tions and then hacking away at the rest of the paper to fit it to the procrustean bed thus constructed has not unnaturally led him astray.

Incidentally, I don't think Sayers' distinction between 'ordinary language philosophy' and 'theory' is really of much use as a touchstone for diagnosing what is reactionary about English-speaking philosophy at the present time. The trouble is that the aim of just 'describing' ordinary usage has been more talked about than put into practice. I'm not at all sure what Sayers means by 'theory', but if a theorist is anyone who dissents from the dictum that the sole task of philosophy is to describe the logic of ordinary usage, then not only am I a philosophical theorist but virtually every significant philosopher writing in English at the present time is a philosophical theorist.

Certainly this is true, to take just one example, of Professor R. M. Hare, a philosopher whose views I do not altogether share, but whom I greatly respect; who seems to have become a regular aunt sally for some Radical Philosophers, largely on the strength of his article 'A School for Philosophers'. Hare's own work, it seems to me, totally belies that article. It is indeed one of life's little ironies that a man who can assert, with every appearance of complacency, that a philosophical doctrine must be briefly stateable and wholly non-technical if it is to receive a serious hearing at Oxford should himself be the author of two long books of great technical difficulty and complexity which expound a very elaborate moral theory of the same general type as Kant's. Of course Hare claims *inter alia* that the theory he constructs is implicit in the everyday logic of 'ought' and other moral terms, but these claims themselves serve a theoretical function in protecting his doctrine against certain lines of attack, mainly having to do with the well-known problems about naturalism. The fact that Hare's methodological asides make him look a bit like Sayers' straw man should not blind us to the fact that the edifice which Hare's methodology helps to support is a 'theory of morals' in a quite traditional sense, and one which bears upon many traditional, and important, problems about morals. But perhaps Sayers has some other sense of 'theory' in mind which I simply don't understand.

In short, although I don't necessarily dissent from the claim that some of the views, and perhaps a lot of the views, characteristic of English-speaking philosophy at the moment are in some sense reactionary (I wouldn't accept the view that English-speaking philosophy is reactionary *root-and-branch*, but then 'English-speaking philosophy' seems to me to designate a very mixed bag of views and tendencies and not a single homogeneous entity), I cannot see that the ordinary language/theory distinction gets us any closer to discovering which, or why. I thought I was attacking some rather reactionary views in my article. But that had better be left now to speak for itself to other readers.

Putting Morality in its Place

Few readers of *Radical Philosophy* (except perhaps spies acting on behalf of *non*-radical philosophy) are likely to disagree with Richard Norman's description of recent moral philosophy as 'inadequate', or with his insistence that those who practise it are really committed to a morality of liberalism. [See 'Moral philosophy without morality?' in *Radical Philosophy 6*, pp2-7] And the hopes he expresses for what moral - or rather ethical - philosophers ought to be doing ('articulating a workable set of ethical concepts in terms of which one could direct one's life and activity'), and the wish that academic philosophers would stop sneering at the suggestion that philosophy has something to do with questions about the meaning of life; these will find an enthu-

siastic audience in most of us too, certainly in me.

What does *not* arouse such agreement or enthusiasm in me is the main body of the article. To be fair, Norman himself has doubts about the validity of what he says; and I think he was right to have them. Basically, he wants to replace an ethics of 'morality', 'ought', 'duty' and 'virtue' by one whose basic concepts are ones like 'health', 'harmony', 'self-realization','integrity' and so on. And it's this more positive section that gives me doubts.

To begin with, I don't like the company he keeps. The philosophers who have taken this sort of line in the past - who have they been? Plato, Aristotle, Bradley - are these the prophets of radicalism? Great men, undoubtedly, but not quote those we should normally expect to find lined up on the same side as *Radical Philosophy*. They were not liberals, true; but only because they were conservatives. (It may be significant that when Norman briefly considers jettisoning the concept of 'virtues', it is Warnock he criticizes, and not Aristotle or Plato.)

