Hume, say, or Horace Walpole? The bibliography of the book under review does list our author, D. O. Thomas, as the author of what may be a Price biography, *Richard Price* 1723–1791 (Cardiff, 1976); but I have not been able to examine a copy.

Thomas's aim is to show a coherence in the whole of Price's thought and work. But he is careful to point out inconsistencies or shortcomings within a given stretch of thought, or inconsistencies that turn up as Price moved from one endeavor to another. The thought and works are subjected to close examination; and Thomas takes full account of both Price's contemporary critics and his modern commentators. Thomas's style is serviceable, but not overly graceful. The matter is sometimes dense; and we are required to give it a close reading. But both Price and Thomas are worth the effort.

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ETHICS: INVENTING RIGHT AND WRONG. By J. L. MACKIE. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, Penguin Books Ltd., 1977. Pp. 249. $1.95.

Professor Mackie has produced a vigorous, intelligent, sophisticated book in which he defends, in a marvelously good-natured way, some controversial, hard-headed views in moral philosophy.

In Part One, Mackie explains and argues for "the subjectivity of values." He claims that "there are no objective values" (15), and points to the variableness of our beliefs about values, and the "queerness" of value properties, in support of his claim. He goes on to provide an account of some of the meanings of "good" and "ought." To say that something is good is to say that it is "such as to satisfy requirements (etc.) of the kind in question" (55–6). To say that *a* ought to *G* is to say, roughly, that there is a reason for *a*'s *G*-ing (73–4). In each case, there is an "indeterminacy" in the suggested equivalence. With "good," this appears in the kind of requirement that might be in question. With "ought," it has to do with the reasons. In both cases, however, Mackie acknowledges that ordinary language has "built in" claims to objectivity. We speak as if good things satisfy "intrinsic requirements," requirements "which simply are there, in the nature of things, without being the requirements of any person or body of persons, even God" (59). Mackie claims that these facts about what's "built into" ordinary language have no direct bearing on the objectivity of values. Thus, he maintains what he calls an "error theory" about

ordinary language.

Part One concludes with a discussion of various concepts of universalization. Mackie distinguishes among three stages of universalization, and for each stage, he discusses the claim that we ought, for logical or moral reasons, to be prepared to universalize our value judgments in the way in question. His conclusion is that, in each case, "the universalizability of moral judgments, then, does not impose any rational constraint on choices of action or defensible patterns of behaviour" (99).

Those who believe in good and evil, and right and wrong, can construe normative ethics as the attempt to discover and formulate principles about what's good and evil, and what's right and wrong. As an antiobjectivist, Mackie construes normative ethics otherwise. To him, the problem is first to decide why societies have moralities. What social purposes might be served by the commitment to a whole package of nonsensical, or at best uniformly false, views? Secondly, we may try to determine which normative views would most suitably serve this purpose. In Part Two, Mackie answers the first of these questions by saying that "the function of morality is primarily to counteract (the) limitation of men's sympathies" (108). He goes on to claim that traditional forms of utilitarianism, as well as some other normative theories, cannot adequately serve this function, and hence must be rejected. Act utilitarianism, as well as the Golden Rule, are rejected as "wholly impracticable" (129–30).

Some of the elements of a more practical morality are sketched in the final chapter of Part Two. Mackie briefly reports some of his views on the good life, rights, liberty, truth-telling, "how princes should keep faith," the virtues, and the right to life. He also discusses the question "why should I be moral?" His answer seems to be that, unless there's something in it for me (which there often is), I have no reason to be moral.

In Part Three, Mackie offers a brief survey of some issues on the "frontiers" of ethics. The freedom/determinism puzzle is sketched, and a few pages are devoted to the connections between ethics and religion, law, and politics.

Although Mackie propounds a number of provocative and challenging doctrines, none seems more central than his antiobjectivism. In my view, however, Mackie has neither formulated this doctrine sufficiently carefully, nor defended it persuasively.

