

Why Teach Interdisciplinary Curriculum?

Wesley Null

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Let me say how pleased I am to be able to share some ideas with you this evening. These dinners, however short they may be, provide us with a very important way to build community in the Honors College. The Honors College is one of the main reasons I came to Baylor (and remain at Baylor), so I try to contribute to the future of the College in any way that I can.

I come to this talk as someone who is part educational historian and part curriculum philosopher. What does that mean, you might ask? Well, my work is by definition interdisciplinary. I spend a great deal of time with the history of education (I edit a journal published by a group called the *Organization of Educational Historians*), but I've never been satisfied with only describing the past or only trying to understand what happened during a period in history. I study history because I see it as a body of knowledge that can and should inform our deliberations as we decide what to do. At the same time, I've read philosophy since I was an undergraduate—especially ancients like Plato and Aristotle and Christians like Augustine and Aquinas—but I would not be satisfied as, for example, an analytic philosopher whose role is to clarify terms or analyze arguments. I've always been drawn to *action* in the social world, but action always informed by history and philosophy. To use Plato's famous metaphor, for some reason I've

always been heavily influenced by his insistence that we have the responsibility to descend *back into the cave* and serve as a liberating force for others.

On that note, I recently ran across a quotation that I want to share at the outset. I think it sets the tone for what I want to do with the fifteen or twenty minutes that I have. It does, however, come with a story.

I'm originally from New Mexico. I grew up in a place called Artesia, a tiny little oil town in the southeastern part of the state that's about halfway between the UFOs in Roswell and the caverns in Carlsbad. Both of my parents taught in the Artesia public schools for thirty-five years. My Dad is a Methodist pastor-turned-high-school English teacher, and my Mom taught first grade. When I was in eighth grade, I had a biology teacher who got me hooked on fly-fishing. New Mexico has beautiful mountains, and one of my favorite Saturday activities during high school was to drive the hour or so that it took to get to a small stream that I loved to fish in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Now fly-fishing is a great sport. It requires tying flies to emulate what trout are eating. This is fascinating stuff. It's very different from the bass fishing that people do around here, where they use worms or spoons or dynamite or something. Were they Baylor students, let's just say bass would not be in the Honors Program, whereas trout—especially brown trout—would be. Well, I really got into this fly-fishing thing, even going so far as to start my own fly-tying business. One summer, I tied about 700 dozen flies and sold them to fly shops all over New Mexico and Colorado. I did this throughout high school during the summers, and, had I continued, I would probably be operating a fly-shop on some river in northern New Mexico or southern Colorado right now. Well, just about every Saturday for two or three years, I would

get up at 4:00 in the morning, drive to the river, and walk about a mile or so *so* that I could arrive as the sun came up. Arriving early is crucial so that you can “match the hatch”—as they say it—and fool the trout into eating your fly and not the live ones. Well, along the river, there were several small ponds and a few lakes that I loved to sneak up to as I was making my way to my favorite spot on the river. Now I don’t know about you, but there is something about a crystal clear lake early on a cool June morning in the Rocky Mountains that can’t be beat. On many of these mornings as I walked along the river, I would quietly make my way over to one of these ponds and peak my head over the reeds to see what I could find. I would often see fifty, seventy-five, or sometimes more than one hundred *ducks* quietly paddling their way around and foraging for food. Sooner or later, one duck would see me and start quacking, then another, and then another. I liked to catch trout, but I also liked to watch these ducks. Now if you’ve ever seen the following happen, you’ll understand the image. There’s always one duck that decides to stop quacking and *fly*. When that happens, it’s remarkable what follows. Words can’t describe how beautiful a morning like that can be.

Now, fast forward to about 8 weeks ago. I was reading an essay by a British political philosopher named Michael Oakeshott. In the essay, titled “Learning and Teaching,” Oakeshott writes the following: “[T]he intellectual virtues may be imparted only by a teacher who really cares about them for their own sake and never stoops to the priggishness of mentioning them. Not the cry, but the rising of the wild duck inspires the flock to follow him in flight”.¹ Or, my preferred shortened version: Not the cry, but the rising of the wild duck inspires flight. What is

¹Michael Oakeshott, “Learning and Teaching,” in *The Voice of Liberal Learning: Michael Oakeshott on Education*, Timothy Fuller, ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 62.