Still, perhaps that isn't really fair. The point isn't who else said something rather like what Norman says, it's what he says himself. Yet there are some funny things in that too. If we take seriously the question 'What is it that screws up people's lives?' we are told, then, ultimately, the answer must be: not individual failings and weaknesses, but corrupt and oppressive institutions. It's that 'not' that bothers me. For its implication is that the un-screwed-up life is the life of the man who *isn't* the victim of corrupt and oppressive institutions. And that suggest the man who is their *beneficiary* - the aristocrat, the *rentier*, whom the institutions serve and who hasn't even got the troubles of an active company director. The natural inference from Norman's position is that this is the man who is to provide us with a model of the un-screwed-up-life, as far as we can get one; maybe the institutions even screw him up a little, but he's the nearest we can get. And surely he is *not* a good model; not for our lives here and now, anyway. Explicit praise of the aristo-crat may suit Nietzsche, but hardly Norman - even if he does quote Nietzsche with approval.

Is he a good model for the future, then? Do we hope ultimately for a Utopia in which everyone is (more of less) like this 'aristocrat'? That doesn't seem likely either. Even in Utopia people work; and, what is more, some of them will need to do the un-pleasant or monotous kinds of work. You can find fulfilment in a great many callings, but there are some that I suspect of having alienation built into them. It's not Utopia we need for a society of perfectly fulfilled citizens; it's Paradise.

But of course the 'aristocrat' I've been describing isn't Norman's ideal in the least, and I've had to admit it. In fact, the 'balanced' man in a corrupt society is as defective as anyone else; he is nicely adapted to crooked surroundings, and when they get straightened out he will no longer be balanced. Granted. But that only makes my point more clearly; it isn't balance or harmony or self-realization that constitutes the ethical ideal. At the most, it's what would be balanced or harmonious in an uncorrupted society, and that only because in an uncorrupted society a man could presumably live the ideal life without getting unbalanced. In an oppressive society the man who truly responds to his higher self will be a misfit, and quite right too. That is how radicals, revolutionaries, and even reformers, are made.

Do we then want to reinstate 'Morality' after all, with its old Apparatus of 'good', 'right', 'ought', 'duty' and so on? I suspect that it has got a place, though only a subordinate one. (It seems to creep back even into Norman's sketch of the healthy individual; isn't the 'higher self' rather like an improved and more humane version of the Kantian legislative will - as well as being a near-literal translation of 'super-ego'?) It has a place for two reasons. Firstly because, as Norman says, even the healthy individual (even, I should add, in an uncorrupted society) can't really act all the time

on impulse. He will have to weigh possibilities and come to decisions, and those decisions are practically certain to contain 'oughts', and those moral 'oughts', not just 'oughts' of advice. Secondly, because we aren't all of us healthy, and morality may be the best we can manage a lot of the time. The trouble with a Norman-style ethics, which praises spontaneous and 'genuine' altruism but not the altruism that springs from masochism and frustrated aggressions, is that it is psychologically aristocratic even when it isn't socially so. What is the poor devil who's got this masochistic hangup to do? the man who isn't 'secure in his own identity', who would like to give freely of himself but can't? Is he somehow predestined to ethical damnation, someone whom the moral philosopher in his health needn't bother to notice? It seems a bit hard on him. Perhaps he can be given 'morality' as a second-best? It does, after all, seem to be more or less what he needs. In fact, isn't this pretty much what Kant said - that the moral, dutiful, law-abiding will is only a second-best, that a *holy* will would be beyond that? The only thing is, Kant evidently thought that for practical purposes we'd better concentrate on the second-best. (Whether he was right or not is another matter; probably not.) Obviously, the more the Moral Man is aware of the defects in himself and his morality the better. If he recognises that there's a masochistic element in his altruism, or that the call of duty has been using his super-ego as a megaphone, and in all probability getting the message distorted in the process - why, his altruism will be the more rational for it, and his discrimination in listening to duty's voice the sharper.

So I'd like to reinstate morality, provided that it keeps its place. But if morality is only a second-best, what comes first? I've already said why I don't think an ethic of health or self-realization will do. There's another reason too: it is only negatively egalitarian. This is a defect it shares with liberalism. Neither of them really cares about others. Of course, individual liberals, even individual aristocrats, may do so ; but that's an accident, so to speak. The liberal leaves people to their own life-styles - to the life-styles of 'men of action, dedicated artists, religious recluses or professional golfers' (and, presumably, to the 'life-styles' of refuse-collectors, subsistence peasants, lavatory attendants, geriatric nurses or members of the dole-queue?). The 'aristocrat' takes a paternal interest in less fortunate souls when he meets them, but to wear himself to the bone looking for them isn't truly harmonious. Aristotle's 'megalopsuchos', one remembers, was slow to action unless great deeds offered themselves; and I suspect that the healthy, well-balanced man is the same. His fundamental interest is in the realization of his own self. Norman wants to commit himself politically because it makes sense in terms of his own life. This sounds hideously like a Warnockian life-style. Suppose it doesn't make sense in terms of my personal life? or suppose a reactionary commitment *does*?

