

TOPICS: SECOND PAPER

Once again, what follows is a list of suggested topics meant to start you thinking about the reading so far. And once again, I remind you that starting points are not destinations, but that your final draft should have some discernable connection with one of the items on the list. In thinking over these suggestions, you may happen upon a topic that addresses only part of what is suggested. Good. The more local and confined the topic, the tighter will be your argument. Papers should be at least seven pages (figure 350 words/page) in length. You should consider what you write to be advocacy for a point of view. You must be adept at catching and delineating the point of view of the text(s) about which you write, but it is important to remember that you are at liberty to challenge that point of view, if you think it important to do so. (What! Challenge Conrad? Swift? Ibsen? Absolutely. Any narrative fiction has designs upon the reader which the reader is entitled to resist. The mode of resistance here is lucid exposition and careful argument.)

Papers should deal largely (although not necessarily exclusively) with materials encountered in the syllabus from the unit marked "Stewardship" onwards. And once again, each paper should be headed by a brief abstract of the position taken within it.

One last word: By mistake some questions about Milton Friedman were included in the list of suggested topics for the mid-term paper, and a few students wrote on them. These questions make an appearance now in their proper place below. If you have already written on Milton Friedman, you are enjoined not to write about him again - except, perhaps, as a minor figure in your argument about some other topic.

The first topic repeats the opening suggestion of the first assignment: Discuss any reading encountered in the syllabus from the unit on "Stewardship" to the end of the term in connection with an episode from your own career and draw some conclusions about each.

Machiavelli implied a kind of hard-and-fast opposition between a chief executive and those under his authority, who must be manipulated by gullibility and greed. The old lord's discourse in "Sorrow-Acre" also implies a hard-and-fast opposition between executive power and those under its authority, but here it is of a somewhat different kind. Elucidate the difference. The old lord's maxim bears upon this context: power is the only virtue. What does he mean by this? This remark is connected to a discussion of the Greek gods, who have no one to blame for "the woe of the universe" except themselves; when it comes to deities, the uncle prefers them to the Danish gods, who are good and who can blame their evil adversaries for "the woe of the universe". What is the point of this connection? Does the manner in which the story is told uphold or deny the old lord's judgment? To gain the advantage of NAFTA, there had to be serious job loss - the improvement was held to be worth the cost in terms of the human pain of reduced income, diminished family opportunities, and necessary relocation of labor. Those who decided to pay this cost did not have to pay it themselves. How about the five to six per cent unemployment (amounting to twelve to thirteen million people - more than the entire population of New York City) that is generally held to be a number that can be tolerated in order to allow efficiency of productive costs in a free market? Is this what is meant by administering the woe of the universe?

In "Sorrow-Acre" a barn has been burnt down; this is a serious offense in a culture of scarcity and it is evident that someone must pay. *Someone must pay* - Dr Rank, in Ibsen's *A Doll's House* makes much the same observation. An ethical principle? Bill Walker would say, "Yes" - he does not want to be forgiven, he wants to pay. Comment.

The old lord has a problem in executive management. How would you describe it? What prompts him not to take a decision but to empower a subordinate to make one? Why is he unwilling to act upon his beliefs or his sympathies? How good a manager is the Old lord in respect of dealing with a crisis of

decision? Where Adam (the innocent) sees cruelty, the old lord implies respect. Compare the old lord's sense of his responsibilities with Milton Friedman's sense of fiduciary management. Compare the old lord's view of his responsibilities with that of EPA Chairman William Ruckelshaus in the article "Tacoma". What would Milton Friedman say of Ruckelshaus?

One way of looking at the old lord's action is to see it as passing the buck—a failure of decisiveness and accountability. Interestingly, the class (in part) adopted this view in the case of the old lord, but (again in part) the class did not see Archbold's wish to hand Leggatt over to the judgement of the law on land as passing the buck. Compare the two cases. At least part of the adverse view of the old lord is founded on a sense that the risk imposed on Anne-Marie is disproportionate to the risk (if any) that would be incurred by the old lord if he simply instructed the judge to free the boy on grounds of insufficient evidence. What answer can be made to a proponent of this view? Adam, of course, takes the view that the old lord is failing himself and his responsibilities by making the wager with Anne-Marie. In part, Adam's view is determined by his opinion of the folk for whom the old lord is responsible. What is this view?

Compare the old lord in "Sorrow-Acre" with Creon in *Antigone*, explicate the dilemma that each finds himself in, and elucidate the rightness or wrongness of their exercise of authority *as the text seems to approve or condemn it*. Your own judgments upon them may follow, but first try to expose the view that the text seems to be taking of them. (You can then agree or disagree with the texts, but you don't have to judge the characters directly—they are not historical figures, just parts of a fiction.) In this context, we may recall that Creon is often charged by readers with being "stubborn" in not rescinding his edict. In contrast, the old lord explains to Adam why he cannot take back his word, even if it was offered in caprice, as a piece of whimsy. Why will the old lord not take back his word? We may also recall here the view of Orwell, that those in executive authority must look decisive and do definite things - but Orwell presents this as a loss of power, a surrender to those under one's authority, whereas the old lord presents it as necessary to the exercise of power. Comment on the difference.

The bailiff in Dinesen's "Sorrow-Acre" observes that if everyone worked as hard as Anne-Marie, the estate might actually show a profit. (The implication is that it doesn't.) The old lord replies in such a way as to suggest that profit is not the justification of the estate's existence. How about corporations? In Milton Friedman's view, management has a fiduciary duty to honor the message stamped on every dollar of investment—within the limits of law, to make a profit on it as rapidly as possible. Does every dollar bear this message? Is the message clear or ambiguous? How rapid is "rapid"? Is the investor's money interested in long-range or short-range profit? How much of the future of the corporation is the money concerned about? Does the money have any stake in the company's survival beyond the next quarter? How can management tell?