Oakeshott doing with that sentence? Not what is he saying. What is he doing?! Perhaps he's challenging us to study and teach an integrated curriculum.

I want to make three brief points about why teaching a curriculum of this type matters, and then we'll see if you have questions. I want to argue that an integrated curriculum matters for at least three reasons: 1) It makes us more fully human, 2) it creates true—not false—professionals, and 3) it provides us with a path to our faith. As students, you can think “why *study* interdisciplinary curriculum” while I talk from the perspective of “why *teach* interdisciplinary curriculum.” The effect is the same. If anything holds together the four programs in the Honors College, it is the idea of interdisciplinary curriculum, so it seems to me that some reflection on why this type of study matters should be useful.

I. It makes us more fully human.

First, we should acknowledge that an interdisciplinary curriculum makes us more fully human. We flourish only in relation to one another, and a common curriculum is an essential force in building community. A common curriculum provides us with metaphors, stories, images, and heroes that serve as unifying elements that bind us together. For example, all of you should have a sense of what I'm referring to when I mention items like Plato's cave, the tripartite soul, the three types of friendship, the pear tree incident, Dido, eating our tables, the body of Christ, “I Have a Dream,” the virtue of practical wisdom, or the distinction between theoretical and practical reasoning. These are some of the common points of departure—what Don Hirsch calls cultural literacy—that help us to make sense of our lives together.

Another great benefit of humanistic study is that it provides us with *people* who focus on what holds knowledge together, not necessarily on the latest discoveries that may or may not last. When university faculties began to specialize into highly narrow fields during the early 20th century, we lost people whose role is to see the big picture of knowledge, curriculum, and college life. Studying an integrated curriculum provides us with the opportunity to make connections that we otherwise would not make. Beyond that, the Honors College provides you with *faculty role models* who of course have specialized fields, but who also have the courage and humility to step outside of their specialties to teach books and courses and ideas that they otherwise would never touch.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate this point is with an example of someone who serves as a role model for me: John Amos Comenius. I'm not exaggerating when I say that Comenius is arguably the most brilliant educational philosopher of all-time. He was a seventeenth century Moravian Bishop who gave us the first comprehensive vision of universal liberal education. His goal was to set forth a vision—and actually accomplish the task—of providing a high-quality liberal arts curriculum to all young people—regardless of race, religion, nationality, or economic class. Comenius's vision, notably enough, also included women, a *radical* view at the time. The scope of Comenius's work stretches from the education of infants all the way to adults. He wrote the first picture book for children. Called *Orbis Pictus*, Comenius's idea was that we could teach children Latin more effectively if we included drawings that illustrate the words we are trying to teach. With *Orbis Pictus*, Comenius invented children's picture books, something that I use every night in the Null home. Beyond that, Comenius was invited to serve as the first

president of Harvard, but he turned down the role because he didn't want to move to colonial America. America would be a very different place had Comenius accepted that position.

Outside the field of educational philosophy, however, very few people know Comenius today, partly because his work does not fit neatly into one of the modern-day technical categories that dominate university life. He was a theologian, philosopher, historian, curriculumist, and psychologist all at the same time. His books are part theology, part philosophy, part curriculum philosophy, part literature, part psychology, and even part educational administration. Modern universities have no idea what to do with someone like Comenius. He is first and foremost a human being. He is also a Christian. There are principles and a narrative that hold Comenius's work together, but unless we have scholars and future scholars like you who can see what Comenius is doing, people like him are forgotten. Without an integrated curriculum, the Comeniuses of the world get tossed into the dustbins of history.

