

**THE GREAT BOOKS PROGRAM  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAVARRA:  
REPORT ON THE QUALITATIVE NARRATIVE  
ASSESSMENT OF THE CORE CURRICULUM<sup>1</sup>**

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*To J. Scott Lee,  
for his inspirational work  
and his generous friendship.*

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**ABSTRACT:** This document contains the final report of the University of Navarra's participation in the second cohort of the "Qualitative Narrative Assessment" project, conducted by the Association for Core Texts and Courses in 2014-2016. The project studies the educational impact of classical texts or of great cultural relevance. We will first present the choices for modelling the new Great Books program at Navarra in the context of the university's institutional mission and of the restraints imposed by our educational tradition. Second, we will explain the actions taken for the improvement of the new project, from the first meetings of a Committee for the Core Curriculum to the launching of our flagship project: a two-tier program that offers an optional track based on core texts seminars (the "Inter-College Itinerary"). Third, we will describe which procedures of narrative assessment have been implemented, and how those have helped us adjust course; finally some concluding remarks for further improvement will be added.

**KEYWORDS:** Core Curriculum, Narrative Assessment, Great Books

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In 2013, the University of Navarra, a Catholic university in Spain<sup>3</sup>, assigned a Committee for the development of the Core Curriculum. In its first year, during the 2014-2015 academic term, the university offered four core text seminar courses to students. Rather than cover specialized content, those new courses were intended to teach basic habits for the life of the mind: how to read (carefully), to write (persuasively), and to argue (thoughtfully). The initiative did not start from scratch, given that the University of Navarra had a core curriculum program since its foundation in 1952, as a part of its educational mission. Nevertheless, the methodology of core texts seminars was a major innovation in our country's university culture of lecture-based courses and professionally oriented degrees. Although we had in mind a clear destination – to train students in the practice of an active search for truth through a great books approach – we had to navigate uncharted waters across the rigidity imposed by our tradition of higher education.

After six semesters, the Core Curriculum at the University of Navarra has grown and strengthened its position: during the 2017-2018 academic year, fifteen core texts seminar courses will be open to students, fifteen faculty members will be active in the project, and the optional track called “Inter-College Itinerary” will enter its second year. Obviously, there is still work to be done, but this experience allows us to be optimistic and has persuaded us that a cross-disciplinary, integrative, and seminar-based program is achievable in a European university of Napoleonic tradition. However, evaluating whether our students are reaching those essential intellectual habits we aim for extends beyond just attesting the enthusiasm among the teaching and learning community.

The quantifiable consolidation of our Core Curriculum program has been due to different factors, among which three are worth mentioning: the whole-hearted support given by the institution, the encouraging practical help we have found in conversation with other educators and institutions through the ACTC, and equally as important, the evaluation of the program's development by students and faculty, in which the narrative approach has been a reliable beacon from the beginning.

In this chapter, we will first present the choices for modelling our new program in the context of the institutional mission and of the restraints imposed by our educational tradition. Second, will explain the actions taken for the improvement of the new project, from the first meetings of a Committee for the Core Curriculum to the launching of our flagship project: a two-tier program that offers an optional track based on core texts seminars (the “Inter-College Itinerary”). Third, we will describe which procedures of narrative assessment have been implemented, and how those have helped us adjust course; finally some concluding remarks for further improvement will be added.

<sup>3</sup> The University of Navarra is a private, non-profit university, founded in 1952 by St Josemaría Escrivá, the founder of Opus Dei, an institution of the Roman Catholic Church: see Statutes of the University of Navarra, n. 1: “La Universidad de Navarra, fundada por san Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer en 1952, es una Universidad de la Iglesia Católica que se dedica a la enseñanza y a la investigación de las distintas ramas del saber, de acuerdo con su espíritu fundacional y su ideario propio”. It has a student body of 8.000 undergraduates and 4.000 graduates in the Social and Natural Sciences, Humanities and Engineering. A research-oriented institution, it also has a prestigious business school (IESE) and university hospital (Clínica Universidad de Navarra).

## 1. Institutional choices: Napoleonic tradition, the Core Curriculum and the University of Navarra

The first paragraph of the document “Principles of the Core Curriculum”<sup>4</sup>, dated October 2014, defines the University of Navarra’s institutional mission in the following terms:

“Since its beginnings, and in accordance with its mission, the University of Navarra promotes the development of its students’ personalities in all aspects, it contributes to scientific, human and Christian formation; it promotes solidarity and fraternity in students, which is reflected in acts of service to society, primarily through the exercise of one’s own profession; it develops in students a critical capacity and a knowledge of problems, which permits them to freely form their own convictions in a legitimate pluralism; it aspires to be a place of community, study and friendship, for people of diverse political and ideological tendencies.”

Paragraph 6 of this document delineates five objectives for the kind of instruction that the Navarra interdisciplinary program offers:

“The objective of Core Curriculum is to help students:

- Reach intellectual maturity through study and reflection on questions of human existence.
- Acquire a global interpretation of reality on their own, that gives meaning to their lives and serves as a space of integration for the rest of the subjects they take in their degree (...).
- Develop their capacity to judge as well as their intellectual liberty.
- Cultivate their moral and esthetic sensitivity, through art, literature, and intellectual dialogue.
- Discover the truth, good, and beauty both in the world and in the human person, who, by having been made in the image of God has been giving infinite dignity (...).”

Another significant document, the University’s “Statement of Core Values”,<sup>5</sup> also considers and explains interdisciplinarity as one of its seven main principles, along with work, freedom, respect, responsibility, service, and international dimension:

“Interdisciplinarity: The University’s mission statement – to seek and present the truth – is a collective enterprise that requires dialogue between specialists from different academic areas. With this approach, the diversity of the sciences is mutually enriching, students acquire an overall vision and knowledge is not overly compartmentalized.”

The means to achieve those ends have varied over the years. In the beginning, from the founding of the university in 1952 on, students were required to take lecture-based courses on Professional Ethics and Theology regardless of their major. In addition to offering their own degrees and programs, the Schools of Humanities and Theology have from the beginning had the mission of contributing to the education of all the students of the university. In 1994 (philosophical) Anthropology and Ethics were introduced as required courses and Theology became optional. With the aim of supervising these courses and fostering interdisciplinarity in the university the rectorate created the

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unav.edu/en/web/core-curriculum/what-is-it/principles>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.unav.edu/en/web/conoce-la-universidad/ideario-de-la-universidad>

Institute for Anthropology and Ethics in 1998. In 2008 new optional courses on literature, history and science were added to the core curriculum. It should be noted that these initial core curriculum courses were lecture-based for groups of 50-150 students.

Further down the road, the occasion to improve the Core Curriculum at the university arose around ten years ago, when the institution began an in-depth conversation on our identity as a research-oriented university of Catholic inspiration. This dialogue aimed not at changing the mission, but rather at fostering reflection and invigorating our institutional culture.<sup>6</sup> Great efforts are also being put into strengthening the intellectual community among faculty members. The challenges we face are the usual ones: career pressure, multitasking and socio-cultural trends towards individualism.

### 1.1. The Core Curriculum at the University of Navarra: grafting or raising?

In 2011 one of the authors of this chapter was a visiting scholar at the Committee on Social Thought of The University of Chicago. One day, as he was walking through the campus, he read the following ad: “Why did Socrates die?” It was part of “The Core” activities for freshmen. In the following months, he learned more about that program, got to know some of the students and faculty involved, and he could read through its exciting and controversial history, dating back to 1919 at Columbia.<sup>7</sup> Though the idea of a Core Curriculum did not appear unfamiliar to him, the teaching methods were entirely new: seminar discussions based on the reading of core texts and essay assignments. These seemed to be a more proper pedagogy for an interdisciplinary program than what is usual in Europe, since the primary aim of a Core Curriculum demands the basic intellectual habits. In other words, helping students grow in critical thinking requires teaching how to read, write and argue.

Recently, after reading the *Apology* in one of the new core texts courses at Navarra, a student asked: “If Socrates’ arguments were so sound and convincing, why did the jury finally condemn him?” The answer sparked a lively discussion: “Well, unfortunately, we live in a world where reason does not always win”. These intellectual conversations are precisely what the University of Navarra has been committed to offering its students since it was founded in 1952: dialogues on complex questions that require reflection and engagement with the preceding great conversation. Some time ago, a well-known Spanish philosopher visited Navarra. In his lecture, he began by saying that, were he ever to meet an oracle and given the opportunity to ask two – and only two – questions, he would choose: “Why did Socrates die?” and “Why did Jesus Christ die?” The answers to them offer fundamental insights for the interpretation of our culture and, thus, to understand who we are.

In this sense, the University of Navarra’s Catholic identity has been crucial in maintaining the interest for educating the whole person throughout the decades, and in nurturing the attitude necessary for joining the great human discussion, viz. engagement with the truth.<sup>8</sup> The dedication to seeking truth safeguards the non-ideological character

<sup>6</sup> See Alfonso Sánchez-Tabernero and José M. Torralba, “The University of Navarra’s Catholic-inspired education”, *International Studies in Catholic Education*, 10/1 (2018): 15-29.

<sup>7</sup> See José M. Torralba, “La idea de educación liberal. De cómo se inventaron las humanidades”, in *Falsos saberes. La suplantación del conocimiento en la cultura contemporánea*, ed. Juan Arana (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2013), 61-74.

<sup>8</sup> On the educational principles of University of Navarra, see Álvaro del Portillo, “La Universidad en el pensamiento y la acción apostólica de Mons. Josemaría Escrivá”, in *Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer y la universidad* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 1993), 13-39 and Francisco Ponz, “Principios fundacionales de la Universidad de Navarra,” *Anuario de Historia de la Iglesia*, 10 (2001): 643-685. See also Alejandro

of the Core Curriculum, since it aspires to provide every student with the tools for a free, personal and responsible pursuit of the truth, and not to pass on certainties through the exercise of power. By its nature, education must have a liberating effect on the person, while ideology enslaves, intellectually, politically or even religiously, which would openly contradict the core principles to which our institution is committed. So, at least in its most visible outcome, the pedagogics of core texts courses combines our institution's founding values and updated methods. That is, we would like to think that the process has not entailed grafting a strange branch into an adult tree, but rather the natural growth of tenets that existed from the beginning. A quick look at the model the Spanish university in recent centuries may be useful to better understand this approach's novelty.