At the same time, we might put these questions in the name of management itself. "Sorrow-Acre" is concerned with perpetuating the present order of things and in distributing the sacrifices required to help in ensuring that perpetuation. Does management have any responsibility for the long-term survival of the organization? Is it possible, quite apart from the immediate interests of stakeholders (labor-force, management, suppliers, clients, local and wider community), that the organization of a particular corporation, with its distribution of resources and responsibilities and its particular core competences represents an *achievement* - something worth perpetuating? In an earlier period of corporate takeovers (leading to downsizing and bust-ups of managerial structures, selling-off of plant and hard capital, which was immediately worth more than the next five year's estimated profits), James Bere (CEO, Borge-Warner) said, "It's wrong to play financial games with long-established companies, but when the Street talks, we must listen." Commenting on Bere's opinion, Robert Mercer (CEO, Goodyear Tire) argued that there was more to a company than shareholder price, capital assets and the pension fund; there was also the company's values.

Milton Friedman - you might have guessed it - approved of these cannibalizations (by the likes of T. Boone Pickens and Sir James Goldsmith); he thought that if assets were worth more than the

accumulation of five year's profits it should be sold, to let the efficiency of the market do its job; and those, like Mercer, who argued against such "corporate raiding" were trying only to defend their cushy salaries. Try explaining what Mercer might have meant in the light of the old lord's views. Does the fact that the story takes place in a world whose values were shortly to be extinguished forever (Adam represents the modern world that displaced it) make a difference in judging the old lord's position?

Like Undershaft, Milton Friedman believes that the businessman must put his mouth where his money is; he might take as his motto Undershaft's "Aunashamed". Shaw deals in paradoxes, and in this connection, Friedman, too, offers a paradox: it is more than hypocritical, it is positively unethical to give ethical reasons for business activities that earn a profit. Comment in any way on this subsuming of ethical responsibilities under the rubric of the profit-motive. What is the difference between saying "It's profitable to be ethical" and "It is ethical to be profitable"? Explicate as generously as possible Friedman's position, then attack or defend it. Would Undershaft approve of Friedman's essay? How does Friedman's position compare with Albert Carr's view in the essay on "Bluffing"?

Andrew Undershaft is an unusual figure in a number of respects. Here is one of them: he and Lazarus do not think of themselves as chairmen or CEO's but as owners. They do not run a corporation but a company, a business, and are not presented as mindful of fiduciary interests. Milton Friedman, in contrast, is deeply involved in the notion of fiduciary interests--it is what he regards (although he doesn't use the word) as "stewardship", i.e., care of other people's money. It follows that a modern corporate executive has an advantage not possessed by the owners of companies in Andrew Carnegie's day: they can say that they are in business to make profit (quite different from salary, which is what they are paid) and use the phrase to express a sense of duty.

Friedman, in an interview that we reproduced in the Coursepack, argued that the liability of business practices for risking harm (e.g., direct harm to individuals, harm to their environment) ought not to be determined by executive decision, which would either outlaw the practice altogether or set a level of indemnity should the harm be realized. Rather, matters ought to be left to the market, which will establish "an acceptable level of risk". Explain the issue as Friedman sees it and defend or quarrel with his conclusions.

In this connection, consider the case of a worker accepting a job with a high risk of danger (to health, to life or limb), because it carries a higher wage than a job with similar duties without such risk. How does the case of this worker compare with that of Anne-Marie, in "Sorrow-Acre", who willingly undertook a risk because of the benefit that it would yield? How does the Old lord compare with the companies that offer such jobs or with the stockholders who invest in them? If the old lord was wrong, in your view, and should be debarred from making his offer to Anne-Marie, does it follow that companies are wrong in offering employment at risk, no matter how strong the market-demand for their product, and should some executive authority debar them from making the offer?

Following up Milton Friedman's discussion of fiduciary responsibility, we described the fiduciary relationship as one in which the client cedes authority for making decisions to an agent, whose responsibilities are explicitly limited by specification. In consequence, the fiduciary agent is not authorized to promote the client's overall balance of interest but only those specified in the fiduciary terms of appointment. One issue that may follow upon such an arrangement arises when a number of the client's interests conflict and the fiduciary agent thinks himself or herself obliged to violate the client's overall balance of interests in order to pursue honorably the narrow range of interests that define his or her appointment. (We mentioned in class the doctor's responsibility for the health of the patient, which may require deception; there are more severe medical examples to be found, e.g., when a doctor insists upon preserving the life of a patient in defiance of a patient's well-attested wish for speedy extinction in a case of painful and terminal illness.)

Fiduciary responsibility comes down to this: in exchange for the agent's expert management, the client surrenders *pro tem* his or her right to adjudicate the weighting of the certain interests against his or

her other interests over-all. The fiduciary agent will pursue these interests single-mindedly, and the client gives the agent a free hand in doing so (unless, of course, the fiduciary contract specifies certain other interests that are to be consulted, as is the case with so-called “green investment” policies). Discuss this sort of issue in connection with any reading encountered during the latter part of the semester.

Again, in connection with the fiduciary client’s interests overall, Friedman believes that these lie outside the fiduciary agent’s concern, if for no reason other than that in a free society, the client’s overall interests are his or hers to manage. The fiduciary agent may know more about law or medicine or business - superior knowledge in some local area of interest is the reason for the client’s delegating the power of decision to the agent - but one’s overall interests cannot be determined by anyone but oneself. (This is the point of Friedman’s insistence that “one man’s good is another man’s evil--a point anticipated by Cusins in *Major Barbara*.) Comment in connection with any text or texts read during the second part of the term.

Discuss either “The Machine Stops” or “Corporate Virtual Workspace” in the light of an analogy to the conditions of work in modern corporations and comment on the value or disvalue of those conditions. The world in *The Machine Stops* has rejected intimacy and bodily expressiveness in communication; the world in CVW presumably captures such things, but shows them entirely satisfied by virtual experiences of diagrams, charts and business presentations. Comment.

