Preposterously, Menyhárt (2010) in her comments on McCloskey's reasoning went so far as to argue her rejection of it on the grounds that "the aims of metaphors in rhetoric and in poetry are completely different", since "literary metaphors want neither to persuade nor to predict, just to decorate" (p. 26), a notion which rather spectacularly misses the point of the use of metaphors: The metaphor, by replacing the name of the item it refers to with the name of one which shares some characteristics of the former but is sufficiently different from it to put a slant on its contextual interpretation, is used in literary texts or anywhere else as a device to entice its addressee into sharing this interpretation and as such is a tool of rhetoricity (cf. Lakoff and Johnsen, 2003 pp. 140–142).

Still, there's a lot of truth to what Menyhárt says about McCloskey's foray into epistemological uncertainty; it sheds light on the anxieties that lead some economic thinkers to reflexively put up barriers between the humanities and their discipline. Beyond her erroneous interpretation of

metaphors, she raises two very intriguing aspects in her critique of McCloskey's ideas. One is that she agrees with critics of McCloskey's theory of economics who say things like "about the lack of standards of truth and about leaving out the issue of the pursuit of truth" (Menyhárt 2010 p. 23). However, she doesn't take into account the possibility that these critics' definition of truth is biased, driven by their desire to protect their reference frameworks from criticism that could damage their validity and marketability. The other point is that though she definitely agrees with rhetoric being "a key success factor of everyday business"– "you do not get what you deserve, you get what you negotiate" (ibid. p. 27) –, she does not link rhetorical negotiation to the introduction of the fictional elements characteristic of tactics of persuasion, implying that as long as the negotiation is successful and the negotiated issue thus becomes part of the economic value chain the validity of such elements` relationship to reality does not matter to the issues` marketability. This line of thinking concludes that it is "a key success factor of everyday business" (ibid. p. 27), paraphrasing Menyhárt's own words, because no one questions the artificiality of the semantic effects caused by economists' data selection, configuration, and presentation.

Menyhárt's misappropriation of the concept of rhetoricity in general and of the metaphor in particular points straight at the dimension of meaning supported by epistemological doubt according to our understanding of literacy. Relying on metaphors in rhetoric is not something that happens naturally in every writing culture; rather, it is a product of the alphabetic writing system. Metaphors are a way that Western civilization deals with the uncertainty of written words caused by this system. In contrast to writing systems like the Egyptian hieroglyphs or the Mayan-Aztec script or, to stay nearer our own time, Chinese or Japanese writing (see Jones and Aoki, 1988), the twenty-six letters constituting the alphabet have retained nothing of their original pictorial resemblance to the objects whose names went into the constitution of the phonetic alphabet on how powerful their first phonemes were. Although the absence of visual references was crucial to the alphabet's success as a simple language tool, the abstract nature of its notational technique meant that users had to make interpretive choices to connect the dots between what the letters meant and their actual experiences. To address this need, metaphors are used instead of the still-essential pictorial elements in Chinese logography to guide readers semantically. This is achieved through an operation that can only be done with the phonetic alphabet. The reader is guided by the tension that arises when one object's name is replaced with another, whose meaning is similar enough to indicate a connection to the old name but determined by a semantically different context. Going back to the economist narrative that McCloskey studied, we can see that its metaphorical parts originate from the Western writing system. This, in turn, implies that the meanings conveyed by these metaphors are associated with the Western writing system and can be interpreted in light of its assumptions about the world.

Using humanities-based literacy to use epistemological skepticism in order to trace such events is not, in and of itself, limited to any one academic discipline or topic area. Research interest in the humanities' contribution to it is on the rise, as we saw in the first section, but certain subjects provide better footing for investigating its formation. One such topic is economics storytelling, which includes management education. However, a significant obstacle in this area is the operationalization of epistemological doubt via the instruction of critical reading skills in cultural practices. The responses to McCloskey's work show that the information it generates has an intrinsic claim to factual truth in its investigation and its presentation, which is met with deep-seated animosity when accused of rhetoricality. The idea that aesthetic categories and techniques are inherently untrustworthy makes it difficult for "real" scientific research, which follows a methodology similar to that of the natural sciences, to accept our literacy concept, which states that all cultural practices, including economic and management practices, must be viewed as artifacts in order to derive agency from them.