## 1.2. A Core Curriculum within the French Tradition of Higher Education?

Since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century, universities in Spain, like in many other European and Latin American countries, follow the French (or to the so-called “Napoleonic”) tradition of higher education,<sup>9</sup> the leading aim of which is to prepare professionals. Students must declare their major before entering the university and usually take courses almost exclusively on their specific subject throughout their four years of study. Consequently, including general education requirements in the curriculum has been barely feasible. Regarding the teaching methods, lectures and textbooks are still privileged over seminars and the study of primary sources. The average number of students per class usually ranges from 50 to 150 students, which prevents the students from receiving feedback, since one faculty member is usually in charge of the group with very scarce or no help from teaching assistants.

At the institutional level, universities have a vertical and rigid structure: Department, School, Rectorate. There is nothing like the “College” of American universities which takes care of the education provided to all undergraduate students. Each department is usually responsible for one degree or one area of knowledge. In sum, interdisciplinary research, programs or degrees are still uncommon. Certainly, the so-called Bologna Process in Europe favored some reforms in the past decade, that have aimed to improve teaching methodologies, but this process has often interpreted as a chance for stressing the entrepreneurial character of the degrees, so that the situation remains substantially as described.<sup>10</sup>

Consequently, both to fulfill the institutional aspirations and to cope with the restraints imposed by our university system, it became necessary to make a new effort of clarifying the purpose of the Core Curriculum, to update the pedagogy, and to engage faculty interested in the project.

Llano, *Repensar la universidad. La universidad ante lo nuevo* (Madrid: Ediciones Internacionales Universitarias, 2003) (lecture of a former rector on occasion of the university's 50th anniversary).

<sup>9</sup> Although the reduction and centralization of Spanish Universities in the hands of the State, that affected in many cases to Hispanic America and the Philippines, has some precedents in the reign of Charles III (1771 “Plan Aranda”), it took place by means of diverse actions between 1814 (“Informe Quintana”) and 1857 (Law of Public Instruction).

<sup>10</sup> See Marijk van der Wende, “The Emergence of Liberal Arts and Sciences Education in Europe: A Comparative Perspective”, *Higher Education Policy*, 24 (2011): 233–253. On the Spanish higher education system, see Víctor Pérez-Díaz and Juan C. Rodríguez, *Educación superior y futuro de España* (Madrid: Fundación Santillana, 2001), who argue for the need of liberal education in our country.

## 2. Action Steps: From a lecture-based to a Core Curriculum model

### 2.1. The Committee for the Core Curriculum

In October 2013, the University of Navarra took action by appointing the Committee for the Core Curriculum, composed of six members: the deans of the School of Humanities and the School of Theology, the director of the Institute for Anthropology and Ethics, and three representatives from the Rectorate (offices of the Provost and of Student affairs). The Committee initially gathered experiences and suggestions from outside institutions. In December 2013, the Committee invited Prof. Roosevelt Montás, Director of the Center for the Core Curriculum at Columbia University, to give a lecture in a faculty seminar on “The identity of the university institution”. Acquiring first-hand knowledge of how a liberal arts college works within a research university proved crucial to make the case that our project was not just a commendable but utopian idea. It had already been in place for almost a century, and even with great success in some of the most renown universities in the world.

The Committee also undertook a better intellectual justification for the idea of an interdisciplinary program. A substantial outcome of this process is a five-page document prepared in collaboration with the different schools and validated by the Rectorate in October 2014, entitled “Principles of the Core Curriculum of University of Navarra”.<sup>11</sup> The document provides the rationale for our program,<sup>12</sup> describes its future development, and addresses common misconceptions among the Faculty.<sup>13</sup> In 2016 the Rectorate decided to transform the Institute for Anthropology and Ethics in the Core Curriculum Institute, with the aim of developing an administrative structure capable of supervising the program<sup>14</sup>. The Committee is now part of the Institute. They are responsible for the activities of the ICI and, in general for the development of the university’s core curriculum and fostering interdisciplinarity among faculty. The Board of the Institute reports to the Vice-President of the University.

### 2.2. The “Tradition and Innovation” workshop as a catalyzer

In June 2013 the two authors of this chapter took part in the Summer Institute “Tradition and Innovation: Liberal Arts Education through Core Texts”, which clarified our choices,<sup>15</sup> and worked as a catalyst on our campus for three reasons:

- a. First, although the institution was determined to improve its current Curriculum, it was not yet evident how to achieve it: core texts seminars came as the answer, and at least two faculty members had direct experience

<sup>11</sup> See <https://www.unav.edu/en/web/core-curriculum/what-is-it/principles>.

<sup>12</sup> See Rafael García Pérez, “Desfragmentar la Universidad: el Core Curriculum como marco integrador de saberes”, *Documentos Core Curriculum*, 1 (2018) URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/10171/49512>

<sup>13</sup> The dialogue between the Committee and the Schools has become also a key factor for faculty development, since it has fostered the reflection on our university’s essence: the education of the future generations. Against the centrifugal forces of the contemporary multiversity, the Core Curriculum can operate as a centripetal force that provides a compass for integrating the multiple demands on the faculty: teaching, research, advising and management.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.unav.edu/web/instituto-core-curriculum>

<sup>15</sup> We owe a special thanks to Profs. Kathy Eden and Norma Thompson, as leaders of the core texts seminars in Columbia and Yale, as well as to Scott Lee and Roosevelt Montás for the organization of the workshop and their very helpful advice on curriculum development.



of doing these seminars. So, the weeks in Columbia and Yale furnished us with the necessary expertise and intellectual impulse.

- b. Second, the “Tradition and Innovation” experience was presented together with the document “Principles of the Core Curriculum of University of Navarra” to over 100 professors in three meetings in Autumn 2013. The intellectual and pedagogical benefits of core texts seminars could now be explained in greater detail, and new Faculty volunteered to teach them. In addition, the experience of the Tradition and Innovation 2013 had continuity: two other professors, Gabriel Insausti (Department of Literature) and Manuel Cruz (Department of Philosophy), attended in 2016 the same Summer Institute at the Universities of Columbia and Chicago.
- c. Third, given the lack of such a tradition in Spanish universities, to be part of a community of liberal education institutions through the ACTC reinforces our mission, provides us with helpful resources and has significantly enhanced the perception of the Core Curriculum among students and Faculty.

Following this development, the University of Navarra co-organized the conference “Liberal Arts and Sciences Education and Core Texts in the European Context”, held at the Amsterdam University College (11-12 September 2015), as well as the conference “European Liberal Arts Education: renewal and re-formation” at the University of Winchester, UK (1-2 September 2017). Both events are the visible peaks of an emerging network of European institutions interested in liberal education. From a Spanish perspective, we also see the opportunity to share our experience with Latin American universities. For instance, one of the authors of this paper gave a presentation on teaching core texts seminars at a meeting in Chile in October 2014 for universities from 10 different countries.<sup>16</sup> The University of Navarra will join the Liberal Arts Institute of ACTC in 2018.

### **2.3. Towards a two-tier Core Curriculum**

As has already been explained, since 2008 the structure of the university’s core curriculum is as follows: each major (Degree program) consists of 4 years of study, or 240 credits, of which the student must take 18 in the following four compulsory courses: Anthropology (6 credits, two semesters, first year), Ethics (6 credits, two semesters, second year), two elective 3-credit courses called “Cultural Keys” (one semester each on History, Literature, Science, Theology and other subjects, third and fourth years). Thus, our curriculum of interdisciplinary studies represents 7.5% of the credits a student needs to graduate.

Even though the program was working well, there was a general sense that more could be done to improve the program. However, the idea of implementing a full-fledged program based on core texts seminars and making this obligatory for the over 1500 students entering each year was not feasible. During the week we spent in Yale, we learnt that their Directed Studies program was optional, selective and that it

<sup>16</sup> Álvaro Sánchez-Ostiz, “El Core Curriculum y los seminarios de grandes libros”, lecture at the V Encuentro Internacional de Humanidades, Universidad de los Andes, Santiago de Chile (10.24.2015), [publication forthcoming]

consisted of 6 semesters of study. Inspired by this model, we envisioned throughout the workshop a two-tier program for our own university:

- a. The “ordinary track”, in which the 18 required credits of Anthropology, Ethics and Cultural Keys are imparted in lectures for large groups of 50-100 students, but also offering some optional core texts seminars (for groups 25 students max) as part of the “Cultural Keys” courses.
- b. An optional “intensive track” (finally called “Inter-College Itinerary”), where students take the same 18 required credits, but taught exclusively as core texts seminars.

Students would have to choose which track they preferred to follow at the beginning of their first year. Despite the ostensible benefits, the new idea had to reconcile seemingly unassailable obstacles: to raise more funding, to convince different schools to join the new track, to coordinate class time schedules (initially the most unsurmountable hindrance) and, most importantly, to find faculty interested in and capable of teaching it. Fortunately, the supportive atmosphere described above made it possible and the “intensive track” began in September 2015 under the name “Inter-College Itinerary” (hereafter ICI, “Itinerario Interfacultativo” in Spanish).<sup>17</sup> In 2016-17 freshmen of four schools (Architecture, Communication, Humanities and Law) have enrolled in the ICI from the beginning of their studies, so that they are to become the first cohort of students to complete the whole ICI in 2020, and will provide perspective over the whole educative process of the program.

A selection of the syllabi included below gives an overview of the seminars: five belong to the ICI, and three belong to the “ordinary track”, offered to the students of one school. Each professor was free to configure their course, both in the arrangement and in the selection of texts. In fact, even though the document “Principles of the Core Curriculum” endorses core texts seminars, it allows other kinds of courses as part of the curriculum, and there is no common or obligatory list of readings for core texts seminars. Faculty can freely design their own syllabus, but they must submit it to the Committee on the Core Curriculum for approval. This has proved to be the right decision, since, first, our focus was more on the pedagogy than on the content of the courses, and, second, faculty feel more comfortable and prone to teach such new courses when they are granted such freedom. Some professors have chosen to use complete books in their classes, while others prefer to use selections and excerpts.