How is a system like a machine? MIT’s own Peter Senge (in a book entitled *The Fifth Discipline*) talks of systems having a mind of their own. Can you give an instance from your own experience of the resistance of a system to important change? The air-ship service is kept up although few use it “because it was easier to keep it up than to stop it . . .” The attendant on the air-ship was horrified that light came through the blind but “could do nothing” because “it was not her place to mend the blind.” Are these hallmarks of living within a system? Adam Smith affirmed that machines were physical models of systems and that systems were imaginary machines. In contrast, Peter Drucker (and many other management gurus) have hailed the advent of the “third industrial revolution”, in which the age of machinery gives way to the age of system.

Kuno says that people “worship” the Machine. Can a Machine be worshiped? The word “machine” comes from a Greek word meaning “means to an end”. Can you “worship” the means to an end, valuing them more than the end itself? In this connection, an observation by Shoshana Zuboff, in her book *The Age of the Smart Machine*, may be helpful. She writes that during the twentieth century “the objective character of industrial enterprise, the machine process”, to use a term coined by the sociologist Thorsten Veblen, had itself become a kind of transcendent object. Fulfilling its requirements was intrinsically right and good. Efficiency was invested with a moral power that implied social well-being, not just profits. For many managers, the naked functional requirements of the machine were all that was needed to justify their prerogatives.”

The people in Forster’s story, *The Machine Stops* value something that they call “ideas”. Do they mean by this word what we mean? How does this valuing of “ideas” relate to their “horror of direct experience”? In an essay on contemporary banking, a banker wrote:

“I spent years and years in what is now called venture capital’. My decisions and those of my colleagues were based on in-depth study of a company’s financial situation and prospects, but we also relied on the extensive interviews and site visits required to gather that information--on in-depth study of the characters of the managers and what you might call the corporate spirit of the group that wanted backing. In gathering information we got the feel of the other group as people. Nowadays, computers get the core information and construct projections. The bankers just see moving pie-charts; they must feel numbers and relate it to people.”

How would you describe the problem to which the banker is referring? Is it a problem whose existence requires the introduction of computer machinery and visual displays or does it antedate the information revolution?

The article on Corporate Virtual Workplace rules out the banker's difficulty simply by stipulating that it doesn't exist. Whatever the processes by which the story's imagined technology does the trick, virtual reality is "as good as" direct experience. Imagine Roger Boisjoly arguing against the Challenger launch in the world of Corporate Virtual Workplace. (Recall that his efforts during the final telecommunications conference relied on shuffling diagrams, charts, and illustrations.) Imagine as well that management had the same resources to communicate to each other the disaster for Morton-Thiokol, should the launch be cancelled and the contract currently under renegotiation not renewed. Do management and engineers live in different "virtual realities"? Would the outcome be different if both outcomes (launch disaster, financial disaster) had the graphic immediacy that the Pruitt and Barrett article proposes for all business presentations?

"Money", says J. R. Lucas, "carries information. It shows what people's actual priorities are." Does it? Lucas understands perfectly well that the system of money introduces a kind of isolation between people. (This is carried by his use of the terms "tu" and "vos". "Tu" is the form of "you" used in familiar address--the person to whom you are speaking or writing is intimately acquainted. "Vos" is the form of impersonal address--you know or invoke for the purposes of communication only so much of the person as is relevant to the context of the communication.) Money, says Lucas, is not "tu-istic", it is "vos-istic". That is, the system of money gets us to treat each other as standard types of people, depending upon income and consumer habits. (As Forster might say, "the Machine cannot communicate nuances of expression.") There is a reduction of our experience of one another when we deal with each other through the medium of money, but this is not harmful and has benefits to bestow. Comment in the light of any other text read this term.

The trouble with case-studies is that they raise issues that could be resolved by access to more information but they do not provide the access in question. In the Challenger case, we can only guess what Roger Boisjoly did and failed to do when he was denied a variety of research priorities in pursuing his hunch about the relevance of temperature to risk of sealing-joint failure. We must also guess about his response to Morton-Thiokol's view (not covered in the case-study at hand) that the problem of blow-by was a seating problem, not a sealing problem as he suspected, and that new procedures had been developed which resolved the issue. We know that he did not challenge management until after the disaster, at a time when the source of the blow-by difficulty was bound to become known as a result of Congressionally mandated inquiry, and that the effect of his challenge would not make a technical difference to the design of subsequent exploration vehicles but might well damage the lives and careers of many Morton-Thiokol employees. Establish as best you can a balanced view of Boisjoly's actions, taking account of management's position as fairly as possible.

"One is not always the best judge of one's overall or real' interests, but even so one is the only rightful judge, and no one else has the right to determine them." Plato would disagree with this idea, and moralists have always found exceptions, as in the case of children, perhaps, or of mental incompetents, or of people oppressed by the stress of immediate circumstance. Does the list extend to people who haven't sufficient technical knowledge or expertise to weight risks against proposed advantages? In the "Challenger" episode and the "Carter Racing Paradigm", hard evidence was wanting but those engineers closest to "hands-on" experience with materials had an intuition that a situation of inherently high risk was now unreasonably risky, whereas others (also engineers, but of higher authority) were aware of the risk of not proceeding as scheduled (a contract was being renegotiated). It has been suggested that the decision ought to have been referred to the astronauts or racing-car drivers--or that they should at least have a vote. Suppose that the astronauts/driver had simply observed that all flights/races are risky and agreed to proceed as scheduled. What weight should that bear in making an executive decision at this point? Anne-Marie (in "Sorrow-Acre") was willing to undertake the task proposed by the old lord. Does that absolve him of the consequences of his proposal to her?

The issue of real interests and fiduciary responsibility is raised in “The Uses of Force”. The young girl is “Everypatient”, unable to take in complicated explanations. She must not be lied to, coaxed or deceived into compliance - outright force is the preferable alternative, since she cannot understand enough of the situation to make a responsible judgment in her own behalf but she can understand what is wanted of her and the consequences if she does not comply. Does the story indicate that the girl’s sense of her interests has been respected? How badly has the doctor behaved? He says that no doubt it would have been better had he come back later (although this is uncertain) but he, too, was beyond detachment and disinterested reason now. Does this make him a worse doctor?

