Television Discourse and Governmentality

CONSIDERING *DA VINCI'S INQUEST* AND *DA VINCI'S CITY HALL* AS CITIZEN PROJECTS

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INTRODUCTION: The *Da Vinci* Series, Governmentality, and Political Economy

The episode begins with a blurry shot of we do not know what. The shot slowly sharpens to reveal a close up of a woman's feet in high heel platform shoes. It is nighttime and she walks on a glistening wet street, suggesting she might be a prostitute. We hear a car pull up and we watch as she climbs in and is driven away. The shot rack-focuses from close up to long shot to reveal another sex-trade worker further down the road. Although the shot is in colour, the setting, dark atmosphere, and high con-trast cinematography all evoke a strong feeling of *film noir:* we are on the wrong side of the tracks, in seedy territory, immersed in urban decadence. We almost expect to cut to a private eye, to Sam Spade or Mike Hammer on a stake out; or to a sexy but deceitful femme fatale running away from her crime. But instead we cut to the back seat of a limousine where two men debate the merits of a red-light district in Vancouver, Canada. This is no *film noir.* This is episode three of the first season of *Da Vinci's City Hall,* entitled "Isn't Very Pretty But You Can Smoke It" (November 6, 2005), and the men in the limo are newly elected mayor Dominic Da Vinci and his assistant Sam Berger. As the scene continues, the two men pull over to the side of the road and exit the limo to meet Paula, the head of the Prostitutes' Association. Mayor Da Vinci then explains to his sceptical companions exactly how he imagines his red-light dis-trict will work, how it will be regulated, and how he expects the city police to play a helpful role in his plan—whether they like it or not. In less than five minutes we have shifted from the expectations established by a certain filmic style to something entirely different: governmentality and biopolitics. But this is nothing new for the *Da Vinci* series.

The *Da Vinci* series began in 1998 as *Da Vinci's Inquest* on Canada's public broadcaster, the CBC, and was produced by the private production company Haddock Entertainment. It aired for seven seasons as *Da Vinci's Inquest,* for one season as *Da Vinci's City Hall,* and officially ended on June 14, 2008 as a CBC made-for-television movie called *The Quality of Life.* In

Mayor Da Vinci

2002, when the show began its fifth season, it was broadcast in 45 countries worldwide.[1] Until recently repeats aired in Canada on the specialty channel Showcase and currently the first three seasons are available on DVD through Acorn Media. Along with the Degrassi series, the Da Vinci series is one of Canada's most successful television productions; and like the Degrassi series its success seems the result of a direct engagement with real matters of public concern—an engagement so direct that key consultant to the show, Larry Campbell (the inspiration for the Da Vinci character), used the show to run for mayor of Vancouver in 2002 and as mayor initiated controversial harm-reduction policies promoted within the discourse of the show.[2]

This analysis will use a Foucauldian governmental approach that borrows from political economy. A governmental approach is a context-specific approach that analyzes cultural institutions, products, and discourses in terms of tactics and strategies of influence and control where power and knowledge work together to regulate, manage, problematize, and maintain and/or change behaviour and thought.[3] This approach assumes that "discourses structure action, belief and conduct"[4] and it has been applied to both film and television.[5] It also assumes that discourses compete with each other as "wills to knowledge" and "wills to power" in what Foucault calls "truth games."[6] Understood in this way, discourse is both more and less than ideological. That is, this approach understands that tactics and strategies can be resisted, rejected, and contested both by those addressed and by others seeking to address the same audience. As Foucault says, "[t]he power relationship and freedom's refusal to submit cannot... be separated."[7] However, this approach also understands that the types and forms of knowledge and power used to underlie the "truth" of any particular discourse will still have an impact on that text's ability to maintain, control, or change thought. A governmental analysis of discourse in film, television, and new media, then, is not so much concerned with how the spectator is hailed to accept as true, uncritically, a certain ideology, or, alternatively, how a certain discourse can be deconstructed to reveal its inherent contradictions, or even how a multiplicity of spectator positions can frame a text in different ways; rather, this approach is concerned with the methods, practices, and knowledges used to try to persuade spectators to accept as valid particular perspectives—perspectives seeking to maintain, control, or change enough thought about an issue or problem so as to have an impact on that problem. As such, this approach should also work to uncover the political, economic, and institutional influences reinforcing these discursive tactics and strategies. This is why the discipline of political economy is perfectly suited to dovetail with a governmental analysis. According to Vincent Mosco, political economy is the study of "the social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources."[8] How discourses, especially media discourses, are constituted politically and economically prior to and during distribution and consumption have definite effects on their governmental influence. For Mosco, the key entry point for political economy is the process of commodification, but this process must also be understood in relation to processes of spatialization and structuration.[9] While this paper does refer to the profit-driven commercialization of Canadian television, a process of commodification, and also to

the relationship between the regional politics of Vancouver and the national politics of Canada, a spacialized relationship, the political economic emphasis in this paper will be on how the discourse of the Da Vinci series participates in structuring and promoting certain kinds of social relations, particularly power relations; in this case, as they pertain to the relationship between certain governmental institutions (the police and coroner's office) and certain vulnerable populations in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (drug users and sex-trade workers). Of course, for Foucault, technologies of power intersect with technologies of production, technologies of sign systems, and technologies of the self.[10] As such, the Foucauldian emphasis here will be on how the narrative sign system of the show is constituted with the power to influence and change thought and action (or the self) on the issue of harm-reduction through productive influences. In other words, this paper will use as its entry point that intersection where the show's explicit textual meaning meets both its socio-political context and (some of) the creative elements of its production. I am using this as my entry point to highlight the show's obvious political agenda, which seems to operate above and beyond any desire of the show's producers to generate profit.