Found in his masterpiece *The Great Didactic*, Comenius's argument for universal liberal education can be summed up in three points: 1) all of us are made in the image of God, 2) the part of us that is God-like is our ability to reason, and 3) we have the responsibility to make ourselves and others more Christ-like by strengthening the God-given ability to reason that we all share. Think about the inspiration here. His argument means my job is to make myself more God-like by training my ability to reason, and I contribute to the Great Commission by helping others to do the same. Faith working alongside reason is what enables us to overcome evil with love. Each of us has the tools to resist corruption, but we have to fend off the dark side of our

nature with the twofold light of reason and faith. Teachers are responsible for showing us how to make this happen—in their curriculum, character, and conduct.

To Comenius, all of us can reason, but our reason is also clouded by the Fall. Good teaching clears away the fog of fallenness so that the twofold light of reason and faith can illuminate our lives. As Comenius puts it, “The seeds of knowledge, of virtue, and of piety are . . . naturally implanted in us; but the *actual* knowledge, virtue, and piety themselves are not so given. These must be acquired by prayer, by education, and by action. He gave no bad definition who said that man was a ‘teachable animal’. And indeed it is only by a proper education that he can become a man.”² Don’t forget that “man” is a general term to Comenius here. He is by no means excluding the ladies.

Comenius’s views were consistently criticized by at least two main groups. One group thought his vision for educating everyone was naïve. Certain souls just can’t reason, argued these critics, so let’s not even try to develop reason where it never existed in the first place. A second group also thought Comenius was naïve, but for a different reason. They emphasized the fallenness of man to such an extent that they outright rejected Comenius’s view that mankind could be improved by curriculum and teaching.

Now Comenius had an answer to both of these groups. To the first, he responded with his lifelong argument that everyone—*everyone*—is made in the image of God. He understood that some people may reason more strongly than others, but that does not mean that reason is

²John Amos Comenius, *The Great Didactic*, M. W. Keatinge, ed. (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing), p. 52.

nonexistent in some people. Good teachers strengthen reason wherever they find it, regardless of how strong it may be.

To the second group, Comenius responded by pointing out that—in their overemphasis on fallenness—these critics rejected the entire point of education. If we can't make people better, then does it not follow that we should just stop trying to teach people anything at all? Perhaps we no longer need teachers and teaching? As Comenius puts the point, “[O]ur inner strength, some one will remark, has been weakened by the Fall. I reply, weakened, yes, but not extinguished. Even our bodily force, if it be in bad condition, can be restored to its natural vigour by walking, running, and other forms of exercise. . . . Shall not a man be easily taught those things to which nature—I will not say admits him or leads him—but rather *urges* and *impels* him?”³

Given the number of women we have in the Honors College, I thought the women here might appreciate Comenius' response to those who criticized his insistence that women should get the same kind of high-quality curriculum and teaching as the men. Comenius responded with the following, “No sufficient reason can be given why [women] should be excluded from the pursuit of knowledge. They also are formed in the image of God, and share in His grace and in the kingdom of the world to come. They are endowed with equal sharpness of mind and capacity for knowledge (often with more than the opposite sex), and they are able to attain the highest positions, since they have often been called by God Himself to rule over nations, to give sound advice to kings and princes, to the study of medicine and of other things which benefit the human

³Ibid., 85.

race, even to the office of prophesying and of inveighing against priests and bishops. Why, therefore, should we admit them to the alphabet, and afterwards drive them away from books? Do we fear them?”⁴

Comenius omitted nobody from his vision—and *plan*—for universal liberal education, and, after more than three centuries, we remain a very long way from realizing his expectations. If an integrated curriculum can make us more like Comenius, we will indeed become more fully human.

II. It creates true—not false—professionals.

Let me move on to a second reason why an interdisciplinary curriculum is so crucial at this time. It creates true—not false—professionals. We are at a watershed moment in history. The notion of professionalism is changing. I had a student work with me on her thesis last year. Her name is Roselynn Nguyen. She’s now a first year medical student at UT-Southwestern in Dallas. I originally had Roselynn in a Great Texts 2301 course, and we became close friends and remained in touch throughout her time as an undergraduate.