Alternatively: Compare “The Use of Force” with the *Antigone* in respect of the opposition between two characters. How similar are the two conflicts and the characters engaged in them? What values do the characters with authority (i.e. the doctor or Creon) represent? What values do the characters without authority (i.e. the little girl or Antigone) represent? How similar are the resolutions of the conflict? Perhaps you might consider comparing the doctor with the Grand Inquisitor. Both the doctor and the Inquisitor think of themselves as serving their client’s “real interests” but the one administers pain and respects his client, whereas the other administers happiness and has contempt for his client (the people).

Find an example of “shooting an elephant” either from your experience or from instances that you’ve read about and discuss it in the light of the story.

“Shooting an Elephant” is about saving face or preserving the image of authority before subordinates. The person in authority “wears a mask and his face grows to fit it. . . He has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things.” Whatever else, he can’t say, “I don’t know what I’m doing; I’m guessing my way through this.” Or even worse: “The best thing to do in the present crisis is to sit on our hands.” How essential is the image of decisiveness to effective authority? The example chosen - shooting an elephant, which is, among other things, a valuable piece of property - raises the question whether one can do a cost/benefit analysis of saving executive face. Would Orwell’s argument work as well (or the essay be as effective) if an animal easier to kill had been chosen as the target?

In many ways, the hero/narrator of Conrad’s “The Secret Sharer” must learn *not* to be driven by an image of authority derived from the expectations of subordinates. Is the image of authority extolled by that tale very different from the image that, in Orwell’s view, colonialism demands of its administrators? Was Rand Raskog shooting an elephant when he summarily fired a recently-appointed president of a subsidiary company in anticipation of a legal scandal that the president could not have time to avert?

The many in Orwell are mean, sneaky cowards - too weak to claim and exercise authority, they sneer at it in petty resistance. We may have our view of British colonialism, but let us for the moment take it for granted that colonialism was not a good thing but better at the time than any possible alternative (call this “the big picture”). Let us also suppose that the colonized are not capable of seeing the “big picture”, partly because they are blinded by immediate interests and partly because they do not have access to enough information. In this connection, compare the figure of Orwell, the colonial officer, with the doctor in “The Use of Force”, whose patient cannot see “the big picture”, either.

How would you describe the managerial weaknesses and strengths of the narrator’s promotion (and Leggatt’s) in “The Secret Sharer”? At the outset of the story, the hero/narrator (he has no name) is, for the first time in his life, in “a position of the fullest responsibility”. How should one understand that phrase in the context of the story? The narrator distinguishes himself from his crew in that they “had simply to be equal to their tasks” whereas he had to measure up to an ideal. Can this view of authority be justified? Do you believe that you hold a position for which mere competence is enough? Do you believe that there are others under your supervision for whom mere competence is enough? Where would you draw this line and what is the meaning of it? After all, the text immediately goes on to say that he wondered how far he “should turn out faithful to that ideal conception of one’s own personality *every* man sets up for himself secretly.” Is there a contradiction here? Further: does Leggatt represent an ideal

self? After all, he has killed someone under his command, a person whom he describes as one of the sort of “miserable devils who have no business to live at all.

The captain of the *Sephora*, whose name is Archbold, speaks of himself as “representing the Law” and wants to turn Leggatt over to the Law for judgment. The narrator does not think of himself as “representing the Law” and does not wish to turn Leggatt over to the authorities. He harbors a fugitive and in the end risks his ship and the lives of his crew in order to give Leggatt his best chance at reaching shore without drowning. This, he says, “was a matter of conscience.” Conscience, then, is above the Law? Comment.

Leggatt says that neither a parson (his father) nor a man in a wig and twelve tradesmen would be capable of judging his actions. The assumption is that only someone with similar responsibilities of office is capable of understanding his situation. The reader, however, is not a ship’s officer and is more than likely to be either someone in business (i.e., a tradesman) or else someone who would think that - personal insufficiencies to one side - a religious vocation ought to enable one to understand guilt and exoneration. What is implied by Leggatt’s claim? Why are we supposed to understand, as the narrator is expected to understand, what others are allegedly not capable of understanding? Is Leggatt seeking exoneration? Why does the narrator regard it as a weakness that he is at first unwilling to let Leggatt swim for shore since the swim and the subsequent marooning (if he survives the swim) will put Leggatt in peril of his life?

It was suggested in class that Leggatt was certainly guilty at the least of manslaughter. Does the text agree or disagree? Does it make a difference to one’s judgment of Leggatt? Taking Leggatt’s word as honest, read again *carefully* his account of setting the foresail. The text does something odd and effective here - it is Leggatt’s account but it is not entirely his point of view; at a crucial moment, he blanks out and becomes dependent for information on what others tell him. The crew has sprung into the rigging; the deck is submerged below them, and for ten minutes they can see nothing but the raging sea. At the end, all Leggatt can say is that “it was clear that I meant business”, as if in impartial observer was trying to puzzle out what Leggatt was up to. The appeal of this phrase is from one seaman to another; the narrator is supposed to understand without further explanation just how much intention was involved in what Leggatt did, and we - the honest tradesmen of the jury - are supposed to judge matters by his uptake.

Again, consider that a foresail is a small sail at the front of the ship, used to redress balance in close maneuvering and not usually unfurled at sea, that the storm had destroyed the other sails, and that a ship drawing as much water as this one (the text places emphasis upon this point) cannot be kept afloat in a storm without the capacity to steer and this requires wind-power. The ship is likely to founder even with this small sail and the sail is likely to be torn to pieces by the wind. In the light of these considerations, how dangerous was the crewman’s interference with the setting of the sail? Why was Archbold unwilling to set the sail and risk losing the ship’s last hope? Is hope worth saving when the alternative is certain destruction? What does Archbold’s unwillingness here say about his capacities as the person in a position “of fullest responsibility”? Do you accept the narrator’s judgment that Leggatt’s action (which included killing the seaman) saved the ship? Archbold is also unwilling to leave the door of Leggatt’s cabin unlocked, because the blame for Leggatt’s disappearance will be placed on his shoulders and this will put a black mark upon his otherwise unblemished record of service. Without thinking about what he is doing, the narrator in contrast hides Leggatt in his cabin overnight, and disclosing this fact next day will certainly place a black mark upon his record, as well. How are we to understand the narrator’s enduring collusion with Leggatt? Is Archbold the better man?