### *Syllabi of Great Books Seminars in the ICI*

<b>Anthropology</b> M. Cruz/A. Martínez	Complete books: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Sophocles, <i>Oedipus Rex</i>.</li> <li>· R.L. Stevenson, <i>Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i>.</li> <li>· M. de Unamuno, <i>Abel Sánchez</i>.</li> <li>· W. Golding, <i>Lord of the Flies</i>.</li> <li>· F. Scott Fitzgerald, <i>The Great Gatsby</i>.</li> </ul>
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<sup>17</sup> Of the two semesters of Anthropology (3+3 credits), the first is lecture-based for a group of 50-100 students, while the second semester the group splits into core texts seminars of 25 students. The same scheme will be followed in the Ethics course (3+3 credits). The two semesters of elective courses (3+3 credits) will be taught only as seminars. In 2013-2014 four “pilot” courses were offered. In 2014-2015 the ICI began with Ethics and Cultural Keys. Since 2016-2017 the full program (Anthropology, Ethics and Cultural Keys) is offered to freshmen of four Schools. It enrolls 50 new students every year. In the near future it will expand to the rest of the Schools of the university. Around 15% of the students from each school enroll in ICI.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· A. Solzhenitsyn, "Live not by Lies".</li> </ul>
<b>Ethics</b> J.M. Torralba	Complete books: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· J. Ortega y Gasset, <i>La rebelión de las masas</i>.</li> <li>· E. Waugh, <i>Brideshead Revisited</i>.</li> <li>· Plato, <i>Apology of Socrates</i>.</li> <li>· Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>.</li> <li>· W. Shakespeare, <i>Macbeth</i>.</li> <li>· St Augustine, <i>Confessions</i>.</li> <li>· Homer, <i>Odyssey</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Literature, Violence and Liberties</b> R. García	Complete books: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· F. Douglass, <i>A Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave</i>.</li> <li>· H. Lee, <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>.</li> <li>· C. Achebe, <i>Things Fall Apart</i>.</li> <li>· R. Kapusinski, <i>The Shadow of the Sun</i>.</li> <li>· P. Levi, <i>If This Is a Man</i>.</li> <li>· H. Arendt, <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil</i>.</li> <li>· A. Solzhenitsyn, <i>Matryona's Home</i>.</li> <li>· A. Akhmatova, <i>Requiem</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Great Books of Greece and Rome</b> A. Sánchez-Ostiz	Complete books: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Sophocles, <i>Oedipus Rex</i>.</li> <li>· Plato, <i>Phaedo</i>.</li> <li>· Thucydides, <i>History of the Peloponnesian War</i>.</li> <li>· Xenophon, <i>Anabasis</i>.</li> <li>· Plautus, <i>Miles gloriosus</i>.</li> <li>· Cicero, <i>Pro Archia poeta</i>.</li> <li>· Virgil, <i>Aeneid</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Great protagonists of the Bible</b> F. Varo	Selected passages from the Bible on the following figures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· First settlers of the earth: Gen 1-11.</li> <li>· Patriarchs: Gen 12-35.</li> <li>· Moses: Exod 1-24.</li> <li>· Samson and the Judges: Judic 1-5; 13-21.</li> <li>· David: 1 Sam 16-21; 24; 26; 31; 2 Sam 1-2; 4-7; 11-19; 1 Reg 1-2.</li> <li>· Solomon I: 1 Reg 1-11.</li> <li>· Solomon II: Cant; Sap.</li> <li>· Jeremiah: Jer.</li> <li>· Tobias: Tob.</li> <li>· Jesus I: Luc Lc 1-14.</li> <li>· Jesus II: Luc 15-24.</li> <li>· Paul: Act 9-28.</li> </ul>
<b>Literature and Major Human Themes</b> R. Fernández	Excerpts from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· A. de Saint-Exupéry, <i>Le petit prince</i>.</li> <li>· J. Salinger, <i>The Catcher in the Rye</i>.</li> <li>· G. Eliot, <i>Middlemarch</i>.</li> <li>· G. Flaubert, <i>Madame Bovary</i>.</li> <li>· R. Carver, «Cathedral».</li> <li>· H. G. Wells, «The Country of the Blind».</li> <li>· J. Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i>.</li> <li>· V. Hugo, <i>Les Misérables</i>.</li> <li>· H. Murakami, «The Seventh Man».</li> <li>· Munro, «Free Radicals».</li> <li>· F. Dostoyevsky, <i>Crime and Punishment</i>.</li> <li>· O. Wilde, <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i>.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· H. Melville, <i>Moby Dick</i>.</li> <li>· McCarthy, <i>The Road</i>.</li> <li>· F. Kafka, <i>The Metamorphosis</i>.</li> <li>· Huxley, <i>Brave New World</i>.</li> <li>· Dinesen, «The Blank Page».</li> <li>· M. Unamuno, <i>Niebla</i>.</li> <li>· P. Modiano, <i>Dora Bruder</i></li> <li>· M. Proust, <i>À la recherche du temps perdu</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Reading the Contemporary World</b> P. Pérez	<p>Excerpts from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· A. de Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i>.</li> <li>· F. Dostoyevsky, <i>Crime and Punishment</i>.</li> <li>· J. H. Newman, <i>The Idea of a University</i>.</li> <li>· Huxley, <i>Brave New World</i>.</li> <li>· J. Huizinga, <i>Homo Ludens</i>.</li> <li>· W. Churchill, «Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat»; <i>Memoirs</i>.</li> <li>· de Gaulle, «Appeal of 18 June 1940»; <i>Memoirs</i>.</li> <li>· de Saint Exupéry, <i>Pilote de guerre; Le petit prince</i>.</li> <li>· G. Orwell, <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i>.</li> <li>· F. O'Connor, «The Artificial Nigger».</li> <li>· A. Solzhenitsyn, «The Exhausted West».</li> </ul>

*Syllabi of Great Books seminars offered to students in the “Ordinary Track”*

<b>Classic Characters in English and American Literature</b> (School of Economics) R. Baena	<p>Complete books:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· M Shelley, <i>Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus</i>.</li> <li>· K. Chopin, “The Story of an Hour”.</li> <li>· W. Faulkner, “A Rose for Emily”.</li> <li>· H. Lee, <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>.</li> <li>· J. Swift, “A Modest Proposal”.</li> <li>· S. Becket, <i>Waiting for Godot</i>.</li> <li>· G. Orwell, “Shooting an Elephant”</li> <li>· N. Gordimer, “The Ultimate Safari”.</li> </ul>
<b>Modern Literature and Film</b> (School of Architecture) G. Insausti	<p>Complete books:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· O. Welles, <i>F for Fake</i>.</li> <li>· Ch. Baudelaire, <i>The Flowers of Evil</i>.</li> <li>· Hitchcock, <i>The Rope</i>.</li> <li>· S. Zweig, <i>Letter from an Unknown Woman</i>.</li> <li>· J. Frankenheimer, <i>The Train</i>.</li> <li>· R. M. Rilke, <i>Letters to a Young Poet, First Elegy</i>.</li> <li>· R. Redford, <i>A River Runs Through It</i>.</li> <li>· E. Thomas, Wilfred Owen, <i>War Poems</i>.</li> <li>· R. Rossen, <i>The Hustler</i>.</li> <li>· Dinesen, <i>Babette's Feast</i>.</li> <li>· J. Huston, <i>The Dead</i>.</li> <li>· S. Heaney, <i>Singing School</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Literature, Power and Leadership</b> (School of Economics) A. Sánchez-Ostiz	<p>Complete books:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Xenophon, <i>Anabasis</i>.</li> <li>· Plato, <i>Krito</i>.</li> <li>· F. Lope de Vega, <i>Fuenteovejuna</i>.</li> <li>· W. Shakespeare, Richard III.</li> <li>· T. More, <i>Utopia</i>.</li> <li>· Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, <i>Castaways</i>.</li> <li>· J. Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i>.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· W. Golding, <i>Lord of the Flies</i>.</li> <li>· Achebe, <i>Things Fall Apart</i>.</li> </ul>
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In addition to the new courses specifically designed for the ICI,<sup>18</sup> other actions during the last three years have helped the consolidation of the program: an inaugural lecture “On the Aims of Education”,<sup>19</sup> a series of practical seminars on teaching methodology,<sup>20</sup> and, more significantly, a six-hour workshop “Rhetorical and argumentative skills” that all students in the inter-college itinerary are required to take at the beginning of the spring semester.<sup>21</sup>

We discerned the need for a workshop on “Rhetorical and argumentative skills” in the first core texts courses taught in 2014-15, when we verified that the seminars’ flow was compromised by superficial reading and poor verbal expression. A significant number of the attendants simply overlooked the nuances in the texts’ arguments and that the text was part of a wider conversation. During the seminar sessions, some spoke up to share feelings rather than to put forward their own stand. Others brought in evidence irrelevant to the text, composed merely descriptive essays, or gathered insights without a line of argument.

With such weaknesses, we distinguished at least two different difficulties affecting the educational process: ignorance of the goals and lack of skills. On the one hand, the students were not clear about what or how they were being required to perform, because the class methodology was new to them. On the other hand, many of the students had never implemented basic procedures on an ongoing basis, so that they had not turned them into a mastered technique.

As for the communication of the purposes, the experience of the first year suggested that we develop a detailed rubric that could be applied both to the weekly essays and the longer papers. The rubric deals with questions of form (presentation, grammar, references, style, structure) and content (topic, question formulation, understanding, taking a stand, line of reasoning, connections, aptness of introduction, middle part, conclusion). Also in line with the gradual awareness of the seminar’s aims, most ICI teachers have opted for a progressive assessment, by considering only the better marks for the final evaluation, which provided more opportunities for the students to improve.

As for the deficiency of dexterities, the core of the problem was paradoxically that those capacities were the ultimate goals of our Core Curriculum - the basic habits for the life of the mind: how to read, how to write and to argue – while the seminars could not work appropriately without the students being elementarily trained. For this

<sup>18</sup> Three courses in the ICI are not listed above: “Jesus Christ: His Person and His Mission”, “Great Books: Genius and Creativity”, and “Literature and the Great Human Issues.”