PART I: Television as Government, the CBC, and Broadcasting in Canada

To understand how the Da Vinci series sought to influence public policy and change thought we must first understand how television discourse operates governmentally, both in Canada and in general. In their study of American reality television, Laurie Ouellette and James Hay place television in "an analytic of government" that emphasizes television as "a cultural technology that, working outside 'public powers,' governmentalizes by presenting individuals and populations as objects of assessment and intervention, and by soliciting their participation in the cultivation of particular habits, ethics, behaviours, and skills."[11] Ouellette and Hay cite the work of Foucauldian scholar Nikolas Rose[12] in their explanation of how television governmentalizes. They explain that Rose's work is "useful for situating television within a larger history of social and cultural technologies that have been called upon to create citizens 'who do not need to be governed by others, but will govern themselves.'"[13] Of course, their study focuses entirely on American reality television. As already noted, The Da Vinci series is a narrative co-production between Haddock Entertainment and Canada's public broadcaster, the CBC. As such, the discourse in the Da Vinci series does not work outside public powers, nor is it specifically concerned with creating citizens who can govern themselves. Rather, the Da Vinci series is concerned, at least in part, with changing citizens' thoughts on how state government should approach certain issues, issues such as drug addiction and the sex trade. The idea of television as a public instrument for creating citizens, whether in action or in thought, is also explored in a collection of work on Canadian television edited by Zoe Druick and Aspa Kotsopoulus.[14] They define Canadian television as a "citizen project", one similar to the public initiatives "epitomized in the mandates of the CBC and NFB [National Film Board]," but they note in recent years these initiatives have been "challenged by the private sector's market populism and by neo-liberal arguments against public sector

Coroner Da Vinci

spending."[15] They describe the second part of their book, "Making Citizens," as adopting a Foucauldian perspective. Quoting Foucauldian scholar Tony Bennett[16] they describe television "as policy" and as being "inescapably normative... bringing about a reformation of habits, beliefs, values—in short, ways of life."[17] In other words, both in its private neo-liberalist capacity, and in its public nation-building capacity, television operates as a form of government. However, this is not to say that it operates fluidly or without contradiction. Nor is it to suggest television's governmental capacity can be reduced to anything so simple as "media effects." Rather, it suggests that television is one of many media forms that serve to frame and delineate, as well as to produce and maintain, possibilities of thought and behaviour, including forms of resistance. Furthermore, it is to suggest that television operates within a matrix of mutually constituted power relations.

In her study of Canadian regional television Sera Tinic situates the development of *Da Vinci's Inquest* within a larger problematic of power relations inherent to the CBC.[18] She uses Foucault's account of how an administration and politics of knowledge can lead to regional and territorial forms of domination to show that "the CBC maintains a geography of power whereby access to, and information about, the development process is concentrated at the centre and withheld from the periphery."[19] These power relations are further complicated by an "often unwieldy process of cultural negotiation and... conflicting goals among independent producers, regional managers, and Toronto network executives as they attempt to develop drama that represents life in the region[s] to national audiences."[20] The history of the CBC and its role as Canada's national broadcaster is too multifaceted to explain in detail here. However, it is important to know that the CBC was originally intended as Canada's only national broadcaster, that production was supposed to be situated in the provinces and the regions, and that its mandate was conceived within an environment of anxiety and fear surrounding national unity and American cultural imperialism.[21] In spite of this, today the CBC is but one of many broadcasters in an industry dominated by private enterprise and centralized production, and reliant on revenues derived largely from advertising and the purchase of inexpensive American programming.[22] Within this highly competitive market, the CBC exists on a public/private funding formula comprised of a yearly parliamentary grant (one that is traditionally decreased rather than increased every year) combined with approximately 30% commercial revenue.[23] In other words, the geography of power that operates at the CBC is one that operates within a larger political economy of power controlled by a private industry that tends to dominate and eclipse the CBC in spite of its government mandated purpose. However, because the CBC explicitly serves a socio-political purpose and does not have as its goal the pursuit of profit, it still sometimes attracts more inventive private production companies who are interested in taking certain narrative risks.[24]

In this light Tinic's description of how *Da Vinci's Inquest* came to be chosen as the CBC's flagship west coast drama is important, even if her analysis is short-sighted. While she is correct that of the five Vancouver pitches the CBC had to choose from *Da Vinci Inquest* appeared the more generic choice,[25] she fails to consider the actual discourse of the show. Of course, she is also correct that the show's pitch fit into "the corporation's view of 'the business, the materials and the times'—namely, that the urban-crime drama held high audience possibilities both domestically and internationally."[26] However, Tinic describes the show as "a 1990s version of *Quincy* merged with Britain's *Cracker*, [that] reinforced the enduring sentiment that Toronto's definition of regional production was primarily concerned with setting rather than socio-cultural specificity."[27] Yet, as Glen Lowry points out (and as this essay will further demonstrate), the show's socio-cultural specificity is actually quite strong:

> **Entering Vancouver as social space at a particular historical juncture, *Da Vinci's Inquest* was both local and timely despite the obvious generic antecedents (*Wojek, Quincy, Cracker*, etc.) it brought to bear, and this made the series interesting for audiences in Vancouver and in other parts of the nation or across the globe.[28]**

In Tinic's defence, the show was only in its first season when she wrote her analysis. But she still fails to recognize that the controversial and regionally specific issue of Vancouver's missing women was addressed even in the first season (see below). Nevertheless, what Tinic draws attention to here is the difficulty faced by producers in developing programs outside the market paradigm, even programs developed in Canada by the CBC for the public good. Thus, the Corporation's view of the business of television and its centralized organization of power are actually tactics and strategies of control developed to negotiate the commercialized environment within which it has no choice but to operate. That the creators and producers of the *Da Vinci* series were able to negotiate around these tactics and strategies for nearly eight seasons is testimony to the power their discourse has had in influencing public policy on a number of issues. However, it is also testimony to the fact that their discourse tends to reinforce centralized forms of government.

PART II: The *Da Vinci* Discourse on Harm-reduction and Poverty as Biopolitics

The scene from *Da Vinci's City Hall* described at the beginning of this article harkens back to the second season of *Da Vinci's Inquest*. In that season's two-part finale, "Fantasy" and "Reality" (January 12 and 19, 2000), then city coroner Dominic Da Vinci debates city councillor Jack Pierce on a radio talk show. They heatedly discuss the role of television as an influence on violence in society and they discuss the merits of a red-light district as a response to the issue of Vancouver's missing women. This debate is inter-cut with a storyline, also shot in a style evoking *film noir*, of a man picking up a sex-trade worker intending to murder her. As the police arrest this man, back on the radio show Pierce sarcastically suggests that next Da Vinci will want a hooker's union with hazard pay. Da Vinci responds, "That's the best idea I've heard from you all day." In reality, at the time these episodes aired, Vancouver really was facing a crisis involving more than 50 missing women, although Robert Picton had not yet been arrested, nor had the bodies buried on his pig farm been discovered.[29] So, considering police in Vancouver did not actively begin investigating these murders until August

2001[30]—a year and a half after the airings of "Fantasy" and "Reality"—and considering the numerous other references made to Vancouver's missing women in the first three seasons of the show,[31] it would seem that *Da Vinci's Inquest,* by drawing national attention to this issue, may have actually participated in encouraging the police to begin their investigation. In any case, by 2005, when *Da Vinci's City Hall* was demonstrating exactly how a red-light district might operate, Robert Picton had been arrested and was facing trial for multiple homicides, and Larry Campbell (former mayor of Vancouver, former consultant to the show, the inspiration for the character of Da Vinci, co-writer of the second season episodes cited above, former chief coroner of British Columbia, former regional coroner of Vancouver, and former RCMP officer) had just been appointed to the Canadian Senate to protect his recently established safe-injection site.[32]

A safe-injection site as a response to the growing drug problem in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside is also an issue explored in *Da Vinci's Inquest.* In the sixth season (2003-2004), coroner Da Vinci convinces then Mayor Russ Hathaway to establish one. The airing of this season coincided with Mayor Campbell's real-life three-year struggle to open his own safe-injection site, despite massive opposition.[33] Red-light districts and safe-injection sites as policy initiatives designed to deal with problems surrounding prostitution and drug addiction fall under a general initiative called harm-reduction. In its simplest form harm-reduction is a strategy that addresses and reduces "the health, social and economic harms associated with substance use and addictions"[34] by focusing on public health rather than prohibition.[35] It took Campbell his entire term as mayor to establish Canada's first (and only) safe-injection site, but because he did not seek a second term he never had the opportunity to begin discussions on a red-light district.[36] Campbell's difficulty in enacting his plans were a result of harm-reduction being "at odds with the prevailing framework of international drug control, a framework which rests on law enforcement and the criminalization of behaviours related to illicit drug use;"[37] this in spite of the proven benefits of harm-reduction initiatives such as needle exchange programs (also covered in the discourse of the *Da Vinci* series) and safe-injection sites.[38] In fact, in keeping with this prevailing framework, Canada's Conservative government has been working to shut down Vancouver's safe-injection site,[39] this in spite of their own study that supports expanding such facilities.[40] Considering this, the discourse of the *Da Vinci's* series was not just "influential," it did not just represent an "ideological" point of view—it had a governmental reality that actively inserted itself into Canadian policy debate; and it has the potential to continue to do so today through DVD sales and repeated airings of the show. In fact, were Showcase and the CBC to resume airing the show in syndication now it could influence debate in Ontario, where the recent decision to strike down prostitution laws is currently being appealed by the federal and provincial governments.[41] However, the governmental power of the show does not just reside in its ability to influence public policy—it also resides in its ability to represent governmentality itself.

