

domestic material at any cost. If every aspect of quality -- not just its "Canadianness" -- is the issue, then government policies must address the tastes and skills that shape audience behavior as well as the supply.

In this regard, in discussing U.S. media policy under First Amendment constraints and commitment to a *laissez faire* economy, I have proposed the earliest possible public education in media consumption (Smith, 1995:213-214). The same proposal would be appropriate for Canada. Indeed, it also was suggested by a participant in the public debate on the Power Rangers who opposed its removal. The goals of early education in media consumption (e.g., learning to distinguish media representations from reality, learning how the media can deceive, distort, and mislead) are pertinent anywhere. Canadian children also might be taught how to enjoy and appreciate something without being influenced to copy it. There is no reason not to enjoy any cultural product of any country if it does not lead one to denigrate or abandon one's own. Children need to learn how to evaluate, and that dissatisfaction is not a reason to withdraw support. That is part of socialization. Canadians need to feel free to dislike or disagree with Canadian material and to enjoy foreign material without equating this with abandoning Canada. Most important, Canadians and their leaders have to make a Canada that merits support.

Training in media consumption is more dynamic than protective and promotional communication policies directed primarily to communicators. States' concerns about domestic society legitimize their roles as monitors and rule setters (e.g., CRTC, FCC) and their right to communicate (in the case of public broadcasting). The choice of these roles is based on assumptions that communicators determine not just the material available in a system but also its meaning, and that material determines effects. They implicitly posit a passive consumer subject to either the hypodermic-like effects or cultivation processes. They ignore the possibility that consumers may be active and that control is an ongoing process of competition among a field of interested internal and external actors rather than power concentrated in the hands of communicators.

Consumer education recognizes these possibilities that redresses the power imbalances in the communicator-communicatee relationship by helping receivers to be more discriminating and discerning and more aware of their potential power as communicatees. Commercial media entrepreneurs know that without consumers they are out of business. A multifaceted media policy ought to reflect the fact that communication is a process to which many active participants contribute, that each has some resources and power to shape the operation and survival of a system in which it occurs. At a minimum, consumer education should provide the skills needed to play the communicatee role effectively. If successful, it might minimize the impact of imports either by curtailing demand or ameliorating any of their deleterious cultural effects.

Protectionist media policies have little promise. Aside from their affinity to censorship, it is doubtful that they can be successful in light of innovations in media technology. One cannot deprive Canadians of cable, satellite dishes, or any other new technology they know exist. Pressures to deregulate and privatize, together with proximity to the United States, also make it difficult to control supplies of equipment and cultural commodities. Because the prospects for self-control also are not promising, the option of educating both old and new consumers is even more attractive.

Policies that promote the production of Canadian material are always attractive, but the emphasis must be on quality. Canadians are much more likely to be attracted to and impressed by fewer domestic productions that always are excellent than by a large supply of mediocre to bad material. They might even decrease media consumption, regardless of the provenance of the material, if their tastes were honed on high quality Canadian material. The idea that Canada has to produce enough to fill all its media with Canadian material has not been challenged with this alternative. In addition, such material might improve Canada's position in the export market.