But what the radical wants is for others to realize themselves too - and to have decent selves to realize, at that. Neither of these ethics suits him. A Kantian ethic might do at a pinch, as the 'others' are ends in themselves for Kant; but, as we've seen, Kantianism is only a second-best even for Kant. Is there anything we can think of that will do better?

Norman quotes from *The German Ideology* as rejecting the idea of 'preaching morality' or 'loving one another and not being egoists'. But Marx and Engels were not quite as extreme as Norman was in his preceding lines. They only said that in definite circumstances egoism was as necessary as self-sacrifice. Norman goes further, and says that those who are deprived of power and wealth are under no obligation to forego their own interests, but should on the contrary assert them, apparently setting self-

sacrifice aside altogether. I imagine he has been misled into this by the context of his remarks (the supposed 'social contract' by which it seems the poor promise not to disturb the rich, who in return undertake to leave their poverty alone). But misled he is. For in our present society, the abler a man is, the more Norman's principle will encourage him to hold with the existing system and get on in it as far as he can, to move from the have-nots to the haves. It's not easy, and he'll probably fail, but it's a good deal easier than bringing about a revolution. (If a revolution does come, the asserter of his own interest will of course be chiefly concerned to make sure he comes out on the winning side, and as high up on that side as he can manage.) It seems a funny situation in which radicalism would be confined to those least able to advance it. Would not the deprived do better each of them to sacrifice his own interests, in part anyway, to those of his class, or even of humanity?

It is an odd thing that the biblical quotation echoed in the passage from *The German Ideology*, and also (I think) in a formula rejected earlier on in Norman's article ('One cannot love others unless one also loves oneself') isn't actually quoted in full anywhere in the article. Yet I should have thought that 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself' would be a better basis for one's life than Norman's suggested egocentric ethics. It doesn't seem to ask for compulsive behaviour or external motivation (except that in its original context it is presented as an injunction from God). It doesn't insist on an artificial level of altruism; it gives the agents' own interests a place. But it is unquestionably egalitarian, and couldn't possibly be called merely liberal, nor aristocratic.

The problem is - and here we come back to agreeing with Norman once more - to sort out an ethical philosophy on such a basis. Maybe that's what the Utilitarians were trying to do, even if they didn't have much success. We need a richer set of concepts than they operated with, or than contemporary British moral philosophy operates with - or rather *on* (consider how weak and impoverished a word 'good' is by the time they've finished with it!) And here Norman is certainly right; and probably most of the concepts he suggests could find some place on 'my' list too, though their place might, like that of 'morality', be a subordinate one in many cases. (They might, for example, be needed when one tried to work out what loving one's neighbour - or oneself - amounted to in practice.)

Most ethical theories have set before their adherents some sort of an ideal. In some instances this was social (the Utilitarians would be an example); in others individualist (Plato; Kant, at times; Heidegger). It is a peculiarity of most contemporary British moral philosophy that it has no ideals at all; it is apt to leave the reader wondering 'Why should I *bother* to be moral?' It would never stir anyone to great deeds, even to great goodness; worse, it would discourage anyone who felt called to such, by its relentless interest in trivialities. My only quarrel with Norman is that I think he's filling the vacancy with a poor candidate; I want something that recognises my fellow men more; but the vacancy needs to be filled all right.

Richard Sturch

Electric shock treatment could replace the cane if corporal punishment in schools were banned by law, Mr Terry Casey, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters, told a conference in Birmingham last week.

Outlawing of the cane would mean greater use of illegal and irregular punishments, he said. One science teacher had disciplined boys by passing a mild electric current through them, using equipment in the physics laboratory.

Times Educational Supplement, 4 January 1974