In *Security, Territory, Population* Foucault defines governmentality in terms of the administrative state that emerged in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and traces how it came to operate in modern liberal democracies. He describes governmentality as "the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex, power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge,[42] and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument."[43] Of course, he includes, as part of governmentality's regulatory form, discipline and biopolitics.[44] A seventh season episode of *Da Vinci* entitled "Before They Twist The Knife" (January 23, 2005) demonstrates just how discipline and biopolitics can operate together, even when in conflict and even when lodged between neo-liberal ideology and the needs of the welfare state. In this episode, a confrontation between a drug addict and a police officer outside Da Vinci's safe-injection site ends with both dead and creates a public relations crisis for Da Vinci. The first half of the episode sets the stage for a *Law and Order* style mystery where it is implied, via contradictory witness testimony, that the police may have violated a non-harassment policy outside the site. As such, a dramatic conflict between the police chief (discipline) and the coroner's office (biopolitics) seems inevitable. However, midway through the episode all narrative expectations are turned upside down as Da Vinci inexplicably ignores these contradictions. He concludes, "maybe the response from the Vancouver members was less than perfect, [but] I think that maybe they'll come up clean in this one." Immediately after offering this assessment, the strategy underlying his conclusion becomes clear: with the resignation of Mayor Hathaway imminent, Da Vinci plans to run for mayor himself. Rather than risk a high profile confrontation between two lower levels of government, Da Vinci decides to protect his safe-injection site by sacrificing the "truth" of a double homicide so as to strike out for a higher office. A number of things are important here. First, a governmental conflict between discipline and regulation is expressed here in terms of interpersonal tactics and strategies rather than as an external public debate. However, this actually pointed to the real public debate that was occurring in Vancouver at that time.[45] Second, by emphasizing Da Vinci as *the* individual capable of negotiating these disciplinary and biopolitical conflicts, an implicit assumption of neo-liberalism, individualism, is invoked in a welfare state context. That is, it is not the State, or any particular governmental organization that steps in to solve this problem. Rather it is these organizations that constitute the problem, and it requires the individual autonomy of Da Vinci to smooth over the contradictions and make these governmental organizations work harmoniously. However, this does not extend as far as the individualized self-government Oullette and Hay argue is encouraged by reality television. Rather, here Da Vinci plays a pastoral role.[46] That is, he situates himself as the one individual capable of governing his flock of Downtown Eastside drug users, sex-trade workers, and sympathetic police officers, a flock that is apparently incapable of governing themselves without his help. Finally, the airing of this episode coincided with Larry Campbell's last year as mayor and thus (as politically cynical as it may be) the episode serves to legitimate Campbell's real-life struggle to establish his own safe-injection site, just as the show three years earlier served to politically legitimize his real-life run for mayor. As such, and as controversial as the *Da Vinci* series may be, it nevertheless maintains the governmental systems it

criticizes. In doing so, however, it privileges government as public initiative while still buying into certain key anti-State neo-liberal assumptions. Having said this, harm-reduction is not the only issue explored in the *Da Vinci* series; there are clearly other representations at play here beyond the show's explicit intended discourse.

For example, in Kim Elliott's examination of discourses of poverty in the show, she emphasizes those story lines that "depict real issues and struggles" in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and notes the show's "clear sensitivity to issues of representation" but maintains that it still sensationalizes and distorts the reality of Canadian poverty.[47] She writes, "[i]n its attempt to accurately represent the area while avoiding certain kinds of stereotyping, *Da Vinci's Inquest* tends to over-represent this space as white and young" and it "involves a criminalization of poverty through a focus on deviance in its portrayal of prostitution, drug abuse and homelessness—the images that

'sell.'"[48] Elliott, who defines discourse as the "lens through which people construct reality," explains that one of the ways discourse circulates is through media representations.[49] Elliott is working within an established tradition here. Television discourse is often treated as representational and ideological.[50] However, to do a governmental study of discourse is to treat it as more; it is to treat it as a complex social function, as a tactic that intervenes, both directly and indirectly, in decisions surrounding social relations and the distribution of resources. It is to treat both the technology of the discourse and the discourse itself as a strategy invested with power relations.

Of course, Elliott's analysis does not lack importance for not exploring governmentality in this specific way. Her discussion of the relationship between poverty in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and its representation in *Da Vinci's Inquest* is both insightful and useful. She is quite correct in saying the poverty represented in *Da Vinci* uses images that "sell." My earlier

Man arrested for murder of missing women guides Da Vinci and police to forest graveyard

description of how *Da Vinci's City Hall* uses the entertainment value of a *film noir* style to introduce a serious discussion on the merits of a red-light district illustrates this point. Furthermore, Elliott links the problematics of the political power underlying harm-reduction to the problematics of the discursive power underlying representation. As such, I do not see my work as improving on Elliott's. Rather, I see it as working alongside it, opening up a different space in which to explore how the discourse in the series operates. And Elliott is certainly not blind to my concern. She acknowledges, even if she does not pursue this line of reasoning, that the show does "in fact seek to insert itself into public social policy debates."[51] What I will show next is how the show did this through the material "knowledge" of Larry Campbell.

