Bu's conduct or crimes. Bressen is explicit. In sum, this is a lively, instructive, and welcome account.

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R.L. MEEK. — *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage.* Cambridge, 1976.

This is the most interesting and best written book that this reviewer has encountered in some time. It uses the vehicle of intellectual history to explore the nature and implications of a recurring paradigm of social science; the stages theory of economic development. In this theory the general condition of any civilization is seen to be determined, in a gross materialistic sense, by the means it uses to provide itself with subsistence. The "most backward" (poorest, least technically and culturally sophisticated) civilization is seen to be dependent on hunting and the "most progressive", on manufacturing and/or commerce. While the discussion in the book is confined to the four stages presented in late eighteenth century literature; the hunting, herding, agricultural and commercial stages; the main lines of the argument are quite relevant to the two additional stages, the manufacturing and service stages, that are included in current versions of the paradigm.

Without once dropping the illusion that what is being accomplished is a thorough, objective perusal of the literature, Professor Meek explores the weaknesses and problems of the paradigm as it appears in its eighteenth century versions. These are principally: the difficulty of empirical verification of the sequence of the stages, since they often co-existed in one civilization; and the difficulty of explaining the transition from one stage to another, since some civilizations, unaccountably, did not make the postulated transitions at all, or made them in a different sequence.

The main thrust of his argument, however, is not to criticize the paradigm, but to justify a revision of it, and to defend that revision against criticisms arising from nineteenth century neo-classical economics. According to Professor Meek the economic theories of the nineteenth century were an explanation of only the commercial stage of development, in which society was organized by a process of division of tasks and exchange in a money-market system. In his view, therefore, the use of that theory to explain earlier stages and their evolution into greater wealth and sophistication was an unwarranted projection of then current conditions into the past. Indeed, it implied by pure assumption that there were no stages in development. Everything was the fourth stage. The proper revision, according to Meek, was the Marxist version of the paradigm in which the four stages of development were retained in more or less classical form, and the structure of property rights, the "mode of production", was used as the dynamic and determining factor in the definition of stages and the mechanism of transition from one to another. This Marxist revision is not extensively elaborated by Professor Meek, however, and at the end of the book it is itself left in the form of a merely tendentious, sufficing, plausibility.

Whatever one may think of the conclusion of this book it remains a delightfully subtle exposition of a rather important piece of the intellectual apparatus of social science. Further, it should be of special interest to Canadian scholars, since the recent debate in Canada over the explanatory value of the Staple Theory (Douglas North and the quantitative historians on the one side and Melville Wat-

kins and the national socialists on the other) centred on this paradigm and divided on precisely the lines laid down by Professor Meek as defining the neoclassical and Marxist versions.

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G. E. MINGAY, ed. *Arthur Young and his Times*. London & Toronto: Macmillan, 1975.

This is not the critical life of the great agricultural publicist which its title seems to imply, but rather a selection from Arthur Young's own writings. As one would expect from Professor Mingay, it is well chosen and introduced, and serves as a useful supplement to John C Gazley's *Life of Arthur Young, 1741-1820*,[1] whose 727 pages say a great deal about Young's family, politic, and religion, but not very much about his views on agriculture and economics.

Professor Mingay's general introduction provides a serviceable short life and a spirited defence of Young's competence and importance as an agricultural thinker. The selections which follow are well chosen from the whole range of Young's published writings, and most of them are long enough for Young to get his teeth into a problem. Each group of selections has a short but comprehensive introduction.

The first chapter is in itself a fine summary of the economics of agriculture from the tenant's point of view — the working of rents, tithes, taxes, and rates, — with Mingay gently moderating Young's enthusiasm over such points as the virtue of high rents and the indispensibility of long leases. For the chapter on the "Agricultural Revolution," it would be tedious if not impossible to collect examples of all the new arrangements and techniques involved — enclosure, new rotations and manures, stock breeding, and so on. But Professor Mingay neatly solves that problem by three long selections on what Young thought the best practice: the Norfolk Husbandry, the Marquis of Rockingham, and the stockbreeder Robert Bakewell. The book ends with excerpts from Young's travels in Ireland, France, Catalonia, and Italy, which counterpoint his views on England.

Through all of this, two themes stand out. One is Young's enthusiasm for agricultural improvement and his exasperation at backwardness. But, as the selections show, he recognised perfectly well that what works in one place may not work somewhere else; he was no crank or mere doctrinaire. The other is his acute economic imagination, particularly intent on the economic necessity of a high level of consumption by the poorer ranks of society. It was only late in life that he recognised that his favourite remedy of enclosure was harming the rural poor; but that conclusion fitted what he had always thought.

The introductions to the selections on England are solid and succinct. If they add little that is new, that is because Professor Mingay has said it before.[2] The introductions to the Irish and continental sections, unfortunately, do not go much beyond a precis of what Young is about to say. Surely some comment on

[1] Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1973.

[2] E.G.,J. D. CHAMBERS & G. E. MINGAY, *The Agricultural Revolution* (London: Batsford, 1966).