foucault studies

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ISSN: 1832-5203
Foucault Studies, No 3, pp. 137-143, Dec 2005

REVIEW

David Glimp, *Increase and Multiply: Governing Cultural Reproduction in Early Modern England* **(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003). ISBN: 0816639914**

Foucault has been a presence in studies of the English literary Renaissance at least since his visit to Berkeley in the early 1980s, often seen as the big bang moment of New Historicism, a mode of approach developed by the Shakespeare scholar Stephen Greenblatt but which has influenced the study of all periods and genres of literary production. New Historicism was and is many things; in Greenblatt's hands, it is a vigorous genre of writing that defies in many ways the artificial disciplinary divisions between the critical and creative. Commencing with the description of an early modern anecdote, the genre reads small cultural moments to tell big stories about big power. Despite the fact that Foucault was not much for big bang narratives, nor for the notion that monolithic power structures such as the state or commerce determine absolutely the governed lives of humans, the narrative suggests that New Historicism consistently finds cultural subversion to be "contained" by the order it would challenge by virtue of its relation to Foucault. On the other hand, New Historicism and other literary approaches to history since the 1970s have usefully questioned, after Foucault, the categorical difference between literary and historical documents. In their claims for "the historicity of [literary] texts and the textuality of history" these new historicisms have changed in irrevocable and positive ways our approaches to the study of English literature. Shakespeare is now a dense historical archive, while letters, conduct manuals, navigational treatises and tracts on health are mined for their rhetorical strategies and narrative structures. The discourses revealed in such works are examined in moments of creative tension as they provide differing representations of and commentary on living and knowing in the early modern period.

The problem remains that for some historians and literary scholars, (many of whom appear not to have read Foucault), Foucault *is* New Historicism and especially its weaknesses; in this regard, Foucault as "author function" can evoke hostility in the interlocutors of those who cite him. Historians complain that not only were Foucault's methods faulty, but that the arguments he made about crime and punishment, sexuality and health

cannot be applied to the English case, that the determinist Foucault, who complained of "monumental history," cannot explain English history, with its many checks and balances on royal power. Yet, as David Glimp's book ably shows, it is because of the complex nature of political and social culture of the English sixteenth century that this period can be called "early modern" and that Foucault's work on government and the subject is so useful. Close attention to Foucault's writings on the subject and population and to his recently published lectures suggest that his reading program did include early English works as well as works by revisionist English historians such as Christopher Hill.[1] David Cressy, perhaps Hill's successor in stature and influence, acknowledges, "if I am sensitized to ambiguity, conscious of the disciplinary construction of discourse – the textuality of history as well as the historicity of texts – that in itself may be a sign that Foucault's cultural influence is more pervasive than most empirical social historians would wish to avow." [2]

Perhaps because of the presence of this lingering hostility to Foucault within scholarly communities not many literary critics have visited more recent developments in genealogical studies that have occurred among social and political scientists in Britain, Australia and North America. David Glimp's book, *Increase and Multiply: Governing Cultural Reproduction in Early Modern England* is an exception in this regard. Glimp attends to the historicity of literary texts by Shakespeare and Milton as well as to the productive discourse, the "textuality" of a wide range of documents concerning people and government. More interesting, complex and historically illuminating than an investigation of a "dominant order" that contains that which would subvert it, "[t]his book examines how early modern literary practice acknowledges, contributes to, resists, or disavows the dynamics that have as their unanticipated and unplanned outcome the development of population as a theoretical and practical construct."[3] While Foucault himself considered the significance of the late eighteenth-century work of Thomas Malthus, the first demographical theorist, Glimp examines both the scientific and literary discourse around people and value that developed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and that made Malthusian thinking possible. He elucidates the impetus, from the reign of Henry VIII, to register and count the English people, as well as to consider discrete populations such as immigrants and those who died of the plague. Following Ian Hacking, Glimp also attends

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1   See Michel Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-1976*. (New York: Picador, 1997), especially p. 290.

2   David Cressy, "Foucault, Stone, Shakespeare, and Social History" in *English Literary Renaissance 21 (*1991): 121-33: 122.

3   David Glimp, *Increase and Multiply: Governing Cultural Reproduction in Early Modern England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), xii.

to evidence that demonstrates the desire by authorities to find the means to "make up" more of the right kind of people and less of the wrong kind.

