critical discourse analysis are described thoroughly in separate chapters. As DA today comprises many schools and individuals, a chapter titled ‘Garden-variety Discourse Analysis’ is included to reflect the fact that in many publications researchers use discourse analysis eclectically, sometimes without any theoretical specification, but often usefully. Another chapter, on the interview as a method for collecting talk data, discusses interviews not as a frequently used method in narrative analysis and conversation analysis, but in discourse analysis, as is less often the case. Here the contribution of the authors to social science methodology is valuable and the book rises above ‘textbook level’.

In sum, this book is most useful for beginners or intermediate users, even though some chapters (e.g. the one on using interviews in DA) may be very useful for people experienced in qualitative inquiry as well. Qualitative research has reached the point of scientific acceptance, but at the same time it is still a field in the making and probably always will be because it is multi-paradigmatic in nature. Bischoping and Gaszo successfully provide a short state-of-the-art overview.

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Gary Saul Morson and Morton Schapiro:
Cents and Sensibility: What Economics Can Learn from the Humanities

‘Where human beings are concerned, stories are an indispensable way of knowing.’ (p. 289) In this book, Morson, professor of Arts and Humanities at Northwestern University and a Russian literature enthusiast, and Schapiro, president of Northwestern University and expert on the economics of education, argue that a dialogue between the economics and the humanities would benefit both disciplines. The debate over the value of a liberal arts education has been the subject of vast recent literature. Just in 2017, ‘You Can Do Anything’ by Anders [2017], ‘A Practical Education’ by Stross [2017], ‘Sensemaking’ by Madsbjerg [2017], and ‘The Fuzzy and the Techie’ by Hartley [2017] have also made the case for keeping the humanities alive. Although each of these books has a slightly different approach, they all stem from the same undeniable observation: ‘... that the humanities are in crisis. No one seems to value them anymore. Enrolments in humanities courses plummet, and majors in humanistic disciplines diminish’ (p. 6).

Morson and Schapiro’s contribution to the literature focuses on the importance of studying Great Literature. They put forward a provocative idea: that economics is also in crisis, just not for the same reasons. According to the authors, traditional economics suffers from significant weaknesses: it ignores culture, the importance of stories to fully understand individuals, and it lacks the insight to properly address ethical questions. As they argue, these are subjects better suited for a humanist. Cents and Sensibility argues that both economics and the humanities would benefit from a dialogue between the disciplines. With this book, they aspire to explain how that dialogue can be held and why it is of great importance.

The authors’ initial assertion is that there is a tendency for economics to appropriate other disciplines (which they call ‘economics imperialism’), just as the humanities often justify their value by ‘spoofing’ other fields of knowledge (which they name ‘dehumanities’). For Morson and Schapiro this is the root of the disciplines’ crisis. Just as economics cannot fully grasp the complexity of humanity (individuals’ values, culture, and meaning), when the
humanities attempt to be an objective field of knowledge they simply become ‘hard, unsentimental, materialistic’ (p. 7). Morson and Schapiro’s thesis is that economics and the humanities should collaborate, while respecting the other’s tradition.

In the second chapter, the authors evoke Isaiah Berlin’s allegory of foxes and hedgehogs. In Berlin’s essay ‘The Hedgehog and the Fox: An Essay on Tolstoy’s View of History’ [2013] there are two categories of thinkers: hedgehogs, who know only one thing and perceive the world through that single knowledge; and foxes, who view and solve problems from many different perspectives. They mention Tetlock’s study Expert Political Judgement: How Good Is It? How Can We Know? [2005] to argue that both hedgehogs and foxes have weaknesses, which is why, again, they both fare better when they collaborate. There is a certain confusion here between foxes and hedgehogs and humanities and economics (or, in Gould’s [2003] metaphor, bees, and spiders). But the metaphor helps the authors complete their thesis: ‘literature by its very nature is foxy’ (p. 63) and ‘economics tends to breed hedgehogs’ (p. 63). This is why they claim that a dialogue between the humanities and economics would, in turn, soften the economics’ natural hedgehogism.

In order to identify economics’ weaknesses and illustrate how the dialogue with the humanities can be held, Morson and Schapiro analyse three case studies (chapters 3, 4 and 5). In a witty and original manner, they poke holes in the theories of hedgehog-economists in the voice of none other than literature characters themselves. With these, they not only exemplify how the disciplines should collaborate, but they also pinpoint in which cases economics needs the insight of humanists. Chapter 6 is the bulk of the book, in which the authors finally answer the questions they raised at the beginning. Essentially, ‘... what exactly is the value of studying Latin, poetry, French drama, or the many kinds of “cultural studies”?’ (202). They suggest that, first, great literature teaches a particular form of ethical thinking that is sensitive to the circumstances and to ‘unforeseeable complexities’ (p. 222). Second, reading great literature is an active practice in emotional empathy. Thus, together with a better understanding of culture, good ethical judgement and an empathetic understanding of human emotions and beliefs are what only the humanities can teach.