<sup>19</sup> In the style of “The Aims of Education Address” of the University of Chicago, the speakers being Prof. Pablo Pérez López (“La educación y la chispa”, 27 October 2015) and Prof. Rosa Fernández Urtasun (“2084: ¿El fin de la educación?”, 18 October 2016). See Pablo Pérez López, “La educación y la chispa,” [Documentos Core Curriculum](http://hdl.handle.net/10171/49509), n°2 (2018) URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/10171/49509> and Rosa Fernández Urtasun, “2084: ¿el fin de la educación?,” [Documentos Core Curriculum](http://hdl.handle.net/10171/49510), 7 (2018) URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/10171/49510>

<sup>20</sup> The practical seminars addressed both the Great Books and the Ethics and Anthropology courses. There were also two seminars given by guest speakers: Emma Cohen de Lara, Amsterdam University College, and Gesche Keding, Leuphana Universität Lüneburg, (“Conversation as understanding: Gadamer’s approach to reading a text”, November 11, 2016); Scott Lee, ACTC, (“Teaching core texts: arguments and perspectives”, March 29, 2017).

<sup>21</sup> The workshop is taught by Álvaro Sánchez-Ostiz. It covers the following topics: 1. Lectura crítica y argumentación; 2. Establecer conexiones y tomar postura; 3. Cómo escribir ensayos basados en un argumento; 4. Cómo exponer oralmente.

instruction, we could have entrusted the students to a raw “learning by doing”, directed them towards some learn-it-yourself bibliography, or enhanced the seminars with extra specific guidance. This last option was our choice in the form of practical sessions focused on the basics of reasoning, essay writing, and note taking while reading core texts.

It has been a general perception among ICI teachers that students quickly improved their discourse quality after some weeks. This improvement could be attributed to the confluence of three factors: the workshop on argumentative skills, the classroom experience itself, and the one-on-one tutorials. Giving feedback to the students has required a highly-dedicated faculty, glad to spend a significant amount of time reading paper assignments and in tutorials, but the results certainly made it a worthy investment. Yet, verifying whether the students have made real advancements over and above subjective impressions from the part of the teachers is the task of the narrative assessment.

### **3. Informed judgements: the narrative assessment**

As a first step towards the QNA, we set up in April 2015 a task force of four teachers who were to hold monthly meetings throughout the course and to collect narratives. This measure soon proved unrealistic, principally because of lack of time, however the coordinator of the QNA has maintained constant communication with those four professors and other professors involved, both in the seminars on pedagogy or in personal interviews, as well as with the director of the Core Curriculum Institute. There have also been formal meetings with students at the end of the semester to ask them for feedback.

At the same time, since April 2015, students in different core texts courses have completed questionnaires on acquired skills, appropriateness of readings, and personal appraisal. The results in 2015 and 2016 have allowed us to assess our first courses and discuss improvements implemented in the academic years 2015-16 and 2016-17, mainly in the following four lines of action:

- Focus on guiding the discussion rather than on giving context.
- Elaboration of a detailed rubric for the essays.
- Improvement of feedback and comment on the essays.
- More practical approach of the argumentative skills workshop.

Finally, interviews with teachers and tracking of some assigned essays through Blackboard have completed the evidence.

#### **3.1. Questionnaires: self-assessing narratives**

A statistically significant number of students have voluntarily completed the evaluative questionnaires in writing towards the end of each course, or through Google Forms in May 2017, in a final wave intended to widen our range of data. The questionnaire has followed a common structure, with minor adjustments from one year to the other.

Regarding the enquiring approach, questions of a quantitative nature were avoided as far as possible, since the specific answers often requested by forms can easily turn into computable judgments.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, we could not afford to collect extensive

<sup>22</sup> The university follows the process of standardized teaching evaluation for all its courses. The Institute

narratives of every student involved. Consequently, we attempted a middle course, so that the students faced detailed evaluative questions, but had freedom to answer by means of keywords, short sentences, small paragraphs or a continuous essay. The aim was to help respondents articulate their self-awareness about advancements, prospects or frustrations.

Concerning general tendencies in the answers, both extremes of opinion have been noted: a majority has agreed with the purposes of the course, but there have also been a few conflicting judgments, that have been worth considering. From a methodological point of view, it is noteworthy that the sample was not homogeneous and controlled, but voluntarily provided by the students, which may reveal an important bias.

The courses in which the questionnaires were distributed are listed below. All students have been faced with virtually the same questions, but referred to seminars with different lists of readings, approaches, and teaching style. However, all courses had discussion sessions and assigned essays in common:

1. Anthropology
2. Ethics
3. Great Books of Greece and Rome
4. Great Books: Genius and Creativity
5. Great Protagonists of the Bible
6. Literature and Major Human Themes
7. Reading the Contemporary World
8. Literature, Violence and Liberties
9. Modern Literature and Film
10. Literature, Power and Leadership

### 3.1.1. *Personal appraisal of the course's purpose*

An important part of the questions dealt with time invested, difficulty of the assignments, and inner reward of the experience in comparison with other courses related to their disciplines. Through these parameters, we aimed to ask if they consider that the great books seminar has brought some benefit and how that benefit could be defined. On the one hand, we wanted to avoid that the question of learning or skills being too obvious or patronizing; on the other hand, the general appraisal of the seminar essentially determines one's own assessment of the benefits.

Substantial majority have expressed satisfaction about the experience, regardless of skills acquired or the education attained, both issues remarkably absent in the responses (see appendix with a selection of answers). They were asked that if possible, they would take similar courses in the future, and would they recommend them to other students. When asked about the main objective they have acquired ("What have I learned in this course?"), the most favorable general answers were "learn to think", "deepening in human question", "listen to different opinions held by my classmates", "the mere opportunity to read books that otherwise I would have never read". Minority diverging opinions complained about superficial level of discourse, lack of expert knowledge in analyzing texts ("misteaching" of philosophy or literature from an expert point of view), evaluations out of historical context, and little feedback from the teacher.

receives the results of the core curriculum courses' evaluations. The student's satisfaction with the core curriculum is high and those enrolled in the ICI manifest a significantly higher satisfaction with the program.

Significantly, there is a wide consensus in having invested proportionally more time, both in terms of quality and quantity, in the Core Texts course than in other courses of their discipline (but with more pleasure). Many of them have considered that the mere act of reflecting on issues not necessarily related to their discipline was both more demanding and difficult than other subjects' assignments. And in terms of difficulty, meaningful notetaking and writing the essays were considered by far the most arduous tasks.

### *3.1.2. Perception of acquired skills outside their discipline*

A specific set of queries related to the students' perception of the capabilities and skills acquired or improved in the courses, which was one of the main aims in our Core Curriculum. Students predominantly appreciate the acquisition of academic writing and oral skills, which might be useful for career purposes, but only a few attach usefulness to having improved their argumentative abilities (establishing connections, taking a stand, advancing an argument, refuting opinions). In the same vein, respondents who have attended the workshop on academic and rhetorical techniques considered it helpful to fulfill the requirements rather than crucial for intellectual development. (See a selection of answers in the Appendix).

### *3.1.3. Judgement about the readings' suitability*

Likewise, most students consider that the readings were well chosen to discuss great human issues. Interestingly, when asked for excluding a book of the list, respondents have not shown remarkable consensus on rejecting one text in particular, and virtually all of them chose the book for being difficult. The perception of complexity relates to the critical abilities exposed in the previous section. However, being able to read an arduous book is a non-conscious benefit as well: the students themselves do not recognize it as a goal of the course, but their narrative subjectively denotes that they have ascended to a higher level of "demanding books".

Most respondents on the questionnaires regard the mere reading of the selected books as one of the most profitable element of the seminar, at least at the same level as other high-valued aspects (sharing views with students from other disciplines, going in depth into "issues essential to life", learning how to articulate their own thoughts). About the preferences, while there have not been books completely rejected by students, only a few would prefer to do argumentative rather than narrative texts, fictional or historical.

## **3.2. Interviews with teachers**

The evidence collected from teachers in interviews show that they perceived some improved attitudes and capabilities overlooked by students in the questionnaires. They agree that the students have advanced in achieving the major objectives, although not all students to the same extent. In their opinion, the skills in which the students have progressed more clearly are: level of argumentative discourse, critical reading, connection making, consistency in referring to the text and, above all others, the ability to listen to other opinions in the seminars. Significantly, there is consensus in that students have been able to draw their own conclusions about man and the contemporary world, although the core texts were very different from one course to another, for example, from Biblical texts to 20th century literature.

All teachers report that they had opportunity to exchange experiences about their subject, although some say they have listened to more than have contributed ideas, since



they were teaching Great Books seminars for the first time. Several, even with long teaching experience in their field, affirm that they still should develop their way of guiding the discussions in class. On the other hand, some have also mentioned that they have significantly changed their reading style and the way they pose questions about the text, trying to point towards universal issues and away from their field of expertise, as their own interest in these issues has grown.


### 3.3. Essays: tracking argumentative skills during the courses

The most obvious procedure for assessing the students' fulfillment of the Core Curriculum's goals is to examine the development of capabilities reflected in their essays, from the beginning to the end of a course, according to the rubric. This task has been facilitated because some of the teachers have managed the assignments via Blackboard Learn, a tool that has made it possible to give feedback in a personalized and detailed manner. In general terms, a diachronic overlook of the assignments points to an improvement from the first to the last tests in the course, which is in line with the general impression shared with students and teachers about the results of the course.

Two different examples of that evolution, named LLM121022 and MSR124377, are given below, which may illustrate the nature of the progression verified in writing and argumentation habits (permission granted from both students). These cases have not been selected because they have been necessarily the brightest in their seminars, but because they show different general tendencies. In addition, it has been possible to contrast the progress of both cases with the self-assessment that they have provided through the questionnaires.

#### LLM121022

LLM121022 is a 5<sup>th</sup> year student in the Double Degree Philosophy and Journalism, who took "Great Books of Greece and Rome" of the ICI in the Spring Semester 2017. He wrote his first course essay on *Oedipus Rex* January 23, 2017 (see Appendix for a copy of the essay and the corrections). The instructions he had been given were: "Write a personal essay of approximately 200-300 words on an aspect of Sophocles' *Oedipus King*, which you deem relevant. The evaluation will pay particular attention to the argumentative coherence, the structure (title, introduction, middle part, conclusion) and the support of the argument in the text itself, according to the rubric." The first paragraph reveals that the topic of discussion is diffuse and not formulated as a question. A title, a statement of a controversial issue that guides the argument, and a structuring roadmap helps are missing.