PART III: Larry Campbell, Dominic Da Vinci, and Governmental Roles

When *Da Vinci's Inquest* was first developed Campbell was the chief coroner of British Columbia and friend to Chris Haddock, creator of the show.[52] As such, Campbell was quickly brought on as a consultant; however, as the project progressed he shifted from being just a consultant to being the real-life basis for the character of Da Vinci.[53] With Campbell's ties to the show strengthened he soon became a regular on set, consulting on scripts and technical procedures. Part of his influence was to ensure (contrary to the usual hyperbolic tendency in television to exaggerate medical and scientific procedures for the purpose of entertainment) that the procedures followed in the *Da Vinci* series would be as accurate as possible. As Alexandra Gill explains, "Campbell realized he was being offered a rare opportunity to help take the oft-misunderstood coroner's job out from the shadows between the police department and the medical profession and show the public how it really does function as an investigative advocate for the dead."[54] The effect of this was to enhance a certain kind of realism in the show, but it was also to enhance the political value of the show's discourse. Campbell's lived knowledge as a real coroner infused the show with that knowledge, even if it was mediated through the entertainment of narrative. This is not to suggest that Campbell himself originated the discourse—far from it. But it is still important to consider the impact Campbell had on the show; and this impact is connected to the roles Campbell occupied in real life, the same roles Da Vinci occupied in the fiction of the show. These roles include RCMP officer, city coroner, and mayor.[55]
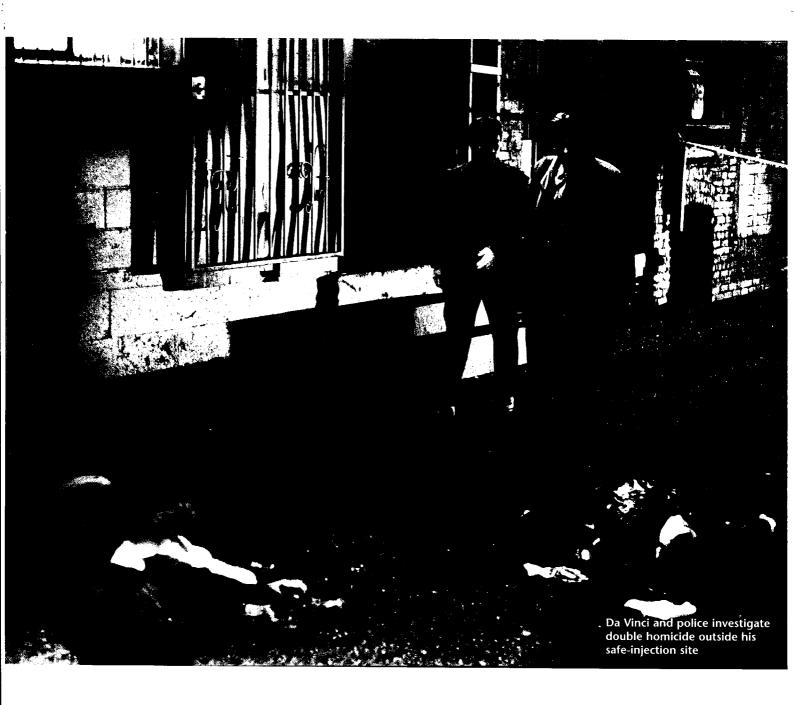
RCMP officer, city coroner, and mayor are all roles associated with state apparatuses that deal with mechanisms, techniques, and technologies of power connected to discipline and biopolitics. Foucault discusses the relationship between discipline and biopolitics in *Society Must Be Defended* where he distinguishes sharply between technologies of discipline, which developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and are applied to individual bodies, and technologies of biopolitics, which developed at the end of the eighteenth century and are applied "to man-as-living-being."[56] He explains that biopolitics "is addressed to a multiplicity of men, not to the extent that they are nothing more than their individual bodies, but to the extent that they form... a global mass that is affected by overall processes characteristic of birth, death, production, illness, and so on."[57] He notes, this technology of biopower "does not

exclude disciplinary technology, but it does dovetail into it, modify it to some extent, and above all, uses it by sort of infiltrating it, embedding itself in existing disciplinary techniques."[58] In other words, while technologies of discipline and biopower are certainly different, they are not necessarily separate. As already discussed, this dovetailed relationship is especially noticeable in the discourse of the *Da Vinci* series. The fact that both Campbell "in reality" and Da Vinci "in fiction" embody careers that straddle and manifest both of these technologies is one of the elements that makes the discourse in this series particularly important as a governmental tactic.