Leggatt kills one man while saving ship and crew. The narrator risks ship and crew to save one man. What can justify the narrator’s recklessness in bringing the ship into danger? It is important (although not decisive) to consider this question in the light of the fact that any such commercial voyage at the time was one of high risk, a piece of recklessness, one might say, comparable to going up in a spacecraft, and that the first duty of the captain was not to the lives of his crew but to the cargo. One

might say that the narrator has created a crisis on the ship in bringing it so close to an unknown shore. Is it ever managerial wisdom to create a crisis *gratuitously*?

We might say: "You can't learn to risk everything (to expend your last hope, in Archbold's case) except by risking everything." In a recent book entitled *Leading Change*, Professor John Kotter of the Harvard Business School argues that business leadership must recognize that crisis is not an extraordinary condition of business. To the contrary: faced with necessities of competition, business is *always* in crisis. Kotter goes on to observe that while top-level management understands this fact, the rest of management characteristically does not. It is therefore continually necessary for top management to create a sense of crisis that the rest of management *will* understand. "Create a crisis," he advises, by allowing a financial loss, exposing managers to major weaknesses vis-à-vis competitors, or allowing errors to blow up instead of being corrected at the last minute." Do you approve of this advice? Can middle-level management - heading up a team or department - be guided by it as well?

Examine any details of the narrative and show their relevance to the underlying theme of the story: e.g., the long opening paragraph of description, the import of the floating hat at the end, the sense of Leggatt that he is like Cain, the notion that Leggatt at the end is "a free man", the distinction that Leggatt draws between drowning himself (i.e., committing suicide deliberately) and just swimming into the imensity of the Gulf until he drops from exhaustion.

Here is a case-study related to the issue of one's responsibility to truth. We might title it "Circumventing the FDIC". The issues involved in the case bear some resemblance to the issues at work in Conrad's story. Discuss these issues, perhaps reflecting upon Conrad, perhaps upon some aspects of your own experience.

You are associate manager of a large intercity bank and part of your duties entails reviewing on a random basis the initial appointments of candidates for various subordinate positions and the quarterly assessments of the interviewers who recommend candidates for these appointments. One such case raises questions--the employment record of a candidate for a position of Associate Manager for Investments at a suburban branch of the bank. This position is just a cut above an entry-level position on the managerial tier. You note that according to his CV the candidate had held no job of any kind for the last year - the period since he had earned his MBA. Imagining that the candidate had suffered some kind of illness or family difficulty, you question the interviewer, who says that she anticipated the possibility of this issue arising and was prepared, if questioned, to disclose the following facts:

The interviewer had been particularly impressed with the candidate's maturity, verbal abilities, professional skills, and desire to obtain employment. Under questioning on the point at issue, however, he revealed to the interviewer that he had a prison record and that he had lost two jobs since obtaining his MBA because his employers had fired him once they learned this fact. Banks fall under the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12th U.S.C. 1829) and are prohibited from employing convicted criminals whose offenses involved dishonesty under Section 19. The interviewer had learned that the applicant's offense had occurred while a freshman in college and that his offense involved theft of a vehicle (the applicant had been only twenty at the time and while under the influence of alcohol had "borrowed" a car from a parking lot on a dare from drinking companions), driving to endanger, and assault upon an arresting police officer. The applicant claimed that he had not assaulted the officer but had knocked him with his elbow when the officer tried to turn the candidate around and "brace" him against the car he had been driving. The applicant was released from prison after twelve months and one day and since has had no further difficulties with the law. The interviewer had herself substantiated these facts with the applicant's former parole officer, in whose view the candidate had been-of course--thoroughly rehabilitated without qualification.

The candidate told the interviewer that after one year's imprisonment he had been readmitted to school on the strength of testimony from his parole officer, had graduated successfully, and by not volunteering the facts of his history had obtained employment and advanced through three junior positions in the investment division of his local bank. After seven years he obtained admission to a well-respected business school, where he received an MBA with highest honors, majoring in finance and banking investment. The applicant said that in his first job after graduation, at a bank in a distant city, he

had told a colleague the truth about his past and the colleague had gossiped about him quite generally. The facts quickly reached the attention of senior management and he was fired. He had subsequently attempted to obtain another job at a bank in the same city, explaining the recent gap in time as the result of illness, but a manager at his new position discovered the truth in the course of business with his old bank, where people were still gossiping about him. Since then he had moved to his present address, but he was now determined not to lie about his past, even though it was proving impossible to obtain a banking position of any kind. It was furthermore not easy to find any other sort of employment beyond general clerical work, for his MBA in banking and investment plus his initial seven years of employment seemed to make him "overqualified" for any substantial position with a good future other than those in his field of specialization.

Considering these facts, the interviewer concluded that the candidate's exclusion from employment was legal but unjust. She had already been involved in a case similar in kind. During the course of this involvement, she had learned that the FDIC would accept applications for exceptions to 12 U.S.C. 1829, but that the FDIC would not grant such a petition unless the bank's bonding company would approve hiring the candidate. The interviewer had encouraged the previous candidate to apply and had discovered that no bonding company will grant such an approval. Distressed by this "Catch-22" provision in the FDIC's rules for exceptions in her previous brush with the Act, the interviewer confessed that in the present case she had decided to turn a blind eye to the facts prohibiting employment. She knew, she said, that she might be risking her own job, but she believed that she had no other course of action.

What action would you take with regard to the application? What action would you take with regard to the interviewer's bi-annual review, which is currently resting in your in-tray?

According to Simone de Beauvoir, every group identifies itself as a group by positing an "Other", a typical or stereotyped representative of what is not a member of itself, and then identifies that "Otherness" with the characteristics of some actual group--ethnic minorities, let us say, or members of different races or cultures or adherents of different religious beliefs. Is it reasonable to think of women as both men and women sometimes think of alien populations or resident ethnic groups?