Metaethical antiobjectivism may take any of several forms. One could maintain that, while there are plenty of properties, there are no objective value properties. That is, there are no such things as good-

ness, rightness, fittingness, and so on. If there are no such properties, then, as the emotivists saw, "good," "right," "fitting," etc. cannot express them. Value judgments, then, cannot be straightforwardly true or false. Another sort of antiobjectivism might be this: there are objective value properties, but nothing has them. Typical value judgments, on this view, would all be false. It should be clear that these views are inconsistent. For on the first view, there are no objective value properties, while on the second there are.

It is hard to tell whether Mackie means to maintain both, or neither, or just one of these views. His argument from queerness is based on the claim that if there were such things as goodness, rightness and the rest, then these would be "qualities or relations of a very strange sort, utterly different from anything else in the universe" (38). While this is hardly a persuasive argument, it appears to be designed to substantiate antiobjectivism of the first sort.

In Chapter Two, Mackie tells us that "good," when used in moral contexts, can mean "such as to satisfy the intrinsic requirements." In this way, our moral judgments contain a "built-in" claim to the objectivity of these requirements. Since, in Mackie's view, there are no intrinsic requirements, any statement to the effect that something is good (in this sense) must be false (35). Nothing has the property of being such as to satisfy the intrinsic requirements. But in this case, it appears that there is such a property as goodness. Indeed, Mackie has told us which property it is. It is the property of being such as to satisfy the intrinsic requirements. So we seem to have antiobjectivism of the second sort.

Mackie is aware that some will find a problem here, and he discusses it in several brief passages (35, 48–9, 62–3). So far as I can tell, however, nothing he says sufficiently clarifies his position.

Mackie's positive contribution to normative ethics is, in many ways, a disappointment. If we think of morality as a social instrument, designed to serve an identifiable purpose, then we may wish to consider what morality ought to be like. Given the facts about human nature, what sorts of rules are such that belief in them would most economically serve the purpose of morality? Mackie deals with this problem in a sketchy and superficial way. He tells us that people generally like a life "made up largely of the effective pursuit of activities (they) find worthwhile," either for themselves or for those closely connected with themselves (170). Assuming this as "the good for man," Mackie goes on to say that we probably will want to have some rules about the ownership and transfer of property (178); that we need some rules concerning whose liberty is to give way in case of conflict (182);

that we need some rules about the keeping of agreements, though we apparently won't want any very strict rules about truth-telling in general (183); that some traditional virtues, such as courage, may often be quite useful (188); that the death penalty, as an "outrage," is something we won't want (195); that we'll probably want to have relatively liberal rules about abortions during the early part of pregnancy, but more stringent ones for the later period (198); and that babies born with severe permanent defects should not be allowed to survive (199).

Some of Mackie's normative views are quite uncontroversial. Others would be widely disputed. I suspect, for example, that many will disagree with Mackie on lying, abortion, and the death penalty. Yet here, where it would be most interesting to consider them, we can find little more than hints of the arguments that would show how these positions can be derived from Mackie's view about the object of morality.

Mackie's book is wide-ranging, provocative, and light-hearted. There's not even a touch of somber moralizing here. Some of us, I suspect, might be moved to take these views more seriously if they were more rigorously formulated, and more carefully defended.

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RELATIVE IDENTITY. By NICHOLAS GRIFFIN. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1977. Pp. 234. Price £8.50.

The seeming simplicity of the notion of identity has not deterred philosophers from elaborate and frequently obscure lucubration on the subject. Nicholas Griffin's book consists of a detailed and comprehensive evaluation of a thesis prodigal of such literature: the alleged relativity of identity. The works of Geach and Wiggins are the main subject of discussion, but almost anyone who has written on the topic gets a mention somewhere. Much ingenuity and analytical ability is displayed in the critical scrutiny of other people's arguments. Yet it cannot be said that the book contains any really new and important insight; nor does it inspire confidence that the author has achieved genuine clarity on fundamentals. He would have done better to cut down the ad hominem discussion and try to address basic questions. As it is, one is not convinced that his energy has been well spent.

The naive (and I would say correct) view of identity may be sum-