In a first season *Inquest* episode entitled "Gabriel" (November 25, 1998) Da Vinci investigates the murder of an underage teenage boy beaten to death for working as an RCMP informant. During an off-the-record interrogation of the officer for whom the boy worked, Da Vinci's invokes his own past in the RCMP as he chastises the man for having abused his position of trust by needlessly placing the boy's life in danger. In a standard shot-reverse-shot conversation set during a casual stroll, the man justifies his tactics as being part of the rules of the game: "I busted him. He rolled over to get a better deal. Those are the rules of engagement." Da Vinci replies, "Well, maybe it's time those rules got rewritten." Here, Da Vinci applies his biopolitical role as coroner to his former disciplinary role as narcotics officer. Now more concerned with the prevention of future deaths than with the arrest of current drug offenders, now more concerned with the general health of child informants than with the need to punish and imprison those who circumvent the drug laws, he decides to push for a change in police procedures so as to protect future informants from unnecessary harm. As such, he uses his power as city coroner to threaten the police with a public inquest. And yet he still respects the police position. He does not "roll" the officer "over" or compromise the officer's cases. Rather, he rebukes him in private, and later addresses his political concerns to the police administration. Even the way the scene is shot—in a comfortable, visually non-confrontational over-the-shoulder shot-reverse-shot conversation—this suggests Da Vinci's complicity. Here biopower and discipline are certainly not in opposition; they work hand-in-hand to normalize and regulate from opposite directions. And, as already discussed, when Da Vinci's position as coroner no longer provides him the influence he needs to instigate the policy changes he desires, rather than give up, or take his fight to the streets in radical revolutionary protest, he moves his way up the ladder of power to the mayor's office. If he cannot establish his harm-reduction policies in his governmental role as corner, then he will do so in his governmental role as mayor, where he is given political influence over both the city police and the coroner's office, over both discipline and biopower.

However, Dominic Da Vinci "the man" is not the important figure here, and neither is Larry Campbell. The important figures are RCMP officer, coroner, and mayor. The "knowledge" of procedure, the "knowledge" of regulation, the "knowledge" behind the information, and the "knowledge" behind the political "truth" that emerges in this discourse are all contingent on the "knowledge" acquired through the experience of living these roles. The reason we trust the discourse of the *Da Vinci* series as being authentic, even if some may not agree with it as

Da Vinci and police investigate double homicide outside his safe-injection site

actual policy, is because we trust the sources of knowledge from which it comes. Larry Campbell RCMP officer, Larry Campbell city coroner, Larry Campbell mayor, and even after the fact, Larry Campbell senator, all serve (along side his roles as co-writer and consultant to the show) to legitimate the knowledgeable truth of the discourse the show engages in. Even if our personal knowledge of the RCMP, B.C. Coroner's Office, and Office of the Mayor of Vancouver is limited, even if we do not know who Larry Campbell is, the "realistic" portrayal of these roles in the show cannot help but work its way through the discourse in a manner that will impact us as citizens. However, for many people, especially in Vancouver, Campbell's association with the show was very public. His mayoral campaign slogan was "Mayor Da Vinci"[59] and even his senate biography refers to the show:

> [H]e became the inspiration behind the popular CBC drama *Da Vinci's Inquest*, as well as its spin-off, *Da Vinci's City Hall*. Larry Campbell was intimately involved with the television programs, writing and collaborating on scripts for the series.[60]

In other words, as much as Campbell's career legitimizes the discourse of the series, the series also legitimates Campbell's political career, and both legitimize the system within which the show and Larry Campbell operate. Lowry confirms much of what I have been saying:

> *Da Vinci's Inquest* focused on the work of City Coroner Dominic Da Vinci, a hard-living, hard-edged, mumbling but socially progressive every-

man modelled on real-life senator Larry Campbell, the former Vancouver mayor and ex-city coroner. With Larry Campbell's expert assistance as a consultant and writer, *Da Vinci's Inquest* was able to bring this mainstay of genre TV to life for prime-time audiences. In so doing, this series became a confluence of real-life social issues and the emergence of an unfolding political drama.[61]

In this sense the *Da Vinci* series may seem an anomaly. The direct relationship between the discourse of the show and the socio-political reality of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside operates in part through an active politician—but this is not usual for television narrative. One could argue that the ability of the show to have the influence it did necessarily required Larry Campbell's involvement. However, one could also argue that the impact Larry Campbell has had as a politician required the discourse of the show; there is no way to know whether Campbell's bid for mayor would have been successful without it. Besides, as I have already demonstrated, the *Da Vinci* series sought to insert itself into policy debates long before Campbell

Senator Larry Campbell

used the show to run for mayor—and even before his ties to the show became public knowledge. What is interesting here, then, are the multifaceted reciprocal relationships tying the show, Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, and Canadian politics all together into one picture.

CONCLUSION: The Da Vinci Series, Governmentality, and Future Research

My analysis of the *Da Vinci* series emphasizes the governmental roles of Larry Campbell as they operate through the governmental role of public television in Canada. However, this is not a complete account of governmentality and the *Da Vinci* series. Lowry, for example, reminds us that *Da Vinci's City Hall* was one of several popular shows cancelled following the 2005 CBC lockout.[62] He does not discuss this in depth, but a more detailed account of the political and economic conflicts operating within the CBC at that time would be an important contribution to this analysis. Also, Elliott concludes her analysis of 'discourses of poverty' in the series by discussing the impact of the show's production practices on the lived reality of the Downtown Eastside. Her paper points to the importance of considering Haddock Entertainment's role as a private institution that participated not only in governing the discourse of the show, but also in governing (however temporarily) the lives of the people living in the locations where the show was shot. As such, a more complete analysis of the *Da Vinci* series would need to address more thoroughly the creative role and production practices of this company and its employees. Elliott's paper further points to the importance of considering the subjective positions of the drug users and sex-trade workers represented in the show. This is also an area where future research could prove fruitful. Of course, by only addressing this one series, my analysis only considers television as a governmental form in a very limited way. Yet, when placed alongside the work of Ouellette and Hay and Druick and Kotsopoulos, it contributes to a picture of the multiplicity of ways that television *can* operate as what Foucault calls the "conduct of conduct"[63] and the "government of self and others."[64] But we must remember, for Foucault governmentality does not just operate as a technology of power; it also operates as a technology of the self. Future research on governmentality and media studies will need to address this aspect of discourse more thoroughly.