In this connection de Beauvoir argues that women are distinct among others because they have no distinctive history, no culture, no ethnic identity distinct from men. This issue touches the point of difference between de Beauvoir and some contemporary feminists, who insist that women do constitute a distinct culture or ethnic group which, like other such identities, deserves to be honored and celebrated. In a recent TV interview, a former President of Ireland (a woman) has argued that women have different dignities and think about human beings rather differently from men; they belong to a sub-culture whose ways are more humane, better suited to the grand projects of global peace and prosperity, than the ways of masculine culture. In contrast, her interviewer (a man) suggested that once in power, women behave and think just like men. What is your view and how would you support it?

De Beauvoir says that men think women have equality already, but only because men by-and-large ignore "the extreme importance of social discriminations which seem outwardly insignificant." The point that De Beauvoir is making here is the heart of her argument, although the fact may not be immediately evident. The whole point of the uniqueness of woman's "Otherness", when compared with the "Otherness" of African Americans, of Asians, of Jews, of Muslims - of oppressed minorities of all types and descriptions - is that the oppressed have had some form of independent ethnic existence, wherein they were a majority within some social or political unit; and so their social oppression can yield to political solutions because redress is a matter of legislating for them a proportionate or equal social or political space. But women (De Beauvoir makes a partial exception for what the translation calls "negroes", who are most closely allied to women in this respect) have no independent, historical ethnicity, and so the problem of their equality resists political solution. As economic progress inspires democratic institutions, minorities of all kinds, including women, are increasingly granted abstract political equality, and this produces a thoughtless sentiment in men that women, among others, are being treated equally. But in fact men and women are bound together by a web of relations too complex and too densely interwoven for politics to unravel. In consequence, what woman's liberation calls for, de Beauvoir believes, is a cultural revolution, not a political change. What stands in the way of genuine equality is that

men at present are ill-positioned to appreciate the realities of woman's oppression and women are ill-positioned to appreciate the possibilities of their freedom. Men and women must somehow reconceive their social identities and their gendered behavior vis-à-vis one another if equality is to become a lived reality.

Comment in any way that seems appropriate, drawing, perhaps, upon your business experience.

How accurately does de Beauvoir's analysis of the category of "the woman as Other" apply to the situation of Nora and Torvald in Ibsen's "A Doll's House". Is the relationship of Otherness reciprocal or one-sided - Nora is Torvald's Other but not vice-versa? When Ibsen was honored at a banquet given by the Norwegian League for Women's Rights, he made a surprising and provocative response in a speech declining the honor that they had convened to award him. He said that "A Doll's House" was unconcerned with the subordination of women, that it dealt with "a problem of mankind in general", and that he was adversely disposed to granting women the right to vote. How well do you think that Ibsen understood the implications of his own play?

Again, you might consider de Beauvoir's analysis in the light of the following:

A distinction is often drawn between "strong" and "weak" affirmative action programs. "Weak" affirmative action simply tries to level the playing-field among candidates for a position by judging each case upon its merits with regard to a given job-description. In contrast, "strong" affirmative action tries to level the playing field by taking account of histories of discrimination which may have selectively disadvantaged certain candidates; these programs impose a handicap upon those whose groups have not been disadvantaged in the past, much as a sporting-event might handicap younger players or others selectively advantaged in certain physical respects. "Strong" "A, in short, wants to even the odds. The standard objection to "strong" "A is that it is inefficient, unfair, and also damaging to the self-esteem of its intended beneficiaries. In reply, proponents argue that (a) the inefficiencies should be endured; (b) the unfairness of imposed handicaps is like the unfairness of conscription in wartime or of property foreclosure under the right of eminent domain: they are burdens imposed upon the community at large, which must, by their very nature be distributed by accident of circumstance among a particular group; and (c) the loss to self-esteem of the benefitted is the price for remedying an injustice more damaging to the social whole. The aim here is (roughly speaking) to eliminate a caste system in less than the several generations that it would otherwise take to eliminate it. To cite the testimony of one proponent (Subcommittee on the Constitution of the Senate Judiciary Committee, June 18, 1981):

"The goal to be pursued is the reduction of a great social injustice, not proportional representation of the applicant pool in all institutions and professions. Proportional representation is of no value in itself. It is not a legitimate social goal, and it should certainly not be the aim of strong affirmative action, whose drawbacks make it worth adopting only against a serious and intractable evil."

The witness quoted, by the way, was in favor of strong "A for African Americans but not for women.

Discuss in any way that seems suitable, with some attention to any fictional text or to your own experience.

Krogstad (in *A Doll's House*) wants to put things right; Kristen tells him that there is time do so, but he should not recover the letter unread. Better to live by painful truth than be happy in illusion. Does the play endorse this view? If Torvald is "patronizing" to Nora, isn't Kristen exceeding her prerogatives at this point? Ignore, for the sake of argument, the simple notion that dispelling illusion at this point saves exposure later, and consider that Krogstad will simply discharge the debt - or that Nora will easily and quickly pay it off once they have "lots and lots of money" and her household allowance is increased. The illusion that Kristen means to dispel is fundamental to the relationship of Torvald and Nora. Is she in the right to do so?

Torvald's illness (from which Nora saves him) is like his life; he cannot be told the truth about it, which in the case of his life is that measure up to his own standards. Here is a version of Torvald's credo:

1. Pay as you go. Debt is bad because someone has to pay and it needn't be you. Krogstad stands for this side of things--a money-lender. Nora doesn't give a fig about who the debt falls on, provided it isn't her family. (It can be her.) But as Dr Rank says, you get nothing for nothing in this world and in every family, someone is paying someone else's debt. (What happened to value-added and win/win and the rising tide that lifts all boats?) Appropriately, he find success as manager of a bank--which lends money, like Krogstad, but respectably.

2. Probity. If you are a lawyer, don't be Alan Dershowitz and provide defense for guilty clients. Take only clients innocent of the charge.