Examining a wide range of techniques, from census taking, to education, to the promotion of self-help for the ambitious, Glimp emphasizes the liberal nature of such government and thus its vulnerability to failure. In literary studies the "intentional fallacy" is considered to be the erroneous assumption that every effect of a literary text is there by virtue of a conscious authorial plan. We might apply the term as well to the notion that every form of government in an historical period can be credited as a design of the state and that every governmental act was successful in its intended aim. By contrast, Glimp declares that, like Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller, he sees government as "'a congenitally failing operation'…[in which there is an] imperfect match between objectives and outcomes…Government aspires to perfect administrative effectiveness, but people resist, accidents happen, unanticipated situations arise, officials differ about how to proceed."[4] Glimp observes as well, how, for Foucault and for himself in this book, the study of government is always also the study of ethics in that it reveals "the manner in which people relate to themselves, the forms through which they are able to scrutinize, understand and reflect upon themselves, to govern their existence, and to modify their actions and capacities."[5]

Increase and Multiply links the political technologies that accompany the conceptual apparatus of population to the less scientific and much more diffuse project of governing "behavior that may be said to be generative," that is, productive in the world. Glimp shows how Tudor insider Sir Thomas Smith's *A Discourse of the Commonweal* (1549) is one of the first political works to approach the problem of governing generation through "policy," a word synonymous in the period with "police." He concludes that "[a]lthough 'police science' never developed in England to the extent it did in Germany, especially in Prussia, the discursive and practical emphasis on 'policy' suggests comparable effects."[6] As any reader of English drama will have observed, however, in the latter part of the sixteenth century, the word "policy" attains a negative denotation; it is associated with "craftiness or subterfuge, acts of ambition, self-centred duplicity, or the manipulative pursuits of self-interest."[7] Foucault himself argues that "police science" was fundamentally different from Machiavellianism. For early modern English writers, however, calling "policy" European and Machiavellian was shorthand for objecting to its alien intrusion into English lives, just as

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4   Glimp, *Increase and Multiply*, 16.

5   Glimp, *Increase and Multiply*, 18.

6   Glimp, *Increase and Multiply*, 9. I make a similar argument about the emergence of "policy" during the reign of Henry VIII in *Governmental Arts in Early Tudor England*, Ashgate Press, 2005.

7   Glimp, *Increase and Multiply*, 10.

"Machiavel" became a pejorative term that served to signal a stage villain. Glimp continues to demonstrate the "textuality of history" when he observes that in the political works of Smith, one way such government was to operate was through the aesthetic power of mimesis; English citizens were to absorb and reproduce themselves through the exemplarity of classical models of being in the world.

Ancient civil "actors" were most of all "active" and the new valuation of the *vita activa* was frequently juxtaposed to the vice of idleness, as in Smith who calls the idle "'caterpillars of the Commonwealth.'"[8] Within this new ethos of the active citizenry, Glimp shows the increasing importance of vocation to the ends of government: "One's calling…provides a means for organizing activity into a life of sobriety, discipline, rational effort, and constraint."[9] His understanding of how discrete populations were to be governed through professional concerns allows Glimp to demonstrate "the manner in which the administrative apprehension of persons does not necessarily oppose, ignore, or suppress, but rather is perfectly consistent with, individual or collective agency."[10] Thus Glimp's project is again differentiated from historical work of the last twenty years such as that of New Historicism and some feminist approaches, work that conceptually opposes freedom and government.

Glimp begins his discussion of literary texts by observing that the humanist education program that was launched to produce a race of governed governors bred a surplus educational product that helped to generate the English Renaissance itself. There was now a dangerous surplus of readers, writers and rhetoricians, not all of whom could be safely employed in administrative posts. The great poet and soldier Philip Sidney himself, while on the one hand charging poetry with "'virtue breeding delightedness,'" on the other hand worried that "'all the Muses were got with childe, to bring forth bastard Poets.'"[11] The most dangerous product of poet fecundity in the period was the stage play, feared for its capacity to produce through mimetic effect the villains, traitors and sinners that it realized in performance as well as for the occasion of its performance, the large social gathering. Glimp presents, in this regard, the rhetoric of Thomas Heywood, a defender of the stage, who employs a lexicon of biological generation to argue that the stage was responsible for producing the greatest military figure of all time, Alexander, through the theatrical representation of the exemplar Achilles upon whom Alexander modeled himself. As for the early English plays themselves, in particular those of Shakespeare, Glimp suggests that

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8   Glimp, *Increase and Multiply*, 19.
9   Glimp, *Increase and Multiply, 20.*
10   Glimp, *Increase and Multiply*, 24.
11   Glimp, *Increase and Multiply*, 37.

their contribution is not only their claims or counter-claims about their own productive generative capacities, but also their grasp of the complexities of the new governmental forms that would aim at the reproduction of the "complete citizen" through an idealized domestic and political economy. Glimp suggests that Shakespeare answers charges against the theatre "both in his thematic treatment of domestic economies and in the various inductions, epilogues, and choruses, moments in which an actor speaks directly to the audience gathered at the playhouse…During these liminal moments, Shakespeare reflects upon the relation of the stage to its audience and to society at large, and specifies his understanding of the governmental and reproductive impact of theatrical activity."[12] Glimp considers William Petty's treatise *Political Arithmetic* to be a key text in governmental thinking about issues of population and cultural reproduction. He calls Shakespeare's approach to the kind of thinking that would make Petty's text possible a kind of "theatrical arithmetic." In Shakespeare's theatrical arithmetic, Glimp concludes, the playwright exposes the limits of measures that would gage the performativity of the stage in terms of its positive social reproductive capacities.