- Ensayo  Edipo Rey -

Después de la clase en la que se vieron algunas de las claves de lectura de esta obra. Juzgo importante tratar aquí el tema de la identidad. Igual<sup>es</sup> recurrente y poco original, pero creo que da en el clavo debido<sup>a</sup> su centralidad en la obra. Como se expresó en clase, "*Edipo es un relato acerca de la identidad*." Además también escojo este tema porque conecta directamente con otro ámbito central de la obra: la culpa<sup>a</sup>

In the subsequent paragraphs, his wording is more appropriate to oral than writing expression, and mixes academic and colloquial registers. From a more general perspective, the student has seemingly not understood what he is being asked for; he rather continues the conversation in class accumulating intuitions and arguments from outside the text.

Con todo, inferimos que el rey de Tebas tiene una visión distorsionada de su realidad, y peca de uno de los problemas más gordos de la historia de la humanidad: la soberbia de la razón. Personalmente, todo este conjunto de reflexiones, evocaba en mí una serie de lecciones del Dr. Alejandro Vigo, en el que nos mostraba cómo precisamente se está en el error mientras no se es consciente del mismo. Es decir, la fuerza operacional de este gaega cuando no se tiene consciencia de él. De aquí deduzco que el pobre Edipo es una contradicción encarnada, creyéndose el más inteligente por una serie de sucesos que él juzga haber resuelto con éxito, se da que es el que menos consciente de su realidad es.

Through corrections and a more general comment, he is suggested to take the role of the “impartial observer” and to avoid the “mindflow”, the authoritative line of reasoning and colloquialisms.

On March 7, 2017, LLM121022 presented his fifth essay in the course, on the first book of Thucydides (see Appendix). The title “The Writing of Memory” and the first paragraph already show that he has developed a clear idea of the essay’s requirements. Although the scope remains broad, the essay focuses on one aspect. The student observes some interesting reservations about the methodology on the implicit evidence to be analyzed. Overall, this essay displays a more coherent argument, greater reference to the text and better style than the previous one.

Ensayo V: Tucídides I

#### - La escritura de la memoria -

Las reflexiones que se quieren traer aquí giran en torno a la problemática del método histórico. Parece que Tucídides se hace las grandes preguntas de la historia: ¿Qué es la historia?, ¿Cómo podemos acercarnos a ella? Es cierto que no las encontramos explícitas a lo largo del texto, no obstante, su modo de abordar los acontecimientos y las consideraciones, es indicativo de ello.

Al leer el prólogo adivinamos una suerte de avance con respecto a los modos de hacer historia de sus contemporáneos. Podemos afirmar que Tucídides es

MSR124377

MSR124377, a 4<sup>th</sup> year student in the Double Degree Business Administration and Law, has taken “Literature, Power and Leadership” in the “ordinary track” during the Winter Semester 2016. She had not done Great Books courses before. The second of her essays, handed in September 15, 2016, deals with books V-VII of Xenophon's *Anabasis*. The text is succinct and decontextualized (see Appendix for a copy of the essay and the corrections): a title and a clear argument are missing, the relation to the text is too general, and grammatical and lexical errors hinder a fluent reading. Apparently, she has focused on a controversial issue (“I will now discuss Xenophon’s behavior in these last chapters”), but the terms deployed reveal a merely descriptive point of view.

#### Anábasis Libros V-VII

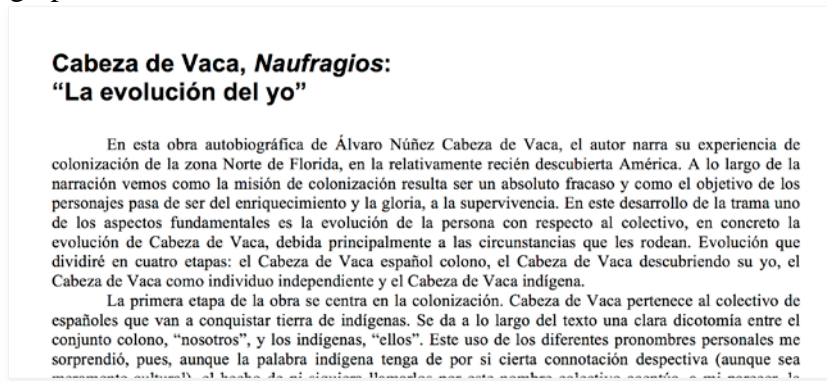
En los últimos tres libros toda la trama gira en torno al ansiado regreso de los griegos bajo el mando, sobretodo de Jenofonte, quien ya se nos muestra como un perfecto líder en los primeros libros, y sigue apareciendo como tal en los últimos. Enfrentándose a diferentes pueblos, e incluso al propio ejército, consigue mantener la compostura. Aún así hay en ocasiones en los que se asoman signos de debilidad humana. A continuación analizaré el comportamiento de Jenofonte en estos últimos capítulos.

El primer signo de debilidad humana surge cuando Jenofonte trama a espaldas del ejército quedarse por la zona de Sínope y formar una ciudad griega. Jenofonte es consciente de que posee un fuerte ejército y del poder y prestigio que la caída de esta batalla, incluso supiera el regreso a

The professor suggested that she structure her arguments around one single issue, take and defend her position using the text as a basis and improve her style.

Two months later, November 4, 2016, she completed her seventh essay in the course, about Cabeza de Vaca’s *Castaways* (see Appendix). It conveys a general impression of

improvement in argumentative and formal aspects: there is a coherent argument that connects the title, the opening introduction, the middle parts and the concluding paragraph.



The essay's coherence is built around a clear taking of position on an issue not immediately evident: the person of Cabeza de Vaca inwardly evolves with respect to the collective that surrounds him. She adds a roadmap of the essay, announcing that four stages in the character's evolution can be detected: "Cabeza de Vaca the Spanish colonist; Cabeza de Vaca the discoverer of his self; Cabeza de Vaca the independent individual, and Cabeza de Vaca the Indian." References to the text could have been better defined but have been used as evidence of her hypothesis.

The cases selected show two opposing types of problems faced by students. LL121022 was accustomed to writing essays in the Degree of Philosophy and Journalism, and had no grammatical difficulties, but at first tended toward an emotional exposition of his views. According to his own words on the questionnaire, he has attempted a more balanced approach as the course advanced:

*To my mind, the course was more demanding than others, but I wish there were more subjects like this in all the schools.*

*Personally, I most enjoyed more works that dealt with everyday human affairs. In other words, the war narratives that raised problems of international law and ethics with validity nowadays were less interesting than, for example, the psychological introspection we saw discussing the characters of Aeneas and Dido.*

*What I value most is that the subject was about human issues that everyone should consider at least once in life.*

*One of the problems is that I talked too much. However, the discussions worked quite well in terms of exchanging ideas.*

For her part, MS124377 had not had to develop writing skills in her Degree on Business Administration and she was not used to striving after linguistic correctness and precision. In this regard, some of her opinions on the questionnaire reveal her progression:

— *The subject has seemed to me as demanding as the conventional subjects, because, although we have not had to memorize, a book per week and an essay is plenty of work. If it had been less demanding, we would not have been thirteen people in class.*

— *The sessions of the workshop on argumentative skills were sufficient and practical enough. I have certainly improved my speaking ability.*

— *There was feedback on many of the essays I have delivered.*

— *The mere reading of one of the "Great Books" is... valuable, opens your eyes and gives you a different perspective on many of the subjects.*

- *I at least have acquired the very useful and advisable habit of reasoning on subjects that you may not usually reason on, but that are equally important.*
- *A highly recommendable and interesting subject: well focused, well taught, very enjoyable.*

Both cases have in common at least the improvement in practical skills that indubitably go hand in hand with refining their critical ability and rigor in the “basic habits for the life of the mind”. That is to say, after completing the course both students were able to read more carefully, to write more persuasively, and to argue more thoughtfully. However, both also substantiate an improvement related to their rhetorical ethos, the character to be guessed between the lines: both have journeyed from looking at the text from outside to talking with the text face to face. In other words, their improvement is based on enhanced intellectual techniques, but it also has to do with the effort they claim to have invested in reading and writing, and with the enjoyment they express at the end of the course. They have reached engagement with the text and have gotten involved in the conversation, a gain which cannot be attributed exclusively to their training in skills, but also to personal maturation through intense analysis and dialoguing with peers.

#### **4. Concluding remarks and further improvements**

Only three years have passed since the first courses of great books were introduced at the University of Navarra. So, we do not yet have a broad perspective to assess the potential long-term effect of the Core Curriculum on our graduates. However, the approach of the non-quantitative assessment carried out since the beginning, in which both faculty and students were involved, has served to adjust the course in a program we were not, at first sight, prepared for. The adjustments have made it possible not only to improve specific issues, but also to focus on what was feasible: we could not substitute one model for another, but rather we could grow a small cutting. This approach has had a broader multiplier effect than we had imagined.

In both the near and long term, we will continue to gather narrative evidence about our courses through questionnaires. This will allow us to accumulate experience and keep track of the necessary alterations in the following years. For example, as already mentioned, the first students to complete the entire ICI track will be finishing their studies in 2020, which will be a good time to reevaluate the educational process. For the time being, the results of the assessment provided by the questionnaires and the interviews have been evaluated and digested mainly by the core of the faculty who were more involved in the QNA from the beginning. It is therefore necessary to reach a wider circle in our discussion of the results. The practical sessions on pedagogy in Core texts seminars may be the best place to achieve this goal.