3. Work like the devil, sacrificing time, energy and life if need be, under the first two strictures in order to achieve independence for your family.

4. Transmit these values through the mother--the appropriate instrument, because she is malleable (but then usually also the source of degeneration)--to your children.

What view does the play take of these values? What view do you take?

Nora says that her father and her husband have done her a terrible wrong. What is the nature of that wrong? Can one generalize the principle at work in this judgment, so that it applies to the position of other subordinate groups in our society? Nora responds to Torvald's outburst about her unfitness to raise children not by justifying her actions (they were necessary to save his life, etc., etc.) but by accepting the judgment and making it the reason for abandoning her family. Many have held that this gesture proves Torvald's case: however bad Torvald's outburst, it does not justify her abandoning her duties to her husband and children. This was a sticking-point with Ibsen, who held all his life that duties to oneself took precedence over other important values.

The issue here goes to the heart of certain arguments about "affirmative action" in general - that the aim may be reasonable but the costs are extravagantly high and also unfairly distributed. (Torvald doesn't deserve to lose Nora entirely; Nora's children don't deserve to lose their mother.) Discuss.

If Nora lives in a Doll's House, so does Torvald. He is constantly shielded from unpleasant truth. Dr. Rank will bar Torvald from his household during his final illness, because he knows Torvald cannot bear unpleasantness. He does not like to see the evidences of household labor (the disarray of sewing, which testifies to household economy, must be kept out of sight, but crocheting is acceptable as a proper, leisure-time pursuit). He is interested in having clean hands, and would not take clients in his law practice who were shady types--the led him nearly to work himself to death. He has always paid his way (and his family's), because he is unwilling to incur a debt upon which there is the least chance that he would default. Nora has conspired with these characteristics. Was she wrong to do so?

After teasing Rank with her stockings and then responding in surprise to Rank's profession of love, Rank accuses Nora of knowing what their relationship was about all along and Nora replies: "How do I know whether I knew or not?" Compare this with the response of the women in the follow case-study:

Hooters is a successful chain of restaurants and bars that features waitresses in tight, low-cut shirts and very short shorts. Hooters also markets T-shirts that bear its name as well as its slogan, "More than a Mouthful". Former Hooters waitresses have filed a class-action lawsuit, alleging that the atmosphere that Hooters created in its restaurants allowed them to be sexually harassed. One waitress noted on a talk show: "We thought that it was a family restaurant. [The uniforms] made us look stupid." The former waitresses have noted that Hooters hired no male wait staff, and that all of the waitresses at its restaurants are very young and mostly blonde. Customers, cooks, and managers, according to the women, made lewd comments and, on occasion, touched them. The women contend that Hooters' atmosphere, their mandatory uniforms, and all-male management caused them to be sexually harassed. The EEOC and Hooters settled the litigation. Hooters's dress policy and its slogans and practices remain the same.

Did the women have no idea what they were getting into? If the atmosphere of Hooters is demeaning to women, should women be allowed to work there? Should Hooters change its name and

policies and become a family restaurant? Would you accept a position in executive management at Hooters corporate headquarters?

Here are three cases about one's responsibility to truthfulness. We might title them "The New Line of Soap", "Mutual Fund Management", and "A Problem in Performance Evaluation". Select one case and discuss two possible views of the issues involved, stating the arguments for both as vigorously as possible and relating them to any of the other readings when appropriate. Alternatively, you may select any case study that appears in the second Coursepack and discuss it in the same manner.

1. The CEO of Consumer Products Unlimited opened the annual meeting with a speech about CPU's commitment to serving the needs of the consumer. At the same meeting, she announced the introduction of a new bath soap into the company's product line, which already contained eleven soaps. She explained that it had the same formula as three of CPU's other soaps, but would have a French Name, would cost more, and would appeal to a more sophisticated clientele. The marketing division, she said, was already beginning an aggressive ad campaign.

2. At a recent annual meeting, Fidelity Investments joined a growing rank of mutual fund proprietors in voting an exclusionary rule, under the terms of which any fund within the Fidelity family might grant itself an exception to the stated purposes of the fund and purchase financial instruments lying well outside the fund's ordinary purview. Such holdings would be masked in quarterly reports to shareholders by a suitable cover term, such as "other" or "other similar holdings". The purpose advanced in justification of this procedure was to allow fund managers license to obtain those extra fractions of a percentage of yield which seem to matter so much nowadays to potential investors. The management of Fidelity argued that without such a provision, the value of current shareholder's portfolios was put at risk, and shaving the description of holdings was the best way to sustain market share and thereby to meet their responsibility to clients.

3. As senior manager of a division, you must conduct a year-end performance evaluation review of lower-level managers within your jurisdiction. The firm is one which encourages a considerable amount of entrepreneurship in its managerial tier and has successfully united a competitive bonus system with a flexible managerial structure which enables the formation of effective management teams. The candidate for review is bright and dedicated, but his personal style seems discomforting and even offensive to many colleagues and clients. You find that you and the candidate's colleagues have few complaints about his work - quite the contrary - but most of his colleagues have found his manner so unsuitable that he is rarely allowed to deal directly with clients. You conclude in the light of these facts that the candidate has probably found his niche in the company and will not rise higher unless his sense of himself and others will change. At the same time, you are dimly aware that his brusqueness and quick manner may be thoroughly connected with the features of his character that make him so useful at his present level.

During the interview, you attempt to discuss his personality limitation but quickly realize that this is prompting unhelpful responses, and so you switch to a discussion of his technical strengths. At this point, he reveals that he has another job offer and that the prospective employer has told him that he has a high probability of promotion within one year, with a consonant and extensive advance in responsibilities. He asks you what his chances are with his present employer and makes it plain that he would take the other offer if your response is not satisfactory.

You believe that his chances are nil, bating substantial changes in style and personality. You are also aware that it would be next to impossible for anyone to pick up his current work immediately and his rapid departure would have an adverse effect on the economic fortunes of an extensive range of his colleagues and upon the discharge of your own responsibilities to the division.