Since half of my home at Baylor is in a professional school, I sometimes talk about professionalism in my courses not just because I think it’s an important idea, but also because I’m interested in the assumptions people bring to the concept. Well, to make a long story short, Roselynn came to me and said that she, too, was interested in professionalism. She is driven to become a physician by her faith, but she told me she wasn’t sure how she would be able to

⁴Ibid., pp. 67-68.

maintain her Catholic identity while entering the medical profession. I suggested to Roselynn that my sense is that professionalism has changed (and was changing) and that she might benefit from tracing its evolution during the twentieth century. Roselynn liked the idea and wrote a fine thesis, the title of which became: “From the Unity of Truth to Technique and Back Again: The Decline and Resurrection of Professionalism in Teaching and Medicine”. I was interested in teaching, she was interested in medicine, and so we merged our interests and she looked at both. Roselynn tells the story of how the concept of the “Unity of Truth” once served as the foundation for true professionalism, yet during the middle part of the twentieth century, Unity was replaced by professionals as *technicians* whose role is to implement someone else’s expertise. Roselynn’s thesis, however, ends on a hopeful note, as her title suggests. She describes how, during the *late* twentieth century, technical professionalism began to break down, and professions across the board began to return to the earlier conception of professionalism rooted in the Unity of Truth.

I think Roselynn got this story right, and it matters to all of you regardless of the profession you plan to enter. Let me give you a concrete example of where I have seen this recently. Just last weekend, I was on a panel at a conference in Chicago. There were eight of us representing universities from across the country. We had someone from UCLA, Stanford, USC, the University of Michigan, the University of Colorado, Boston College, and a former provost from the University of Maryland in College Park, who is now at the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The subject of the panel was the future of the teaching profession and the role of universities in the education of teachers. *To a person*, the consensus was that the technical view of professionalism is dead. It is bankrupt. It has no future. The idea of radically separating specialized disciplines into one college on one part of campus and then setting up technically-

oriented professional schools on another part of campus will not serve our society in the decades ahead. Both types of schools suffer from the separation. The panel concluded that we must return to our roots if we expect to have a strong profession.

In the face of this, I of course offered Comenius and a few others who have built upon his views. The problem that many of these institutions face when trying to revive an earlier view of professionalism, however, is that they don't have the resources that a place like Baylor should have. Baylor's integrated curriculum should provide you with the resources—meaning the knowledge, the traditions, and the virtues—that you will need to resuscitate professionalism across the board. Literature, philosophy, history, theology, politics, and ethics all have a great deal to offer twenty-first century professionalism. We have to set dynamite to the dam that has separated them for too long. We need Lawyers who pursue justice as an ideal and who don't lose their idealism as they travel the Byzantine path of modern law. We need Physicians who treat *human beings*, not just body parts. We need physicians who are as concerned about patient's names—even their souls—as they are concerned about chemical imbalances in their brains. We need Teachers who are both liberally educated and professionally trained. This means teachers who have the skill to incite the interests of diverse groups of students, but who don't stop with that and instead lead students to a rich curriculum that opens up new possibilities. We need professional scientists who doggedly pursue the latest line of laboratory research, but who are also capable of placing their research within a larger context, one that explains to ordinary citizens why their science matters and the *end* toward which they do what they do. Business, medicine, politics, law, engineering, teaching, and many other professions must change if they are to flourish. The complexity of the problems that professionals face cannot be

addressed if we only draw upon the empirically based, technical view of professionalism that dominated the last century. Due to forces like immigration, religious pluralism, demographic shifts, and cultural fragmentation, professionals face problems that require sustained thought, skilled deliberation, and high levels of social awareness.

Don't just listen to me on this point. Take a look at the work of William Sullivan, a philosopher who works with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Sullivan wrote a book called *Work and Integrity: The Crisis and Promise of Professionalism in America*, in which he argues these same points. He writes, "We need a new professionalism adequate to the changed circumstances of American life. The first step toward this reinvention of professionalism requires that professionalism be understood as a public good, a social value, and not the ideology of some special interest . . . The professions will not fulfill their promise, nor will the positive qualities of professional work reach more persons, unless professionals can reconceive their roles within enhanced civic interaction."⁵

Sullivan is on the right path, but what he doesn't address is what happened to the art of deliberation and its connection to true professionalism. Deliberation, or the art of making wise judgments about what should be done in individual cases, was once the hallmark of professional practice. In the era of the Unity of Truth, as professionals deliberated, they took into account lots of information and sources of evidence as they consulted widely, but they ultimately had to *take action* within a unique context. Any one piece of evidence did not tell professionals what to do. Put another way, research informed practical judgments, but it did not control them.