## 5. Appendices

### I. Rubric

#### A. Sobre la forma

	<b>DEFICIENTE (3-4)</b>	<b>SUFICIENTE (5-6)</b>	<b>NOTABLE (7-8)</b>	<b>SOBRESALIENTE (9-10)</b>
<b>Presentación</b>		Incluye título y nombre. Texto dividido en párrafos. Se ajusta a la extensión prevista.		Limpia y elegante.
<b>Corrección tipográfica, ortográfica y gramatical</b>	Algún error ortográfico o gramatical grave.	Algún error ortográfico o gramatical menor. Varias erratas tipográficas.	Alguna errata tipográfica.	Correcto.
<b>Citas y referencias</b>	Plagio (0).	Las citas textuales van entrecomilladas y se indica el número de página y el autor (si no es el del libro que se comenta).	Se usan adecuadamente las citas y paráfrasis: extensión, relevancia, ilustran una idea o apoyan un argumento.	Están bien integradas en el texto. Hay el número de citas que el tipo de ensayo requiere.
<b>Estilo</b>		Emplea ejemplos y califica adecuadamente.	Texto bien trabado y convincente.	Texto muy bien trabado y muy convincente.
<b>Estructura del ensayo</b>	No tiene una estructura reconocible (frases o párrafos inconexos) (0-2). Tiene estructura reconocible, pero le falta alguna parte esencial (3-4).	Tiene estructura reconocible pero no es la adecuada para expresar el argumento o contenido.	Tiene estructura reconocible y es la adecuada.	La estructura hace sólido o convincente el argumento.

#### B. Sobre el contenido

	<b>DEFICIENTE (3-4)</b>	<b>SUFICIENTE (5-6)</b>	<b>NOTABLE (7-8)</b>	<b>SOBRESALIENTE (9-10)</b>
<b>Tema del ensayo</b>	No es claro.	Es claro, pero obvio y de respuesta fácil.	Es claro, relevante y de respuesta elaborada.	Es claro, relevante, de respuesta elaborada y original.
<b>Propuesta, pregunta o problemática del ensayo</b>	El ensayo no aporta ninguna propuesta, respuesta a pregunta o solución a una problemática.	El ensayo aporta alguna propuesta, respuesta a pregunta o solución a una problemática.	El ensayo aporta, de modo relevante, alguna propuesta, respuesta a pregunta o solución a una problemática.	El ensayo aporta, de modo relevante y convincente, alguna propuesta, respuesta a pregunta o solución a una problemática.
<b>Comprensión del texto leído</b>	No demuestra haber leído el texto (0) o no haber comprendido los aspectos fundamentales (3-4).	Demuestra haber leído el texto y comprendido en sus aspectos fundamentales.	Demuestra haber comprendido los aspectos complejos del texto.	Demuestra la capacidad de tomar postura (formular tesis o preguntas relevantes) acerca de los aspectos complejos.
<b>Formulación de las ideas (“ellos dicen” – “yo digo”)</b>	No se describen correctamente las ideas del autor o de los personajes.	Se describen correctamente las ideas del autor o de los personajes.	Se describen correctamente las ideas del autor o de los personajes y se ponen	Se describen correctamente las ideas del autor o de los personajes y se ponen adecuadamente en

			adecuadamente en relación con otras ideas del autor o del personaje.	relación con otras ideas del autor o del personaje, además de con las propias ideas.
<b>Argumentación</b>	Elucubración.	Justificada.	Sólida y convincente.	Sólida, convincente y original.
<b>Comparaciones y contrastes</b>	No hay.	El ensayo establece comparaciones y contrastes (personajes, ideas, pasajes, etc.) dentro del libro.	El ensayo establece comparaciones y contrastes relevantes (personajes, ideas, pasajes, etc.) dentro del libro.	El ensayo establece comparaciones y contrastes relevantes (personajes, ideas, pasajes, etc.) dentro del libro y con otros libros.
<b>Sobre la introducción</b>	No hay o no formula el tema, la tesis o hipótesis.	Formula el tema, la tesis o hipótesis.	Sitúa el tema en su contexto.	Muestra la relevancia o importancia del tema elegido.
<b>Sobre la parte central</b>	No contiene argumentos reconocibles.	Tiene argumentos claramente reconocibles.	Tiene argumentos bien formulados y justificados. Considera los argumentos contrarios (posibles o reales).	Tiene argumentos bien formulados, justificados y convincentes. Refuta los argumentos contrarios (posibles o reales).
<b>Conclusión</b>	No hay.	Se sigue lógicamente de la parte central.	Sitúa la conclusión en su contexto más general.	Muestra la relevancia de la conclusión alcanzada.



## II. Example of Questionnaire

### *Cuestionario para asignaturas de Grandes Libros – Curso 2015/2016*

*La finalidad de este cuestionario es mejorar la calidad de esta y otras asignaturas del Core Curriculum. Puede completarlo de manera anónima o indicar su nombre, si lo desea. Algunas de las preguntas sólo requieren una escueta respuesta al margen. Para otras, en cambio, necesitará utilizar hojas adicionales. También es posible contestar varias preguntas en un mismo párrafo. O sencillamente, si lo prefiere, tome las preguntas como un posible guión para redactar sus impresiones generales en torno a “¿Qué me ha aportado esta asignatura que resulte digno de reseñar?”...*

#### **6. I. Sobre la selección de lecturas o temas**

1. ¿Qué libro o libros le parecieron más adecuados para discutir de “grandes temas”? ¿Cuáles considera más “fáciles” y más “difíciles”?
2. ¿Le pareció excesivo el tiempo dedicado a discutir alguno de los libros? ¿A cuáles? ¿Habría bastado una sola sesión?
3. ¿Había algún libro que no deba ser incluido entre los “Grandes Libros” o el “Canon”? ¿Había alguno irrelevante o superficial en comparación con los otros? ¿Cuál? ¿Por qué? ¿Qué libro excluiría de la lista si tuviera que descartar uno?
4. ¿Profundizaban los libros de ficción de la lista en los “Grandes Temas” tanto como los no ficcionales? ¿Pueden ser literatura esos libros no ficcionales?
5. ¿Qué libro de la lista le recomendaría a su mejor amigo? ¿Qué libro de la lista le recomendaría a su peor enemigo? ¿Para hacerle cambiar de opinión o para infligirle un cruel y doloroso tormento?
6. ¿Qué libro o libros sugeriría incluir? ¿Incluiría alguno que no fuese “del canon de siempre” pero que usted leyó en su momento?
7. ¿Había leído o oído hablar de los libros propuestos antes de hacer esta asignatura? ¿Ha cambiado su opinión, fundada o no, sobre ellos?
8. ¿Habría leído alguno de los libros de la asignatura si no hubiera sido lectura obligatoria? ¿Cuál no le importaría volver a leer?

#### **7. II. Sobre el método utilizado en clase**

9. ¿Había hecho antes —en la Universidad o en el Bachillerato— otras asignaturas basadas en la discusión de opiniones acerca de un texto? ¿Le ha parecido más o menos “exigente” que una asignatura “de las de memorizar”?
10. ¿Podría aplicarse este método a las demás asignaturas de su Grado? ¿a algunas? ¿a ninguna otra?
11. ¿Le pareció una asignatura “de letras”, “de literatura”, “de historia”, “de derecho”, “de filosofía”, “de retórica”, “de nada en particular”?
12. ¿Le ayudaban las lecturas previas a acercarse a la lectura siguiente? ¿Hubiera sido igual si la secuencia de lecturas hubiese estado ordenada de otra manera? ¿Prefiere que los libros estén ordenados cronológicamente de acuerdo con su época o según el desarrollo de un tema? ¿Por qué?
13. ¿Preferiría haber leído sólo fragmentos significativos para ajustarse a las cuestiones controvertidas, o haberlos leído enteros, aunque parte de su material de trabajo no se haya reflejado en la discusión?
14. ¿Introdujo el profesor los libros suficientemente? ¿Prefiere que el profesor revele lo que piensa desde el principio para saber a qué atenerse, o que dé rienda suelta a la discusión, aun a riesgo de que el diálogo se torne caótico o tome derroteros imprevistos?
15. ¿Ha echado en falta más literatura secundaria, bibliografía opcional y lecciones magistrales que dieran marcos generales? En cualquier caso ¿lo considera una ayuda o un modo de manipular y prevenir sus opiniones?
16. ¿Había hilos comunes a todas las lecturas? ¿Estaban esas ideas en los libros, en su mente, o en la mente del profesor (en la medida en que pueda usted sospecharlo...)?
17. ¿Ha hecho usted sus propias conexiones fuera de la conversación en clase entre las diferentes lecturas, entre éstas y otras lecturas u otras cuestiones de su interés, o más bien eran piezas extraviadas de puzles incompletos?
18. ¿Era razonable y realista la carga de trabajo, tanto en el número de páginas como en la extensión de los ensayos? ¿Ha podido leer los libros enteros?
19. ¿Ha dedicado más o menos tiempo de trabajo que a otras asignaturas “de memorizar”?

20. ¿Hubo retroalimentación o *feedback* sobre sus trabajos y sobre sus intervenciones en clase? ¿Eran estrictamente necesarias las entrevistas con el profesor?
21. ¿Fueron respetadas sus opiniones en la discusión o en la corrección de los trabajos? ¿Cree que todas las opiniones que se han defendido eran respetables? ¿Igualmente valiosas? ¿Igualmente válidas?

**8. III. Sobre el contenido**

22. ¿Los temas planteados en la discusión le parecieron novedosos, convencionales o tediosamente previsibles?
23. ¿Ha construido ideas propias a results del proceso de lectura y redacción, o más bien ha confirmado lo que ya sabía o pensaba? ¿Merece la pena dar a conocer esas ideas a otras personas o es mejor que esas personas lean los libros directamente?
24. ¿Le resultaron útiles las sesiones sobre lectura crítica y escritura académica? ¿Fueron demasiadas o escasas? ¿Demasiado teóricas o prácticas? ¿Ha mejorado sus habilidades de lectura crítica, escritura, argumentación, exposición etc.? ¿En qué lo ha notado?
25. ¿Es la mera lectura de uno de los “Grandes Libros” algo “valioso” en sí mismo, o sólo un medio para reflexionar sobre “grandes temas”?
26. ¿Ha aprendido “algo útil” o “recomendable” en esta asignatura? Si es el caso, ¿eran actitudes, hábitos, destrezas? ¿Pueden ser de utilidad en otras asignaturas de su grado? ¿En otras actividades en el campus? ¿En la vida misma en general? ¿En su carrera profesional?

