

Power and Powerlessness: Reading the Controversy over *The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*

• Mavis Reimer •

Résumé: Dans cet essai, Mavis Reimer fait l'analyse du débat de 1994 qui a entraîné l'annulation de la série télévisée des *Power Rangers*. Selon elle, celui-ci nous en apprend beaucoup sur notre perception de l'enfance. En effet, selon certaines théories contemporaines, la littérature pour la jeunesse intériorise les relations de pouvoir entre les parents et leurs enfants; or, dans ce cas-ci, les parents se sont perçus comme sans défense. L'auteur nous convie donc à nous interroger sur les représentations culturelles de ce rapport de force.

Summary: In this essay, Mavis Reimer analyses the rhetoric of the 1994 debate about the cancellation of *The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* for what it can tell us about contemporary Canadian assumptions about childhood and "the child." Recent critics and theorists have read children's literature as replicating imperialist structures of power in its representation and production of the adult-child relation. In this debate, however, adults represent themselves as powerless. Reimer invites readers to consider what cultural function this representation might serve.

One should never forget that language, by virtue of the infinite generative but also *originative* capacity ... which it derives from its power to produce existence by producing the collectively recognized, and thus realized, representation of existence, is no doubt the principal support of the dream of absolute power.

(Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* 42)

In the introduction to his study of the Victorian notion of the child, James Kincaid contends that "[a] child is not, in itself, anything." Rather, what a child is "changes to fit different situations and different needs." For this reason, it is more useful to think of "the child" as a role or function "necessary to our psychic and cultural life" than as a person narrowly "defined or controlled by age limits" (5). In Kincaid's view, the Victorians instituted "the child" as the function through which the adult can both know and disavow desire — "the child is not simply the Other we desire but the Other we must have in order to know longing, love, lust at all" (7) — but contemporary Anglo-American

societies continue to play out the implications of this institution. When it was published in 1992, Kincaid's argument scandalized British reviewers and politicians, who maintained that Kincaid was, in the words of the *Sunday Times* reviewer, "a passionate champion of paedophilia" (Carey 8). That an academic argument about children's literature of the past century could provoke such heated words suggests that Kincaid has located a charged nexus of ideas that continues to have considerable cultural currency. As he noted in his response to the controversy, "[s]candal is the enemy of cultural hegemony" ("Producing" 215).

The scandal of Kincaid's book was identified specifically as the linkage of children and sexuality, but his work more generally explodes the comfortable assumption that childhood and children are natural categories that allow us access to a reality we have lost. As an adult who teaches children's texts to other adults, I find that moving my students to uncover not only the assumptions about children on which those texts depend but also the assumptions about children on which their readings of those texts depend is my most challenging task. It is clear that all of us have a great deal at stake in looking closely at our manufacture of "the child." Indeed, if Kincaid is right, then what is at stake is nothing less than our definitions of ourselves: "If the child is not distinguished from the adult, we imagine that we are seriously threatened, threatened in such a way as to put at risk our very being, what it means to be an adult in the first place" (7).

To begin our consideration of the idea of childhood in my university classes, I borrow the exercise Perry Nodelman suggests in *The Pleasures of Children's Literature* (74) and invite students to collect newspaper clippings, advertisements, magazine articles, or accounts of TV texts that address or discuss children.¹ We then develop a list of attributions made explicitly or implicitly in the texts, using the sentence form of subject, copula verb, and subject complement: "Children are (predicate adjective or noun)"; "A girl is ..."; "Babies are ..."; and so on. We typically find that many of the common assumptions listed in *Pleasures* underlie these pieces, but it also becomes clear that representations to and of "the child" shift from one context to another, that certain representations predominate at a particular time and place, and that contradictory representations can be found side by side, all indications that we are working with the production and reproduction of ideology. Among the questions we ask of these texts is, to which of the representations do we find ourselves acceding? What is the implication of such agreement? How can we use explanatory models of ideology, discourse, and subjectivity to reach an understanding of these implications? The overall objective of the exercise is to encourage students to think theoretically not only about the texts they encounter but also about themselves as readers and as adults who interact with actual children made to bear the burden of meaning assigned to them in the cultural system.

Because such thinking can never be finished, can never be reduced to content to be reproduced in neat lectures year after year, I undertake the exercise with my students. In the fall of 1994, I became aware that my clippings file was full of items about the cancellation of the popular children's show, *The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*. The analysis that follows is my attempt to read these newspaper texts for their manufacture of childhood and "the child." In undertaking this

reading, I begin from Michel Foucault's assertion that, "in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse" (93). My analysis here is restricted to the discourses circulating in a small group of texts; but my hope is to point to some of the questions that those of us who study and teach Canadian texts for children might ask about the ways in which discourses of childhood and "the child" are used to establish the relations of power characterizing the contemporary Canadian social body. Such mapping is preparatory to identifying the power relations we might resist and contest. Pierre Bourdieu remarks that language can be said to "produce existence" in the sense that "collectively recognized" representations of human existence achieve the status of reality, are realized (42). Because official discourses, dominant discourses, hegemonic discourses depend on repeated and collective recognition, there are also opportunities for us to interrupt such recognition.² But to know what we wish to interrupt requires that we attempt to understand the workings of the dominant discourse and the ways in which we are implicated by it. As Adrienne Rich has put it in her poem, "Transcendental Etude," we must "study our lives,/make of our lives a study" even as we live those lives.