According to Rhodes (2016), management students are taught to read efficiently so that they may achieve a predetermined goal, but reading for its own sake is not interesting. This information is "violently reduced" to the very identical textbook tables of contents. "To use those books, to feel compelled to use those books, releases a powerful normalizing and disciplining force on what goes on in the classroom." (p. 367) So, management students typically read texts for information to be bullet points, but they're usually oblivious to the fact that these texts present information in a way that has fictional elements, uses rhetorical devices to convince the reader of its trustworthiness, is constructed to represent reality in a mode of textuality that actually has little in common with the way the human brain processes sensory experiences of reality, and is firmly grounded in the historical context it inscribes itself. In a similar vein, students of management seldom investigate the real-world applications of literary, rhetorical, historical, and other theoretical components. This is because students often fail to recognize that the management tools they learn to use are not merely objective instruments, but rather, that these tools have inherent characteristics that shape how actors perceive and approach problems, as well as the ways in which they can further their own interests within those problems (Jarzabkowski and Kaplan, 2014, p. 539).

In response to this difficulty, we have created a paradigm called Critical Management Literacy (CML, cf. Landfester and Metelmann, 2020) to systematically operationalize epistemological uncertainty in management education. The reasoning is similar to that of Nesteruk (2012), who proposed a "blending model" for management programs based on the capability of "introducing the principles of liberal education to the methods of management" (p. 115). There are several different ways of achieving this, all of which have much to be said for them (cf. Steyaert et al., 2016, part IV “Classrooms” for overview); yet we opted for building our framework on the epistemological expertise at the core of the humanities which has only recently been encoded as crucially relevant to management studies (David et al., 2013). The name "critical" sums up our primary objective, which is to (re)introduce management education with epistemological uncertainty. "Management Literacy" seeks to communicate that management is a cultural activity to be understood in the way described above; the word is used in a critical rather than critical meaning, alluding to the process of self-reflection (from the Greek 'krinéin', to separate, sort out).

Literacy in Conceptual Management, Culture, Society, and Interactions are the four pillars upon which the framework rests.

Management is a cultural artifact that has been shaped by underlying norms and values in specific institutional and societal contexts. Its relationship to reality needs to be constantly re-examined and re-calibrated, and conceptual management literacy is the ability to reflect on this relationship.
A person who is culturally literate in management has a firm grasp on the foundational ideas of management, including how they came to be, the tools and processes upon which they are based, the goals they serve, and the ways in which these all interact with one another and with the culture that permeates management theory and practice.

One definition of social management literacy is "the capacity to identify and respond to "the relationship between specific instances of situated action and the social world in which the action takes place" (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011 p. 1241), which means being aware of how management affects and is affected by society at large.
Being able to operate in a team, with an eye toward group output, while being able to communicate effectively across cultural and disciplinary boundaries is an essential skill for managers in today's world of rapidly expanding information exchange.
In management studies, students gain conceptual, cultural, social, and interactional knowledge. However, this

knowledge is shaped by practices. Students need to learn to recognize these practices as artifacts, rather than taking them for true information about reality. This will give them agency when dealing with these practices. We provide students with readings on leadership and entrepreneurial strategy based on these axiomatic principles. Some of these readings are culled from well-known or very similar corpora to the ones they encounter in their field, such as scholarly treatises, case studies, or policy manuals. Following the model of Litton and Wacker's paired courses, this section of the course is matched with literary works that address related themes (2020). By contrasting the texts' prescriptive and explorative approaches to the topics at hand, as well as the various viewpoints they offer on the subject matter and the audiences they were intended to reach, students are encouraged to consider how their own social, institutional, and cultural context shapes their understanding of the ideas they study. Perhaps an example from the two-credit "Strategy as cultural practice" master class that we co-taught in our university's Contextual Studies program in the autumn of 2018 can help to clarify the problem. Our readings for that class were The War by Carl von Clausewitz and The Prince of Homburg by Heinrich von Kleist. Publication of Clausewitz's treatise (2002) came after his death in 1831, but its parts had been circulated since 1806. It is now considered a fundamental work in the field of strategic management. One of our students had serious doubts about the treatise's legality because it divulged all the secrets of Prussian warcraft to the enemy. Having well-defined goals, sharp perception, rolling planning (as opposed to the aristocratic cabinet method of planning), and virtue (personal qualities plus esprit de corps) should ensure that the fighting conflict can be projected in the event of war, which Clausewitz views as being guided by natural laws. Our students could easily relate to this mindset because Clausewitz's ideas of predictability, hard work, perseverance, and loyalty to the company are ingrained in traditional management education. They were also familiar enough with the ideas to not even notice or question the prescriptive presentation of them. That all changed, however, when they studied Kleist's play in light of Clausewitz's thesis. Kleist, who knew the parts of the treatise then in circulation, with The Prince of Homburg (1989, original 1809/10) responded to Clausewitz' prescriptive plan-thinking by laying out the problems with their concrete implementation: Prince Frederick, so deeply in love with his superior's niece that he walks in his sleep in the night before the impending battle he is supposed to play a part in, in fact wins that battle by impetuously ignoring said superior's command, a crime in Clausewitz` book, which leads to him being consequently condemned to death by martial court in spite of this victory, a sentence which is in the end only reversed due to the superior's niece loving him back. Normative prescriptions about strategy, as Kleist explains, are fine and dandy, but real life is far less patient than a treatise paper. In real life, the people tasked with following an order face a myriad of emotional obstacles that hinder their ability to carry them out correctly. Fortunately, there is a critical reserve, a prominent category in Clausewitz' treatise (although not in Kleist's interpretation), which guarantees a happy ending. The students in our class spent a lot of time debating Clausewitz and Kleist, and eventually settled on the former. They went so far as to accuse Clausewitz of using rhetorical devices to make his readers believe in the fail-safe nature of his strategies, arguing : would fail miserably, if not entirely, when put into practice.