**9. IV. Sobre el futuro**

27. ¿Le gustaría hacer otra u otras asignaturas similares en el futuro, si existiese la posibilidad?
28. ¿Qué “Grandes Temas” le gustaría que se trataran: arte y creatividad, teoría política, amor y matrimonio, medio ambiente, psicología del carácter, hitos históricos, naturaleza y cultura, identidad...? ¿Qué épocas o géneros literarios deberían contemplarse: novela, cuento, ensayo, poesía, teatro, cine...? ¿Literatura “del mundo”, otras culturas, clásicos anteriores al siglo XIX, literatura del siglo XX y XXI...?
29. ¿“Donaría sus ensayos a la ciencia”? Es decir, ¿tendría inconveniente en que se usase alguno de sus trabajos o ensayos —de modo completamente anónimo y confidencial— como ejemplos en los talleres de lectura, argumentación y retórica académica que se organicen en próximos cursos? *En caso afirmativo, escriba, por favor, su nombre.*
30. ¿Ha oído hablar del “Itinerario Interfacultativo” para cursar su *Core Curriculum*?

*Añada, por último, si lo estima conveniente, otros comentarios o sugerencias.  
Muchas gracias por su ayuda.*

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### III. Selection of answers

#### 3.1.1. Personal appraisal of the course's purpose.

- “Personalmente me parece un método de estudio muy bueno, moderno y en el que puedo aprender mucho más; agradezco al maestro.”
- “La posibilidad de ahondar en ciertos temas más esenciales de la vida y de la persona.”
- “Lo que considero más valioso en esta clase es escuchar las diferentes ideas y opiniones que elaboran mis compañeros.” Son temas relevantes, que todos debemos reflexionar. No solo lees, aprendes y reflexionas, sino que ayuda para la vida. Los libros tratan los asuntos básicos de toda vida humana: amor, amistad, religión, cultura...”
- “Son lecturas frecuentemente citadas, pero no léidas, que vale la pena conocer”.
- “Debería haber menos ensayos filosóficos y más novelas. De esta forma, sería más cercano e ilustrativo y se vería la ética en los personajes, no solo en la parte teórica que nos ofrecen los filósofos”.
- “He leído libros que, si no me hubiesen sido recomendados en esta asignatura, creo que no habría leído por mi cuenta y me han parecido muy interesantes a la par que diferentes”.
- “Me apunté a la asignatura porque quería leer todos los libros seleccionados, pero sabía que no lo haría si no tuviera un cierto grado de obligación. Están muy bien escogidos porque, además de ser esenciales en la formación ética y, al fin y al cabo, humana, es sencillo encontrar relaciones entre autores”.
- “NUNCA hubiera leído ninguno de los libros. Quizá *Edipo Rey*, pero sólo si estuviera en una isla desierta sin nada más que hacer”.
- “No había hecho nunca una asignatura de este tipo, pero me parece una idea genial. Respecto a la exigencia, me ha parecido que lleva mucho tiempo y trabajo, pero es bonita”.
- “En resumen: la asignatura es muy interesante, está muy bien planteada, se podría incluir otro tipo de libros también y no se puede pensar que los alumnos leerán los nueve libros, aunque quizás es la única manera de que contactemos con ellos, lo cual es una experiencia valiosa por sí misma. Muchas gracias. Fue un placer”.

#### 3.1.2. Perception of acquired skills outside their discipline.

- “Era la tercera vez que las cursaba” (workshop on academic skills).
- “Creo que al inicio de la asignatura tendría que haber una clase en la que se explique mejor la estructura de un ensayo crítico y lo que pide el profesor. Por otra parte, eché de menos una entrevista con el profesor para comentar el ensayo final que se hizo al terminar la asignatura.
- “Sí he aprendido algo ‘útil o recomendable’: analizar un libro, entender la literatura, hacer ensayos.”
- “Sí he aprendido algo ‘útil o recomendable’: siempre viene bien algo de cultura general y saber expresarse.”
- “Sí he aprendido algo ‘útil o recomendable’: la constancia y volver a tener un tiempo en mi vida cotidiana para leer, no solo en vacaciones”.
- “Merecería más la pena una corrección exhaustiva e individual de estilo

después de haber entregado uno de los ensayos”.

- “Creo que he mejorado mi lectura crítica y escritura. Lo noto en la facilidad para expresarme y en los detalles en los que me fijo cuando leo: ya no leo solo por entretenimiento, también me pregunto más el por qué y ‘persigo’ más al escritor para saber qué pensaba él al escribir una determinada parte”.
- “El hábito de leer más a menudo y centrarse en lo importante de la lectura”.

### 3.1.3. Judgement about the readings’ suitability.

- “Creo que los libros son adecuados y que cualquier obra de este tipo podría ser usada, lo importante no es tanto el libro sino las ideas que salen en grupo, los debates y el aprender de tus compañeros”.
- “Leer la *Anábasis* en primer lugar fue algo duro”.
- “Quitaría de la lista *Ricardo III* o *Fuenteovejuna*, porque en los dos hay villano”.
- “La forma de la clase es inmejorable: es un funcionamiento simple que ayuda a pensar y a soltarse”.

#### IV. Essays analyzed

##### 10. LLM121022, Essay on *Oedipus Rex* (1/23/17)

- Ensayo <sup>1</sup>Edipo Rey -

Después de la clase en la que se vieron algunas de las claves de lectura de esta obra. Juzgo importante tratar aquí el tema de la identidad. Igual<sup>2</sup> es recurrente y poco original, pero creo que da en el clavo debido<sup>3</sup> a su centralidad en la obra. Como se expresó en clase, “*Edipo es un relato acerca de la identidad.*” Además también escojo este tema porque conecta directamente con otro ámbito central de la obra: la culpa.<sup>4</sup>

Vimos que el determinismo es un tema implícito, que se describe pero no se narra: el destino va cayendo implacablemente sobre el protagonista. Ahora bien, lo que cabe<sup>5</sup> preguntarse es si Edipo merece que ese destino recaiga sobre él. Responder con afirmaciones rotundas sería hacer afirmaciones muy fuertes sobre temas humanos que han dado lugar a prolíferos desarrollos posteriores. Por la parte que me atañe y aportando mi punto de vista, creo que fue clave hacernos la pregunta del concepto que<sup>6</sup> tiene Edipo acerca de sí mismo.

Con todo, <sup>7</sup>inferimos que el rey de Tebas tiene una visión distorsionada de su realidad, y peca de uno de los problemas más gordos<sup>8</sup> de la historia de la humanidad: la soberbia de la razón. <sup>9</sup>Personalmente, todo este conjunto de reflexiones, evocaba en mí una serie de lecciones del Dr. Alejandro Vigo, en el que nos mostraba cómo precisamente se está en el error mientras no se es consciente del mismo. Es decir, la fuerza operacional de este<sup>10</sup> llega cuando no se tiene consciencia de él. De aquí deduzco que el pobre Edipo es una contradicción encarnada, creyéndose el más inteligente por una serie de sucesos que él juzga haber resuelto con éxito, se da que es el que menos consciente de su realidad es.

<sup>12</sup> <sup>11</sup>Una repuesta a si Edipo tiene la culpa o no creo ~~que es~~ desacertado en cierta medida porque el autor de la obra no nos pone en esa tesitura, es decir, los datos que nos da y que juegan en la obra, no son suficientes como para determinar la culpa del monarca. Más bien he visto que las intenciones de Sófocles son las de plantearnos el problema: un destino implacable cae sobre una persona imprudente (en la medida en la que no ha conseguido hacerse cargo de su propia realidad). Edipo se quita los ojos al ver, ya Platón habla de una ceguera inicial cuando se sale de la caverna. Igual para Sófocles fue tan cegadora esa luz de la verdad, que al descubrir para sí cuál era su verdadera identidad no quiso aceptarlo e hizo lo que estaba acostumbrado: apartarla cegándose a sí y pidiendo que lo desterraran de lo que había sido su propio reino.

Tenemos por tanto una obra total que, de un modo no poco sutil, va desencadenando mediante el diálogo, la realidad de un ~~rey~~<sup>13</sup> que cae sobre él con todo el peso con el que puede caer la verdad.

1. Te ayudará pensar bien un título que centre el ensayo. 2. coloquialismo. 3. ídem. 4. el contenido del párrafo está bien, pero fíjate que la redacción es más propia de la expresión oral que de la escrita. No te dejes llevar por el "flujo de pensamiento" poniendo las ideas tal como surgen en tu mente. Mejora la calidad si lo reelaboras adoptando la máscara de "observador imparcial". 5. ¿Podría ser éste el verdadero tema del ensayo? 6. ¿o más bien “éste”? 7. redacción difusa. 8. coloquialismo. 9. Evidencia externa al texto, que resta fuerza a tus propios argumentos y excluye al lector de la conversación. 10. éste. 11. Restricción mental que quita fuerza a tu argumento. 12. El orden de palabras denota "redacción oral". En esta línea mencionas un segundo tema del ensayo más concreto (la culpa), pero ambas cuestiones son tratadas de manera difusa y superficial. 13. ¿Cambiaría el sentido de la tragedia si Edipo no fuera rey?



## 11. LLM121022, Essay on *Thucydides I* (3/7/17)

### Ensayo V: Tucídides I

#### **- La escritura de la memoria -**

Las reflexiones que se quieren traer aquí giran en torno a la problemática del método histórico. Parece que Tucídides se hace las grandes preguntas de la historia: ¿Qué es la historia?, ¿Cómo podemos acercarnos a ella? Es cierto que no las encontramos explícitas a lo largo del texto, no obstante, su modo de abordar los acontecimientos y las consideraciones, es indicativo de ello.

Al leer el prólogo adivinamos una suerte de avance con respecto a los modos de hacer historia de sus coetáneos. Podemos afirmar que Tucídides es original en su pretensión: es la primera vez que se busca lo que hoy llamaríamos "rigor histórico-científico". Por esta razón, aludiendo a sus antecesores (Herodoto y Homero) los considera historiadores, aunque lo hace marcando una clara frontera.

Como antes apuntaba, que Tucídides hubiese reflexionado sobre los grandes temas de la historia se desprende de las mismas líneas de la narración. Notamos que ha hecho un estudio de las fuentes y que describe con detalle aquello que cree oportuno de tal modo que, en muchos pasajes, la ambigüedad tiene cabida.

