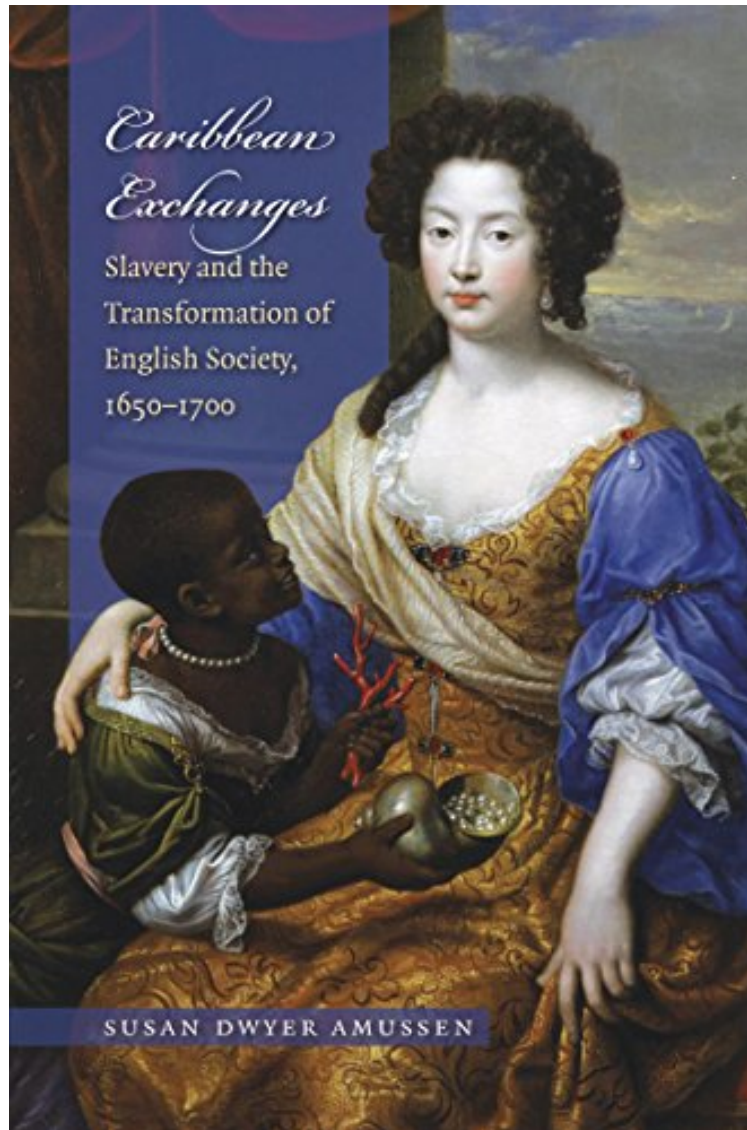


(Free) Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640-1700

Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640-1700

Susan Dwyer Amussen

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Susan Dwyer Amussen : Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640-1700 before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640-1700:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. thought-provoking study of how Caribbean colonization affected English society By hmf22 This is a short book with an ambitious goal: to show how establishing a slavery-based

colonial society in the Caribbean transformed English society. As Amussen explains in the introduction, she was inspired to write the book by someone's question about how Caribbean planters' rape of slave women affected attitudes towards sexual violence back in England. Ultimately, she concluded that "Each of the major transformations in the seventeenth-century Caribbean--in the organization of work, law, gender, and race--has a counterpart in eighteenth-century England. These English developments were not caused by the same events as in the Caribbean, but the sugar islands provided social and cultural resources that could be used as English men and women sought to respond to social change. The changes necessary to sustain a slave-owning society turned out to be--in modified forms--equally useful as England developed a capitalist and increasingly industrial society" (229). Inevitably, given the scale of the thesis and the brevity of the book, Amussen's argument is sometimes more impressionistic than thorough. I was most impressed by her in-depth treatment of highly specific topics, such as her close reading of Richard Ligon's and John Taylor's writings in Chapter 2 and her discussion of portraits of English socialites with black slaves in Chapter 6. Her discussion of the evolution of English Caribbean society in the 17th century is very good but not complete, and I suspect that future historians will find more parallels between developments there and social change in England. But these are hardly weaknesses in a ground-breaking study. I found that this book made me think about the relationship between England and its colonies in a new way. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By robert k. lidyard jr. as described

English colonial expansion in the Caribbean was more than a matter of migration and trade. It was also a source of social and cultural change within England. Finding evidence of cultural exchange between England and the Caribbean as early as the seventeenth century, Susan Dwyer Amussen uncovers the learned practice of slaveholding. As English colonists in the Caribbean quickly became large-scale slaveholders, they established new organizations of labor, new uses of authority, new laws, and new modes of violence, punishment, and repression in order to manage slaves. Concentrating on Barbados and Jamaica, England's two most important colonies, Amussen looks at cultural exports that affected the development of race, gender, labor, and class as categories of legal and social identity in England. Concepts of law and punishment in the Caribbean provided a model for expanded definitions of crime in England; the organization of sugar factories served as a model for early industrialization; and the construction of the "white woman" in the Caribbean contributed to changing notions of "ladyhood" in England. As Amussen demonstrates, the cultural changes necessary for settling the Caribbean became an important, though uncoun- ted, colonial export.