⁵William M. Sullivan, *Work and Integrity: The Crisis and Promise of Professionalism in America* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), pp. 124, 150.

About one third of the way through the twentieth century, however, a new entity called “research” began to attempt to tell professional practitioners what to do *in all cases*. A major consequence of this transformation was that the art of deliberation was abandoned. We witnessed the erosion of deliberation due to the encroachment of empirical science in an arena where it is ill-suited—by itself—to the task at hand. Any true professional knows that every case is different. That doesn’t mean that we do not learn from the practice of others, as well as from research. Of course we do. Research, however, must be kept in its place when the goal is *action* within a practical context. As a former professor of education and biology at the University of Chicago put this point, “Don't burn the social science scholars. But don't believe them without a large grain of salt. And if you must use them, consult widely and apply the eclectic arts.”⁶

Here’s how this situation plays out in my world. I’ll be at a conference or in a meeting and someone will come along and begin an argument with something like the following: “Research says that we must . . .” or “Research has proven that we must do such and such . . .”. If anyone ever begins a sentence in this way, I suggest you run the other way as soon as possible. These people are up to something. They are shutting down deliberation instead of opening it up. Here’s the point: Research does not speak. Research does not make arguments. A body of research does nothing. A book or monograph is an inanimate object. *Researchers* produce studies. *Researchers* make arguments. *Researchers* try to do something with their scholarship. Sometimes they are right, and sometimes they are not. Research of course informs true professionals, but it does not control them.

⁶Joseph Schwab, “The Social Sciences,” *The Center Magazine* 13 (July/August 1980): 41.

All of this matters because the Unity of Truth ideal of professionalism that Roselynn uncovered—and that I think is essential to our future—cannot revive our professions unless we have students like you who study an integrated curriculum. Twenty-first century professionals will need to draw upon *all* of the disciplinary fields to tackle the problems we face. There is no such thing as a one-discipline problem. Pick a field from medicine to investment banking to engineering to teaching. Every single one faces problems that are moral and intellectual at the same time. Technical professionalism will not get the job done, and all of us will suffer if it dominates in the years ahead.

Without public support and a sound philosophy at its foundation, any profession will die. And public support cannot be generated unless a profession has leaders who think broadly *and* in social terms. Our task—indeed your task—is to re-envision professionalism as a moral practice, not just a technical skill. As Roselynn put this point in the conclusion to her thesis, “When professionals learn how to teach what they know, they help to support, guide, and nurture individual students who have unique backgrounds, narratives, and futures. These efforts of individual teachers and physicians extend beyond individual classrooms or clinics to enlarge, empower, and sustain the domain of the communities that these professionals serve. In the course of assisting students and patients, professionals thus serve the ideals of true professionalism. In this respect, true professionals ultimately act to serve the interests of society as a whole, and above all else, the God to whom we profess our faith.”⁷

⁷Roselynn Nguyen, “From the Unity of Truth to Technique and Back Again: The Decline and Resurrection of Professionalism in Teaching and Medicine,” B.A. Honors Thesis, Baylor University, 2008, p. 56.

III. It provides us with a path to our faith.

For the final reason we should teach an integrated curriculum, I want to suggest that integration opens up a path to our faith. Unlike a specialized modern discipline like history or mathematics or biology, curriculum is by definition a teleological term. Curriculum comes from the root Latin verb *currere*, which means to run a race. And nobody runs a race just for the heck of it. We run a race to finish it. There is a finish line, a final cause. The task of curriculum theory is to give balance and a sense of relationship to all of the factors—or what we might call commonplaces—that are necessary to achieving the end an educational program seeks to attain. When a group of people deliberate about curriculum, they are forced to think about the goal they we want to achieve. No curriculum can include everything, so we must make judgments based on institutional goals and priorities. To do so, we need a narrative that holds the curriculum together. At this point, a path to our faith opens up quite nicely.