Una de las características sobre las que apoyo mi argumentación es el estilo utilizado por el clásico historiador. Existe, además, la discusión acerca de si el texto es narrativo o no. Yendo más allá, aquello que podemos ver reflejado en su estilo es que Tucídides es consciente de que el suceso histórico es irre recuperable como tal. Aunque parezca muy obvia, esta reflexión no es banal y ha sido uno de los caballos de batalla de las escuelas de historia contemporáneas. En suma, el autor sabe que el acceso al pasado se tiene que apoyar sobre alguna tipología intelectual que lo soporte eficazmente.

En sus detalladas descripciones, en la elaboración de las arqueologías e incluso en su alusión a las genealogías familiares podemos descubrir la modernidad del griego. Si lleva a cabo toda esta serie de consideraciones antes de narrar el suceso histórico, es porque sabe que el suceso en sí fue una acción del pasado y que él, desde el presente, tiene que darle cierta forma para que el lector actual pueda entenderlo en su plenitud.

Tucídides sabía que el tiempo como el agua que se nos escurre entre los dedos de las manos y, en esta toma de consciencia del tiempo como un irre recuperable condicionante de su propio método de acercamiento a sucesos anteriores, es precursor y sienta cátedra por haber descubierto (o caído por primera vez en la cuenta) de una de las claves de la ciencia histórica: la historia es la que sucede, la memoria es la que escribimos.



## 12. MSR124377, Essay on Xenophon's *Anabasis* (9/15/16)

### Anábasis Libros V-VII

En los últimos tres libros toda la trama gira en torno al ansiado regreso de los griegos bajo el mando, **sobretodo**<sup>1</sup> de Jenofonte, quien ya se nos muestra como un perfecto líder en los primeros libros, y sigue apareciendo como tal en los últimos. Enfrentándose a diferentes pueblos, e incluso al propio ejército, consigue mantener la **compostura**<sup>2</sup>. Ahí así hay en ocasiones en los que se asoman signos de debilidad humana. A continuación analizaré el **comportamiento**<sup>3</sup> de Jenofonte en estos últimos capítulos.

El primer signo de debilidad humana surge cuando Jenofonte trama a espaldas del ejército quedarse por la zona de Sínope y formar una ciudad **griega**<sup>4</sup>. Jenofonte es consciente de que posee un fuerte ejército y del poder y renombre que le podría dar esta hazaña, incluso superior al regreso a Grecia. Sin embargo, **se**<sup>5</sup> **desenmascaran** sus intenciones y enseguida se desdice y decide continuar la vuelta a casa como si nada hubiese sucedido, comportamiento un tanto cínico por su parte. Pero, como no, el gran Jenofonte vuelve a resurgir cuando lo culpan de haber agredido a varios soldados y él se defiende de modo que todo el ejército acaba en contra de los que denunciaron. **Llega un momento en el**<sup>6</sup> **que**, recuperada la confianza con Jenofonte, lo intentan nombrar jefe, pero este se niega. Otra vez más, su gran retórica hace pensar que es por humildad y porque así se lo han mostrado los **Dioses**<sup>7</sup>, pero la verdadera razón es porque teme que le de una peor reputación si las cosas salen mal; **claro signo de**<sup>8</sup> **cobardía y egoísmo**, más que de humildad, diría yo. A partir del episodio con Cleandro, Jenofonte decide marchar solo a casa, para evitarse mayores problemas, pero en un momento de necesidad del ejército, acude a donde ellos, signo casi **utópico**<sup>9</sup> de gran liderazgo.

En una conversación que mantienen Seutes y Heraclides con un líder espartano que quiere el ejército griego, los dos primeros llegan a admitir que el único defecto de Jenofonte es que "mima demasiado a su ejército"<sup>10</sup>. Al vez en la época clásica ese era un signo de debilidad del jefe, pero **más**<sup>11</sup> **tarde** el autor nos vuelve a mostrar la grandeza de Jenofonte demostrando que la lealtad hacia su ejército es su mejor virtud.

En conclusión, Jenofonte en este libro es el líder ejemplar. El autor, el propio Jenofonte, nos deja asomar rayos de debilidad por parte de éste, **no se**<sup>12</sup> **sin querer**, o para demostrarnos que es un ser humano y no un **Dios**<sup>13</sup>. Realmente pinta un jefe con habilidad no solo retórica, sino motivacional. Jenofonte sabe como mover la masa por voluntad propia, y sabe también cómo defender su posición ante cualquier ataque, aspecto también importante para mantener el respeto de un líder.

1. Corregir: sobre todo. 2. Corregir: la unidad / la disciplina / vida ... la compostura es lo que menos importa...
3. Analizaré ESTE comportamiento, es decir, la debilidad...
4. Falta la referencia. 5. Incierto: ¿se?
6. ¿Cuándo? Falta la referencia. 7. Corregir: dioses. 8. Corregir: es difícil juzgar el fuero interno. 9. Corregir: grotesco / paradójico / absurdo / contradictorio... pero no utópico. 10. Sin la referencia, es difícil valorar si el argumento es válido. 11. Falta la referencia: ¿en qué pasaje del libro se dice esto? 12. Corregir: sé. 13. Corregir: dios

### 13. MSR124377, Essay on Cabeza de Vaca's *Castaways* (11/4/16)

#### **Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufraios*: "La evolución del yo"**

En esta obra autobiográfica de Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, el autor narra su experiencia de colonización de la zona Norte de Florida, en la relativamente recién descubierta América. A lo largo de la narración vemos como la misión de colonización resulta ser un absoluto fracaso y como el objetivo de los personajes pasa de ser del enriquecimiento y la gloria, a la supervivencia. En este desarrollo de la trama uno de los aspectos fundamentales es la evolución de la persona con respecto al colectivo, en concreto la evolución de Cabeza de Vaca, debida principalmente a las circunstancias que les rodean. Evolución que dividire en cuatro etapas: el Cabeza de Vaca español colono, el Cabeza de Vaca descubriendo su yo, el Cabeza de Vaca como individuo independiente y el Cabeza de Vaca indígena.

La primera etapa de la obra se centra en la colonización. Cabeza de Vaca pertenece al colectivo de españoles que van a conquistar tierra de indígenas. Se da a lo largo del texto una clara dicotomía entre el conjunto colono, "nosotros", y los indígenas, "ellos". Este uso de los diferentes pronombres personales me sorprendió, pues, aunque la palabra indígena tenga de por sí cierta connotación despectiva (aunque sea meramente cultural), el hecho de ni siquiera llamarlos por este nombre colectivo acentúa, a mi parecer, la sensación de superioridad. La diferencia e imposibilidad de acercamiento entre los dos grupos se ve en aspectos también como el del lenguaje: no se entendían, no se podían comunicar, lo que suponía la falta de información. En esta etapa Cabeza de Vaca aparece como miembro de un grupo, no como individuo; no hay un "yo", hay un "nosotros".

En la segunda etapa, ante los contratiempos de la expedición, aunque Cabeza de Vaca sigue sintiendo su pertenencia al grupo, se da un aumento de la individualización. Muestra en varias ocasiones su opinión (cosa que antes no hacía), incluso siendo opuesta a la del Gobernador, que es quien lidera la expedición. En un momento, ante la oposición de Cabeza de Vaca en el asunto de seguir por mar o tierra, el Gobernador le insta a que abandone el grupo si quiere obrar a su parecer. El protagonista recula y sigue con el grupo (todavía no se da la separación completa). Por otra parte, cambia su concepción hacia los indígenas. Ya no habla de "ellos", sino de "gente". Incluso alaba su fortaleza, su disponibilidad y destreza. En esta etapa se da una nueva perspectiva del sujeto: es un "nosotros", ya que sigue perteneciendo al grupo, pero aparece y se va fortaleciendo el "yo". También cambia el objetivo del grupo: ya no es la riqueza, sino la supervivencia; cambio que es crucial para el cambio de la persona.

En la tercera etapa Cabeza de Vaca asume el mando después de que su barca haya sido la única en salvarse de los continuos naufragios. Y es en este momento en el que se rompe su vínculo con el grupo: quedan muy pocos supervivientes, los cuales se ven obligados a adoptar las costumbres indígenas para sobrevivir: el protagonista aprende diversas lenguas, se procura el oficio de Chamán (aunque sopla y santigua, refleja todavía de una cierta vinculación a su yo español), camina desnudo al igual que los demás, comen lo que les dan... El sujeto ya no se ve parte de un grupo, ya no es colono, pues ese objetivo quedó lejos, pero tampoco es indígena. Se adapta para sobrevivir, pero tiene claro su nuevo objetivo: llegar a tierra cristiana, por lo que ya no hay un "nosotros" colono, pero tampoco un "nosotros" indígena. Se produce aquí la exaltación del individuo, la aparición del "yo" puro.

La última etapa comienza con la marcha hacia tierras cristianas y su entrada en ellas. Algunos de los compañeros de Cabeza de Vaca habían alcanzado tal grado de pertenencia al grupo indígena (para ellos ya había un nosotros) que no querían marcharse, poniendo excusas para retrasarlo. Cabeza de Vaca, en cambio seguía queriendo volver, aunque en la entrada en las tierras se da una posible identificación del sujeto con el grupo indígena: habla de "nosotros", los indígenas. Rechaza el trato de los cristianos colonos con los indígenas, llegando a criticarlos. Rechaza su hipotética pertenencia a ellos, se ve como un completo opuesto: la comida, vestimenta, incluso el pensamiento. Sin embargo, vuelve con ellos dejando a los indígenas. Esto nos deja con la duda: ¿llega a pertenecer al "nosotros" indígena? En un principio parece que sí, pero tras su marcha queda en el aire.

La identidad del sujeto y su percepción del indígena sufren un gran cambio a lo largo del relato: de español a escéptico, de escéptico a individuo, y de individuo... ¿a indígena? Yo concluiría afirmando que Cabeza de Vaca acaba rechazando cualquier pertenencia a un colectivo. Ha llegado a sentir a los indígenas como sus iguales, incluso habla de un "nosotros", pero ha sido una equiparación un tanto forzada por las circunstancias. Cabeza de Vaca se transforma y acaba siendo un "yo", la necesidad de supervivencia le empuja a integrarse en el grupo indígena pero su condición como español sigue ahí escondida. No quiere identificarse ni con unos ni con otros, por lo que termina como individuo a secas.

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