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Review of Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England*

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quadrupling of the costs of consumables by 1603. Fixed stipends would have hit cathedral clergy and singing men hard in any event; it affected the new style family man even harder.

The first seven chapters of the book are necessary but plodding, but Lehmborg introduces more innovative material in the remainder of the book. A chapter on cathedral music and musicians, for example, offers a detailed examination of all that can be gleaned about cathedral music of the sixteenth-century (p. 43). Lehmborg discusses the quality of the music performed and the reaction of congregations as well as describing the human face of the communities of vicars-choral who provided the music. The study of canons, prebendaries, and deans uses a data bank based on Le Neve's *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae*. Unfortunately, Lehmborg does not use this data bank as creatively as he might have. Neither does he seem to be aware of work in this area by John Pruett and myself which suggests the fruitfulness of other approaches.

Finally, Lehmborg asks the \$64,000 question — what was the actual role of cathedrals in Tudor England? Were they important parts of society...? He shows that the role of the cathedral was transformed: The emphasis moved from sacraments to sermons. But he does not really establish the importance of the cathedrals conclusively, despite a final assertion that their altered role was “no less vital because of the impact of the Reformation” (p. 306). This failure stems from the fact that the bulk of the book is not about the interrelationship between cathedrals and society at all, but about the cathedrals as institutions.

To sum up. This is a useful book which attempts an important task — to assess the impact of the Reformation upon the cathedrals and the importance of the cathedrals in Tudor society. It provides valuable information about the cathedrals, about royal policy towards them, and about the impact of royal policy upon them. It is however, a rather pedestrian book. The existence of a data bank in the background looms uneasily. Its use has enabled Lehmborg to make some interesting statements describing the cathedrals, their finance, and their personnel, but it has not apparently stimulated him or freed him to ask new questions about the importance of the cathedrals in Tudor religion, culture, or society. And he has found it nigh on impossible to integrate his intriguing mini-case studies into the broader framework of narrative and description.

The Open University

ROSEMARY O'DAY

Susan Dwyer Amussen. *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England*. New York: Basil Blackwell. 1988. Pp. xi, 203. \$39.95.

Susan Dwyer Amussen has produced an extremely well-researched and gracefully written study on gender and class in early modern England. Amussen describes her work as in part a response to and continuation of the issues raised by the early classic study of Alice Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century*. Amussen argues that “Clark’s mistaken placement of the change from household to capitalist production in the seventeenth century — at least a century before it actually took place — makes it incumbent on students of early modern England to continue to study the family as the fundamental economic unit of society in that period” (p. 1).

But Amussen’s work, with its emphasis on the family in many aspects, goes far beyond the questions asked by Clark. Amussen also continues the argument of many early modern historians that the family in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England was not only the basic unit of political and social order, but also served as a metaphor for the state. To support

her contentions she provides a close analysis of the workings of a number of villages in Norfolk. Thus Amussen's work not only helps us to understand family and village history but also aids our understanding of political structure, and helps us to unravel the popular uses and the ideologies of the analogy often made by early modern theorists between family and the state. Amussen argues that study of the analogy between family and state forces us to examine both families and villages as not only economic but political entities. Amussen suggests that we cannot understand the politics of the state without understanding the politics of the family. Amussen's analysis examines two systems of social hierarchy: gender and class and rank. Her analysis of the question of reputation in village life suggests that appropriate behavior in early modern villages was first and foremost defined by gender. Her study gives us more insight into questions of power, constructions of authority, and gender relations, and fits in well with the work of other authors such as Keith Wrightson and Martin Ingram who are concerned with class and gender in this period. Amussen sees the early eighteenth century as the beginning of the distinction between public and private, a distinction which is not applicable when discussing England of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The middle of the seventeenth century, with its battle between king and parliament, was an especially critical period of change in terms of family and its relation to social order.

Amussen's work also demonstrates a solid grounding in the secondary literature and she brings to her study an understanding of not only political and local history but the impact of religious and economic forces on culture. Amussen uses a wide variety of primary sources to sort out both the ideal and the reality of family life and its analogy with the ordering of society. She is particularly adept at reading marriage manuals and court cases. If there is a weakness to her work, it is in her use of many cases as examples without giving enough background.

Amussen's work is valuable reading for any student of early modern England. She demonstrates the connection between high politics and the social order of the villages. The construction of the world in the eighteenth century can be more thoroughly understood by the contrast with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the ways in which order was maintained in the family and the village. Also in this period the order within the family was a reflection of the attempt at order within the state. Amussen's study helps us to understand the development of the conception of public as opposed to private in terms of family and the state.

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David Riggs. *Ben Jonson: A Life*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 1989. Pp. 399. \$35.00.

Whatever may have induced David Riggs, some eight or nine years ago, to start on the labors which have now produced this *Life of Ben Jonson*, it can hardly have been the discovery of a cache of information about the author. In the matter of personal details, we are not much better off now than our ancestors were with only Fuller's *Worthies of England* (first published in 1662) and the *Conversations with Drummond of Hawthornden*, which have been before the public, in editions of varying degrees of accuracy, since 1711. The latter authority still provides the liveliest picture of the man, outside his own writings. On the other hand, the accumulation of modern learning about the society and theatre of Jonson's time, and the changes in critical practice and in the received views of the nature of the human mind, might