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NOTES
1   Glen Lowry, "*Da Vinci's Inquest:* Postmortem," in *Programming Reality: Perspectives on English-Canadian Television*, eds. Zoe Druick & Aspa Kotsopoulos (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008), 247; and Alexandra Gill, "Dissecting Da Vinci," *The Globe and Mail*, November 9, 2002, 13.
2   Lowry, 250.
3   Governmentality as an approach is rooted in a lecture Foucault delivered at the College de France on February 1, 1978, published as part of *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College de France 1977-1978*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 87-114. This lecture is also published as part of *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, eds. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 87-104. As well as drawing on a variety of other works by Foucault, this approach also draws specifically on the essay "The Subject and Power," in *Power*, ed. James D. Faubion

(New York: The New York Press, 2000), 326-348, originally published as an appendix to *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, eds. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 208-226.

4 Eamonn Carrabine, "Discourse, governmentality and translation," *Theoretical Criminality* 4.3 (2000): 311.

5 See Lee Grieveson, "On Governmentality and Screens," *Screen* 50.1 (2009): 180-187; Lee Grieveson and Haidee Wasson, eds, *Inventing Film Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Laurie Ouellette and James Hay, *Better Living Through Reality TV* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2008); and Zoe Druick and Aspa Kotsopoulos, "Introduction," *Programming Reality: Perspectives on English-Canadian Television*, eds. Zoe Druick and Aspa Kotsopoulos (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University, 2008), 1-14.

6 Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," in *The Archaeology of Knowledge & The Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 218-19; and "Technologies of the Self," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: The New York Press, 1997), 224. (I am deliberately combining sources from two different periods in Foucault's career here to highlight a continuity in his thought not often acknowledged.)

7 Foucault, "The Subject and Power," in *Power*, 342.

8 Vincent Mosco, *The Political Economy of Communication*, Second Edition (London: Sage Publications, 2009), 2.

9 Ibid., 11-18,128-210.

10 Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," 224-5; Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 338.

11 Ouellette and Hay, Better Living Through Reality TV, 12-13.

12 Nikolas Rose has written a number of works influenced by Foucault, including *Inventing Our Selves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and (with Peter Miller) *Governing the Present: Administering Economic, Social and Personal Life* (Malden: Polity Press, 2008); however, here Ouellette and Hay cite "Governing 'Advanced' Democracies," in *Foucault and Political Reason*, eds. A. Barry, T. Osborne, and N. Rose (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 37-64.

13 Ouellette and Hay, *Better Living*, 13, citing Rose, "Governing," 45.

14 Zoe Druick and Aspa Kotsopoulos, eds., *Programming Reality: Perspectives on English-Canadian Television* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University, 2008).

15 Druick and Kotsopoulos, "Introduction," *Programming Reality*, 5.

16 Tony Bennett's *The Birth of the Museum: History, theory, politics* (New York: Routledge, 1995) is a groundbreaking study that analyzes museums as governmental institutions; however, here Druick and Kotsopoulos cite *Culture: A Reformer's Science* (London: Sage, 1995). Bennett is also cited by Ouellette and Hay.

17 Druick and Kotsopoulos, "Introduction," 9, citing Bennett, 91.

18 Sera Tinic, *On Location: Canada's Television Industry in a Global Market* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 75-93.

19 Ibid., 79, citing Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews: 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 69.

20 Ibid., 75.

21 Ibid., 61-66; Bart Beaty and Rebecca Sullivan, *Canadian Television Today* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006) 29-31, 60-65; and Marc Raboy, "Canada: The Hybridization of Public Broadcasting," in *Public Broadcasting for the 21st Century*, ed. Mark Raboy (Luton: John Libbey Media, 1995), 103-107.

22 Tinic, 65-66; Beaty and Sullivan, 67-78, 108-114.

23 Tinic, 65-66; Beaty and Sullivan, 27, 86, 94-95; and Raboy, 113-117.

24 Tinic, 83.

25 Ibid., 91.

26 Ibid., 91-92.

27 Ibid., 91.

28 Lowry, "*Da Vinci's Inquest*: Postmortem," 250.

29 CBC News, "In depth: Robert William Picton and the missing women of Vancouver," *CBC Online News*, January 19, 2007, accessed May 10, 2010, http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/pickton/history.html.

30 Ibid.; and Lindsay Kines and Les Leyne, Postmedia News, "Serial killer evidence ignored, 13 more women went missing," *Vancouversun.com*, August 20, 2010, accessed October 10, 2010, http://www.vancouversun.com/news/Serial+killer+evidence+ignored+more+women+went+missing/3420888/story.html.