A good example of this can be found in the BIC program. When a team of seven or eight faculty members sits down to plan a course, the team instantly faces the challenge of purpose. From the perspective of their various disciplines, faculty have to come to agreement on what holds the curriculum together. Without the attempt to teach an integrated curriculum, however, we never raise this question of purpose. We can of course choose a lesser narrative than faith as the thread that holds a course together, but the result will be dissatisfaction and the unity of the course will eventually dissolve.

Think for a moment about scripture. The Bible includes books of law, history, poetry, literature, prophesy, and of course theology. Scripture is at basis interdisciplinary. Focusing only on, for

example, the book of Exodus without taking into account Job would give us an incomplete view of the Old Testament. Or, reading the Gospels and forgetting about the book of Galatians or the book of James would be to miss the broad range of knowledge that scripture offers. What, after all, is the New Testament if it's not an interdisciplinary curriculum—indeed a path—to liberation and truth?

In the late nineteenth century, however, as leaders in American higher education rejected faith, they also stopped searching for the Unity of Truth. Not often recognized, they rejected an integrated curriculum as well. They bought into the idea that to be educated was to know more and more about one narrow field and less and less about the truth that holds it all together. To use a metaphor, the ideal of an educated person became someone who knows everything there is to know about one specific vein in one leaf on one kind of tree, but who knows nothing about the tree as a whole or the forest in which it exists.

Fast-forward a century and we can see the consequences of this trend. We have amassed a great deal of information, but we're not sure what to do with it. Too many of our institutions are without purpose and direction. To push this metaphor a bit further, it's important to recognize that when we're talking about curriculum, our goal is *not just to understand the tree*, but to *do something with it*. Should we prune it or leave it alone? Does it need more water or less? Should we fertilize it or should we not? If so, with what, how much, and how often? Should it be transplanted? Or, should we just chop the tree down altogether?

Conclusion

Let me finish with a couple of stories that I think illustrate the challenges and the tremendous possibilities that exist for Baylor students and faculty. During my remarks last weekend at the conference I mentioned, I made a point and got a response that perhaps will interest you. In fact, I could use your help in deciding what to do.

In the conclusion of my talk, here's what I said:

“By taking the steps I've outlined, we can—with discipline and work—revive the teaching profession. We will not, however, produce Utopia. We live, after all, in a fallen world, and we have to work within that fallen world. We can improve ourselves somewhat, but if we promise Utopia, we will once again be setting thousands of people up for failure. Let's not do that again this time around.”

The teaching profession has a long history of people who promise Utopia, become popular, but then quickly slink away when human nature catches up with them.

Well, after the session was over, I had a man come up to me and say the following: “You know, I agree with you about not creating Utopia, but, given the audience we have here, I have a suggestion. I don't think you should use the word Fallen. Given the radical secularists in the audience, people will take your point the wrong way, and you'll end up turning people away instead of convincing them to listen to you. Use a word like incomplete or imperfect or say ‘not fully developed,’ but don't say fallen.” That's what he said. I'm still trying to figure out if he's

right. I got the sense that he was a fellow believer who was trying to be helpful, but I'm not sure he's right.

So here's my dilemma. I'm trying to consult widely here. Is the guy right that I should change my language so that I could perhaps connect with my audience better? Or, should I ignore him and continue to use the language of fallenness? Or, should I do something in between? If so, what is it? I'll be making a trip to Tennessee in a few weeks to give a similar talk, and I have to decide between now and then what to do.

To finish up, I want to draw upon one of my favorite films. I have only recently—in the last two or three years—begun to use film clips in my courses. I've found it to be quite helpful. I guess the idea of using films has sort of seeped into the Honors College milieu. I think it has something to do with our Dean.