The indeterminacy of meaning inherent to reality is more accurately presented in literature than in prescriptive texts, which allow and even demand readers to make interpretive choices instead of blindly absorbing information, as Guillet de Monthoux (2015) put it, "is much more about reality than fiction" (p. 164). So, instead of blindly embracing their inherent prescriptive power, "reading teaches you to think critically" (Atlas, 2013 p. 138), which encourages contemplation of the conventionalized patterns of interpretation that govern such choices. Since they anticipate a feeling of practical security from meticulously following instructions, management students are especially

susceptible to this influence (Khurana, 2007). The most crucial aspect of literacy as we know it is that it protects children against this weakness by teaching them to reframe their reference points and, by extension, their viewpoint. According to Schleidewind (2013) and Scholz (2011), the literacies taught in the CML framework are "transformative literacies" since they encourage critical thinking rather than using it to solve specific problems.

complicated issues, but as a state of mind that includes all rational and subjective reactions to events. Thus, they prepare students to comprehend and, more importantly, actively engage with the massive revolutionary changes that are presently reshaping our world. These changes include dwindling natural resources, accelerated migration due to climate change, the blurring of human and artificial intelligence boundaries brought about by digital technologies, and the challenge to cultural hegemonies posed by globalization, such as the Western framework of values established by the European Enlightenment. To rephrase, literacy is not just a means to an end—it is a prerequisite for, and a means through which one may participate in, one's own personal development process (Schneidewind 2018). generating economic development does not imply generating democracy; it is the custodian of a common body of information on this matter. Furthermore, it does not imply creating a society where all social classes have access to healthy, educated, and engaged citizens who can enjoy a good life. This is because it ought to acknowledge and address the reality that "democracies all over the world are undervaluing, and consequently neglecting, skills that we all badly need to keep democracies vital, respectful, and accountable" (ibid. p. 77), skills that are based on the ability to question one's own knowledge.

Conclusion

Taking a page out of the Carnegie report's statement that "usiness has never mattered more" (Colby et al., 2011 p. 1), reimagining management education through the lens of our literacy concept isn't the only possible way to rethink the role of academia in today's interconnected world, but it could be the first step towards a new understanding of academic education and, ultimately, a reimagining of universities' place in this new global society. We believe that this responsibility will be best fulfilled when literacy is seen as essential to comprehending academic management education and, more generally, academic education in its current form, when it adheres to the university's Humboldtian ideal. This recognition must acknowledge its debt to the alphabetic writing system in order to gauge the full richness of the possibilities for interpretative choices it offers. This is because the vision was based on epistemological doubt, and most, if not all, concepts that make up Western cultural practices owe much of their significance to the system.
Texts like Dickens's work are well-aware of this obligation and the danger of simplifying difficult themes to the point where their readers' expectations may be misled. For instance, Dickens demonstrates this self-awareness in the opening sentence of his novel by revealing that the protagonist, Pip, whose expectations are constantly dashed throughout the plot, is actually an abbreviation of Phillip. This is followed by a reading scene in which Pip, who learns about his parents only from their tombstone inscriptions, describes how, as a child, he was led to imagine his father as "a square, stout, dark man, with curly black hair" due to the "shape of letters on his father's" and his mother as "freckled and sickly" according to the "shape of letters on her tombstone" (Dickens, 1965/1860-61) p. 35). Throughout the story, Pip learns the hard way that he can't rely on his own interpretations of reality when he uses this simplified association strategy. In the end, he returns to his starting point and meets I saw Estella there again. To end on a literary note, we would want to recognize the humanities and the arts as contributing to literacy. the liberal arts with Estella's persona, who was once heartless, and with Pip's perspective, who was once obsessed with money: "I took her hand in mine, and we went out of the ruined place; and <…> I saw no shadow of another parting from her." According to Dickins (1965, p. 493).

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Potential Forgery There is no conflict of interest, according to the corresponding author who speaks for all of the writers.

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