31 For example, the first season three-part premier "Little Sister" (October 7, 14, and 21, 1998) and the second season two-part premier "A Cinderella Story" (October 6 and 13, 1999) both address the issue of Vancouver's missing women.

32 Lowry, "*Da Vinci's Inquest*," 250; and CTV News Staff, "Vancouver mayor plays down crystal meth threat." *CTV.ca* October 16, 2005, accessed 10 May 2010, http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20051015/campbell_meth_051015/20051015?hub=TopStories.

33 Jane Armstrong, "Crusading mayor aims to change Vancouver," *The Globe and Mail*, November 18, 2002, A3; Terry O'Neill, "No Quick Fix: A plan to establish a safe-injection site bedevils Vancouver's new mayor," *The Report Newsmagazine (National Edition)*, December 16, 2002, 24-26; and Allan Woods, Ian Bailey and Fiona Anderson, "Drug crackdown may cut safe-injection site funds," *CanWest News Service*, December 5, 2005, accessed June 1, 2009, http://www2.canada.com/national/features/decisioncanada/story_05.html?id=135e9983-3c42-42e6-83dc-e71c05150925.

34 Lucille Auffrey, "Working toward accessible, equitable care," *The Canadian Nurse* 103.8 (2007): 3.

35 Carla Power, Scott Johnson and Stefan Theil, "Europe Just Says Maybe: From the bloodstream to the mainstream: authorities abandon faith in prohibition and embrace 'harm reduction,'" *Newsweek International*, November 1, 1999, 20.

36 Jonathan Fowlie, "Let's talk red-light district, mayor says," *Vancouver Sun*, October 31, 2005, accessed June 1, 2009, http://www2.canada.com/vancouver/vancouversun/news/story.html?id=377759eb-a689-4875-baa0-cc41240bbbab.

37 Canadian Medical Association, "HIV, harm reduction and human rights," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 172.5 (2005): 605.

38 Richard Elliott, et al., "Reason and rights in global drug control policy," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 172.5 (2005): 655; Gilles Paradis, "Harm Reduction: Keeping the Public's Health in Sight," *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 99.6 (2008): 445; and E Wood, MW Tyndall, JS Montaner, and T Kerr, "Summary of findings from the evaluation of a pilot medically supervised safer injecting facility," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 175.11 (2006): 1399-404.

39 Paradis, "Harm Reduction," 445; and Neal Hall, "Tories to ask top court to rule on Vancouver safe-injection site," *Vancouversun.com*, February 9, 2010, accessed May 10, 2010, http://www.vancouversun.com/news/Tories+court+rule+Vancouver+safe+injection+site/2541682/story.html.

40 Janice Tibbetts, "Study backs more safe injection sites in Canada," *Nationalpost.com*, May 5. 2008, accessed May 10, 2010, http://www.nationalpost.com/news/canada/story.html?id =494104

41 CBC News, "Ottawa to appeal prostitution ruling," *CBC Online News*, September 29, 2010, accessed October 10, 2010, http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2010/09/29/mcguinty-prostitution.html.

42 Here Foucault means the political economy of early liberal theorists such as Adam Smith and Jean Jacques Rousseau. According to Mosco, contemporary political economy is partly a critique of early political economy's development into contemporary neoclassical economics (37-64).

43 Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 108.

44 Ibid., 108, 115-120.

45 Interestingly enough, the seventh season of *Da Vinci's Inquest* ends with Da Vinci announcing his run for mayor, but the first season of *City Hall* begins after he had already been elected; so, the public debate is actually skipped within the discourse of the show.

46 For a brief discussion of how ancient Christian pastoral practices were transferred into modern forms of State government, see Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 332-335. This topic is also addressed in detail in several of Foucault's published lectures.

47 Kim Elliott, "'In the Bear Pit:' Considering *Da Vinci's Inquest* in the Context of Representations and Discourses of Poverty in Canada," *Studies in Political Economy* 68 (2002): 19-20.

48 Ibid., 23-24.

49 Ibid., 15.

50 James Friedman, "Introduction," in *Reality Squared: Televisual Discourse on the Real*, ed. James Friedman (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 1; and Todd Gitlin, "Prime Time Ideology," in *Television: The Critical View*, 4th edition, ed. Horace Newcomb (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 507-532.

51 Elliott, "'In the Bear Pit,'" 19.

52 Gill, "Dissecting Da Vinci," 13.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Michel Foucault, "*Society Must Be Defended*": *Lectures at the College de France 1975-1976*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 1997), 242; Foucault also discusses biopolitics in Part Five of *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 135-159.

57 Foucault, "*Society*," 242-3.

58 Ibid., 242.

59 Gill, "Dissecting Da Vinci," 13.

60 Senator Larry W. Campbell 2006 Senate of Canada, "The Honourable Larry W. Campbell: Biography," LarryCampbell.ca, accessed June 1, 2009, http://www.larrycampbell.ca/biography.shtml.

61 Lowry, "Da Vinci's Inquest," 250.

62 Ibid., 247.

63 Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 341.

64 Michel Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the College de France 1982-1983* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).