Has anyone seen *Shawshank Redemption*? I think it's a great film, even a classic. I like it *right now* because we live in dark times, and if we're not careful, we can lose hope. As I see it, the reality is that we have no choice but to rebuild western civilization from the ground up. Not much of a task really, so long as we take it one day at a time, right? I wish this weren't the case, but such is our lot at the beginning of the 21st century. The good news is that the integrated curriculum in Baylor's Honors College provides us with the cultural tools to get the job done.

For those of you who haven't seen *Shawshank Redemption*, the film is about a guy named Andy (played by Tim Robbins) who has been wrongly imprisoned for murder. He didn't do it, but of

course everyone in prison claims to be innocent. Well, as an inmate, Andy does great things for his fellow prisoners. He creates a library, he helps prisoners earn their GED degrees, and he even finds a way to blast Mozart into the courtyard one afternoon. All the while Andy is in prison, he's planning his escape. He devises a way to dig a hole through his cell wall and collect all of the materials he needs for his escape.

Well, one day, Andy is sitting down eating lunch with his fellow prisoners. He's just returned from spending two weeks "in the hole"—or solitary confinement—for the stunt he pulled to play Mozart for all the prisoners. Andy's talking primarily to Red (played by Morgan Freeman), but six or seven other prisoners are sitting there eating and listening. The film uses an internal vs. external distinction that I have found most helpful when I teach books that do the same.

Unbeknownst to Red, Andy knows that he'll escape soon enough. He's been planning the escape for years, and he will soon be separated from his friend Red. But Andy wants to continue to help Red *on the inside* even while he's on *the outside*. The subject of the conversation is music. Andy's trying to explain its power, but no one seems to understand. Here's the conversation:

Red says:

Played a mean harmonica as a younger man. Lost interest in it, though. Didn't make much sense on the inside.

Andy says:

Here's where it makes the most sense. We need it so we don't forget.

Red says:

Forget?

Andy:

Forget that there are places in the world not carved out of gray stone. That there's something inside that they can't get to, that they can't touch. It's *yours*.

Red:

What are you talking about?

Andy:

Hope

Red:

Hope? Let me tell you something, my friend. Hope is a dangerous thing. Hope can drive a man insane. It's got no use on the inside. You better get used to that idea.

Then, at the end of the film, after Andy has escaped, Red finally earns parole. He's having a hard time rebuilding his life after 50 years in prison. He did, however, make a promise to Andy that he would travel to the middle of a Maine hay field to find something that Andy has left for him. Andy is now in Mexico, living on the beach. Red makes the trip to Maine and discovers a box buried under a big oak tree. When he opens the box, Red finds this letter:

Andy writes:

Dear Red.

If you're reading this,

you've gotten out. And if you've

come this far, maybe you're willing

to come a little further. You

remember the name of the town,

don't you? I could use a good man
to help me get my project on
wheels. I'll keep an eye out for
you and the chessboard ready.

Remember, Red. Hope is a good
thing, maybe the best of things,
and no good thing ever dies.

I will be hoping that this letter finds
you, and finds you well.

Your friend,
Andy.

In the last scene of the film, Red, after having finally listened to Andy, is riding along on a bus, staring out the window, going to meet his friend Andy on the coast. He says he has broken the law for only the second time in his life, but the authorities probably won't be too concerned about an old man like him. The narrator is speaking, telling us Red's thoughts, as he stares at the window and rides along. He says:

“I find I'm so excited, I can barely sit still or hold a thought in my head. I think it's the excitement only a free man can feel, a free man at the start of a long journey whose conclusion is uncertain. I hope I can make it across the border. I hope to see my friend, and shake his hand. I hope the Pacific is as blue as it has been in my dreams. I hope.”

We teach and study an integrated curriculum because it makes us more fully human, it creates true professionals, and it provides us with a path to our faith—and indeed a path to hope. This is not something you will achieve this semester or next year or by the time you graduate. It is a challenge that you should take with you from the Honors College and carry for many years to come. In fifty or sixty years, we will haul you up on stage at Baylor as an outstanding alumnus and say well done. If there is one aspect of our integrated curriculum that *I* want you to take, I think it's best summed up, once again, by Michael Oakeshott: Not the cry but the rising of the wild duck inspires flight.

Thanks.