In his analysis of such theatrical moments, Glimp contributes to feminist attention to domestic matters in the plays, as they reflected lived life in early modern England. The English father, he demonstrates, was not himself in any way ungoverned within the patriarchal system he was charged with reproducing: "within the strictures of 'oeconomicall science,' all members of the household were, albeit differentially, subject to a regimen of acquisition, savings, and expenditure, a regimen orientated toward preventing waste, ensuring a frugal mode of existence, and extending the family estate into the future."[13] Stage comedy, with its obligatory multi-marriage conclusions was, it has been argued, an aesthetic representation of communal fecundity and patriarchal control. In Shakespeare's hands, argues Glimp, such endings are so often troubled—angry fathers, thwarted lovers, cross-dressed heroines remaining on the stage-- because the playwright aims to disturb such an instrumental view of domestic economy and of the stage as its folk representative.

Glimp also reads Shakespeare's history plays in terms of governed reproduction, (especially those that culminate in the narrative of *Henry V)* and as a direct address to the political desire for a proliferation of Henries, ideal military men, and for a stage that would aid in such reproduction. Glimp provides a wonderful discussion of Shakespeare's last and very late history play, *Henry VIII;* he suggests that this play's saturation with the language of reproduction constitutes a defense of the stage's positive role in the

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12   Glimp, *Increase and Multiply*, 69.
13   Glimp, *Increase and Multiply*, 73.

"governed generation" of England, a role that Glimp links to the theatre's reception by women. As the Epilogue to *Henry VIII* declares, "[a]ll the expected good w'are like to hear / For this play at this time, is only in / The merciful construction of good women." Glimp thus concludes that "[p]lays both construct and are constructed by the women in the audience, who in turn are able to 'conduct the conduct' of their men…and direct that conduct into approval of the theater's efforts."[14]

Glimp turns to Milton's works on education and government in treatises such as *Of Education, Of Reformation* and *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, as well as to his poetry, to show the poet's concern with the same set of problems. Close reading of the treatises for lexicons of productivity and waste, the valuation of speed and expediency allows Glimp to challenge the notion that Milton was a defender of liberal education, instead linking him to thinkers against whom he is often opposed. On the other hand, Glimp argues, Milton was no Platonist or Puritan; he believed in the value of art and even of rhetorical excess in the political project of his imagined new England:

Milton constitutes his extraordinarily prolific linguistic abundance as licensed expenditure of copia by linking it with the governmental domain of the household, the primary classical locus of education…Thus his work participates in a crucial reconfiguration central to a genealogy of modern forms of governance. To speak of a totality as an 'economy' [as Milton does in *Of Education*] requires an abstraction of the 'oeconomic' framework out of its initial formulation in the household, and dispersal of its explanatory and regulative force to other arenas of existence."[15]

In his last chapter, "Paradisal Arithmetic," Glimp reads Milton's greatest poem, *Paradise Lost* with Petty's *Political Arithmetic,* a work that, in Graham Burchell's words is "'a form of the state's secular knowledge of itself and of rival states. [It] objectifies individuals and their activities as calculable component elements and forces contributing to the state's wealth and strength'"[16] Literary critics have seen Milton's poem as a challenge to Petty, but Glimp sees Milton as neither contained by its understandings nor necessarily subversive of its aims. Milton's *Paradise Lost* tempers Petty's instrumentalist approach to politics and population through its introduction of theological and classical discourses that challenge that instrumentalism. In the poem's attention to work as a preparation for the next world and not this one and in its privileging of the scene of education as "masculine parthenogenesis,"[17] Petty's "political arithmetic" is called into question. Glimp ends his book by suggesting that Milton's discourse on people and the

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14   Glimp, *Increase and Multiply*, 114.
15   Glimp, *Increase and Multiply*, 138, 141.
16   Glimp, *Increase and Multiply*, 148.
17   Glimp, *Increase and Multiply*, 170.

nation anticipates Malthus in that Malthus, though seeing himself as a scientist like Petty, believed like Milton in divine design for population growth and for the distribution of wealth related to such growth. And like Malthus as well, Milton saw as the answer to the problem of supply and demand the self-government of eros by all citizens. Thus Glimp finds in Milton a very liberal answer to the question of freedom and nation. Glimp renders his book a contribution to the "history of the present" when he concludes that "[t]he emphasis on the capacity for self-government, which, especially in the realm of erotic behavior, carries with it the imperative to regulate oneself, is a linchpin of the neoliberal dispensation and the attendant sexual regimes that characterize our contemporary moment."[18]

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18   Glimp, *Increase and Multiply*, 180.