Consider the issue of deceptive advertising in connection with Theodore Levitt's essay, "The Morality (?) of Advertising". Is the consumer a client or an adversary? Levitt suggests the former by arguing that advertising sells the dream and not the product, the packaging and not the content. He also argues in this connection that advertising's "deceptions" are knowingly embraced by customers, who want to "deceive" themselves. What are the merits and shortcomings of this argument? Can we extend Levitt's argument and say that part of the packaging bought by the consumer is the notion that he/she is a wise consumer uninfluenced by clever ads who knows how to make clever, get-the-better-of-the-system

purchases? Take the advertising for Profile Bread (minimally thinner slice yielding minimally less calories - justifying the true but deceptive claim that it contains "fewer calories than ordinary bread"). Or the claim that Bayer is "superior" in effectiveness to generic brands, made on the basis of arguments that trust in a brand-name is a vital ingredient in medications. Or that doctors' report that two Excedrins give twice the relief of two aspirins, made while withholding the fact (from the ad, but not the bottle-label) that each Excedrin contains twice the amount of aspirin as the standard generic aspirin tablet. (These are real examples.) Is there a "thin edge" argument here? Is deception akin to lying? How similar is Levitt's case to the case for bluffing made by Carr?

How good is Leavitt's defense of advertising? Leavitt says that consumers are knowingly self-deceived (shades of Machiavelli and the Grand Inquisitor!). Is knowing self-deception possible? Does this, if true, exonerate the advertiser for pandering to the consumer's short-term interests rather than serving the long-term ones?

The Houyhnhnms have no understanding of competitive or adversarial systems of any kind. Their life is founded upon complete respect for the rational integrity of every other member of their kind. They would not understand a world that contained allegedly rational beings like Kant's potential murderer, who can use language properly and yet proposes violence; neither would they understand the purpose within a corporation of a competitive bonus system. In a way, the Houyhnhnms have an easier time than Kant, for they live in a world in which the only competitive or adversarial creatures belong to a different species; hence they can regard the members of that species (the Yahoos) as "without reason" and therefore unworthy of respect. They can contemplate killing all the Yahoos without a qualm of conscience. (This is what makes Gulliver's presence among them so disturbing--he is somewhere in between horse and Yahoo and they don't know how to treat him.) Would you wish to live among the Houyhnhnms? Why not? If the Houyhnhnms represent the social embodiment of a perfectly ethical life and we cannot be satisfied with it, are we - like Carr's business people and Levitt's customers - bound to live a double life, part ethical, part Yahoo?

Scholars have long been divided on Swift's purpose in writing the fourth book of *Gulliver's Travels*. The horses are in some sense bloodless, passionless creatures, and humanity is represented at the end of the book by the very humane, patient and generous Don Pedro, whom Gulliver regards with loathing. Are we supposed to share his attitude? At the same time, while passionless, the Houyhnhnms are without "ceremony" - the language of symbol and gesture by which we mark differences between human beings in point of rank or institutional authority - free of bias or partiality and incapable of falsehood to the point of not understanding how a deliberate falsehood would be possible. Are not these the right moral positives? The loyalty of each Houyhnhnm is not to anything particular about his or her existence but simply to Houyhnhnmhood in general. (Creon would have no trouble getting a Houyhnhnm Antigone to leave her brother unburied if the general good demanded it.) Not living by an image of his or her personal value and totally responsive to truth, each Houyhnhnm would be impervious to Levitt's advertisements, whereas you can sell a Yahoo anything (even colored pebbles), provided that no other Yahoos can share them. Does Swift, in his portrait of the Houyhnhnms, mean to indict humanity or to mock the ideals by which humanity professes to live?

Any question posed about Kant's ethics is not so simple as it looks. Here is one: how does Kant's view compare with Machiavelli? Or another: Kant would obviously disapprove of Levitt's essay, but what would he actually say about it? How would he argue? Kant admits (not in the essay that we read but elsewhere) that we do have material or partisan necessities, which are bound to overcome us, depending on their strength; what would he say about Carr's essay on bluffing and its two-fold division into religious ethics and the ethics of business? Finally, there is the case of Kristin Linde, who believes that marriage must not be founded upon lies. Suppose that Kant is wrong - that partisan affections and desires are the medium of ethical life, after all. Should a marriage be founded on truth, nonetheless? How important is truthfulness?

More specifically: Kant's views are as far from the viewpoint of the Grand Inquisitor as one can get. For Kant, there are no irrational people (anyone irrational, like an infant - not just as minor - or a lunatic is not properly a human being), and it is a primary ethical obligation to suppose that there are always grounds for the honest negotiation of differences, or at the very least, to respect the integrity of an opponent when circumstances make negotiation impossible. Consider this view of things in relation to William's "The Use of Force" or any other reading assigned this term.

Again: Since lying in Kant's view could never be justified on principle, the distinction between deceiving and lying was of vital importance to him. You must never lie, but you can *prevaricate*, that is, use truthful utterance to mislead people, when the truth might be harmful to them or to others. If bluffing in poker (Carr's chief example) is not lying but deliberately misleading others about what you hold in your hand, then Kant believed in bluffing. Some of Carr's examples do not involve bluffing but outright lying; Kant would not approve of this. Many commentators think that the distinction between lying and prevaricating is just hair-splitting - but then many think that with respect to the sanctity of human life, the distinction between murder and taking a human life (as in capital punishment) is just hair-splitting. As it happens, the Kantian distinction has become important in medical ethics, where some ethicists have argued that it is important that caregivers never lie, but when knowledge of the truth would be damaging to the patient's powers of recovery, prevarication is in order. For example, James Mayskens, in *Moral Problems in Nursing* (pp. 141-2), take the Kantian line: "Evasive deception is at least a concession to the importance of [the patient's] autonomy, whereas the willingness to lie reveals a complete disregard for the rationality and autonomy of the other."

Can a regard for "the rationality and autonomy of the other" (a good expression for capturing Kant's highest ethical value) be extended to business practices generally?