Morson and Schapiro claim that a justification for the funding of the humanities ‘must appeal to those who do not have a vested interest in the activity, particularly if they are expected to pay for it’ (p. 206). In chapter 7, the authors attempt to do just that—they appeal to hedgehog economists, by supporting their arguments in Adam Smith’s work, the founder of economic theory. They note that neoclassic economists usually reduce Smith’s rational-choice principles (in The Wealth of Nations [1981]) to his only principle, thereby ignoring his preceding work The Theory of Moral Sentiments [1982]. In the latter, Smith argues that morality plays a role in determining human action. Reason is not sufficient to explain human action, and so he recommends a foxy appreciation of economics and morality. Anticipating the argument that behavioural economics already addresses these gaps, Morson and Schapiro assert that this branch of economics is still not well equipped to understand irrational human actions and culture, nor to make good ethical judgements. According to the authors, behavioural economics maintains the dehumanised perception of a person, typical of classical economics. Humanists understand the complexity, the atheoretical nature of humankind—what economics needs is the input of those who think outside the rules and models.

Cents and Sensibility’s main contributions are its narrower focus on the power of Great Literature, and an in-depth analy-
sis of two main qualities: the cultivation of good ethical judgement and the practice of empathy. This is, in my opinion, a convincing point, which the authors eloquently put forward, true to their argument that any justification for the survival of the humanities must appeal to those who are not yet convinced of its value. Nevertheless, if the purpose of the book was to single out which knowledge particular to the humanities can contribute to economics, they fail to mention one that is crucial: the cultivation of the imagination. Creative thought and innovation are the results of imagination. In Oscar Wilde’s essay ‘The Decay of Lying—An Observation’ [1891] 2010, Vivian explains to Cyril why she believes that life imitates art, more than art imitates life. As Vivian makes her case, ‘Literature always anticipates life. It does not copy it, but moulds it to its purpose. The nineteenth century, as we know it, is largely an invention of Balzac. ... Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life, and I feel sure that if you think seriously about it you will find that it is true. Life holds the mirror up to Art, and either reproduces some strange type imagined by painter or sculptor, or realises in fact what has been dreamed in fiction.’ What this implies is that what people demand, value, or do is largely a result of what they learn to appreciate and dream of through literature and art. This, I believe, is an appealing justification to an economist.

Although they briefly mention the aesthetic value of Great Literature, Morson and Schapiro do not explore why it is important to teach students the value of ‘beauty’. One of the most distinguishing characteristics of literature and the arts is their special aesthetic values. In Kurt Vonnegut’s novel Cat’s Cradle [(1963) 1999], the main character says ‘... When a man becomes a writer, I think he takes on a sacred obligation to produce beauty and enlightenment and comfort at top speed.’ Perhaps the authors wanted to solely focus on arguments that spoke to economists, and the utilitarian value of aesthetics is hard to defend. Nevertheless, if the target audience also includes policymakers, students and humanists, I believe it is crucial to give due importance to what might be the most particular characteristic of the Arts and the Humanities.

On that account, I believe the authors did succeed in identifying two important reasons for why a dialogue between the humanities and economics is essential. It is my opinion, however, that there are further reasons that should have been addressed in this book. Also, the book is sometimes confusing in its parallelism between the dichotomy of foxes and hedgehogs and the humanities and economics. The authors never claim that all novelists are foxes, nor that all economists are hedgehogs (in fact, in the case studies of chapters 3, 4, and 5, they introduce many foxy economists). However, in certain passages, it is not clear what their argument is: is it that economists should be foxy by reading great literature? Do the benefits of a collaboration between foxes and hedgehogs equal those of a dialogue between humanists and economists? If one of the main reasons for keeping the humanities alive is its ability to dehedgehogise economics, then what is its value to already foxy economists?

What I enjoyed most about the book was its style, which I found eloquent and original—and perhaps this is one additional benefit of a collaboration between an economist and a humanist. It was especially delightful to have their arguments supported by the fictional characters themselves. In Cents and Sensibility, I felt that it was really Anna Karenina, Levin, Rastignac, and Pip who were convincing the reader that they have a lot to offer. This dynamic is meant to simulate the dialogue that the authors advocate, and in this sense, the book accomplishes one of its main purposes—it does show how the dialogue between the humanities and economics can be conducted.
The book is interesting and entertaining, but does not answer some of my most pressing questions in this debate: what is the purpose of an education, given today’s reality? If the book might persuade economics students to enroll in additional liberal arts courses, I don’t believe it is enough to convince undergraduates to pursue a liberal arts degree. The book might not satisfy those who are looking for a convincing argument that will alter the current state of affairs; and, to those who are familiar with the literature on the crisis of the liberal arts, it will feel like it’s just more of the same.

Nevertheless, I recommend the book to those who are fond of great literature, not because they will find in it a good justification to study humanities, but because the authors’ analysis of the epistemological assumptions underneath novels is, in my opinion, fascinating. To those who are skeptics and are looking for a clear reason to support the humanities, this book might also be a good place to start.

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References

Philip Tetlock and Dan Gardner: Superforecasting: The Art and Science of Prediction

Is it possible to forecast future events? If yes, what are the skills needed to be as accurate as possible? This book condenses some of the findings of the Good Judgment Project (GJP), which was started in 2011 by Philip Tetlock and Barbara Mellers, in collaboration with the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Pennsylvania. Volunteers were able to access an online portal in which they had the opportunity to forecast future events. This book analyses the strategies used by the top performers, the ‘Superforecasters’ that represent approximately 2% of the total sample of participants in the GJP and show to have a diverse background including mathematicians, filmmakers, or retirees. Forecasting future political or economic events is not an easy task, given the complexity and unpredictability of human behaviour, and failure in being accurate is common among most of the very top experts.

In his previous book, Expert Political Judgment: How Good Is It? How Can We Know?, Tetlock asked 284 high-ranking professionals to make predictions, anonymously, about future political and economic events. The results showed that most of