In November, 1994, YTV, the Canadian children's specialty channel, withdrew *The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* from its schedule after the Ontario Regional Council of the Canadian Broadcast Association's Standards Council ruled that the show was "too violent" for Canadian television. In its review, the Council judged that the popular children's show, about teenagers who regularly save the world from evil after metamorphosing first into ninja fighters and then into a robotic dinosaur, "depicted excessive violence, scenes of violence that were not essential to the plot, and failed to show alternatives to violence as a method of resolving conflict" (Lacey, "Power Rangers" A17). The decision was followed by a flurry of comment and opinion in the Canadian media: open-line talk shows, the cultural pages of major newspapers, and letters to the editor were devoted to the question of the effect of the *Power Rangers* on children.

The focus of the public controversy about the cartoon show was on violent texts. In what sense could texts be considered violent? What were the demonstrable effects of violent texts? The second part of the question went unremarked in the discussions: no one, apparently, thought to ask what was understood by the term "children." Such silence suggests that the conceptual category is regarded as obvious. But the obvious, as Louis Althusser reminds us, is often the site of the most effective working of ideology. What does the *Power Rangers* debate suggest about the dominant constructions of children current in Canadian society? To what ideological uses is the category of "the child" being put? My primary texts for this reading are the items carried in November and December 1994 in the national edition of the *Toronto Globe and Mail*. As a newspaper that markets itself as one of the foremost sources of information for and about Canadian business, the *Globe and Mail* can, I assume, be taken as representing the range of opinion on the subject acceptable to dominant interests in Canadian society.³

At first reading, that range of opinion seems to be extensive. Among the items from the paper, there are letters cheering the Standards Council decision (Tavuchis, Fletcher), queries about whether this show should be described as violent ("Magazine"), reports of the effects of violent television images on children (Fletcher, Freedman, Lee, Wilson), protests against state censorship (Coyne, Cummings), articles weighing the conflict of the various goods involved in producing a code such as the one regarding violence in television programming (Doyle, Freedman, Lee), essays on the vulnerability of childhood (Salutin). But, when the newspaper texts are read for the assumptions about children underlying the variety of rhetorical positions, it becomes clear that the range of opinion is, in fact, remarkably narrow.

The most obvious commonality across the commentary is that children are a stable, homogeneous, self-consistent group. Psychologist Jonathan Freedman, for example, notes, "The kids do like it and we should let them watch it" (Freedman A19). Patrick Lee, instructor in child development, disagrees with Freedman's conclusion, but, in deriding what he characterizes as the view of "the child's growth, vitality and self-realization as unmixed virtues," he, like Freedman, uses "children" as a self-consistent category: TV programs that "convey violent messages" are "inappropriate for children" (Lee A25). Andrew Coyne, in a polemic against "this ludicrous fit of nanny-statism," qualifies the assumption that "children ... are no better than laboratory rats, conditioned beyond resistance to mimic whatever they see on television." His qualification, however, is to modify "whatever they see" to "some of what they see." "Children" is retained as an acceptable generalization: "It's true that kids like to act out what they see on the tube" (Coyne A18). Anecdotal information traded in letters to the editor leave the impression that the response of the "gangs of 30 or 40 boys" reported by a Scarborough teacher to be "launching flying kicks at each other" at recess (Fletcher A23) means the same thing as the response of the "little girl" in a small town in Northern British Columbia who dresses for Halloween as "pink Power Ranger Kimberley" (Wilson A20).

When "the child" is assumed to be an obvious and stable category, it becomes possible to set "the child" in structural opposition to other categories, categories that are themselves stabilized by such opposition. In the *Globe and Mail* accounts, various categories of adults occupy the position of binary opposite to "the child." Sometimes, this category is identified only as "we," a "we" that is distinguished from censorious people and "many parents" by Freedman. In Lee's analysis, "we" is more generally identified first with all adults and then with society. This "we" must weigh two conflicting rights, "the child's right to special protection and society's commitment to free speech"; "the child" and "society" apparently are categories that do not overlap. In the most extended example of such binary opposition, Rick Salutin spins an elaborate scenario in which what he calls Adultcult is seen as "making war on kids" ("Spread" A13).

Both the assumption of categorical consistency and the principle of structural opposition used in the depictions of children in the *Power Rangers* texts corroborate observations made by Perry Nodelman, in an article published in the *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* in 1992, of the way in

which children are constructed as colonized subjects in our culture, as subjected “others,” to use the terms Nodelman borrows from Edward Said’s study of Orientalism. The purpose of assigning otherness to children, according to Nodelman, is to allow the defining adult to control the field of representation. In this theory, the malleability — or, to use James Kincaid’s term, the “emptiness” — of the concept of “the child” is precisely the point: whether “the child” is construed as vulnerable and needing protection, as Lee does, or celebrated for its natural and anarchic potential, as Salutin does, the category functions to allow the adult subject to position itself in relation to attributes it needs or desires in order to consolidate its power. Read in this way, the meaning of the *Power Rangers* debate would seem to be either that adults define children as powerless in order to see themselves as powerful or that adults define children as powerful in order to access what is seen as their power.

The first point of view — that children are powerless — seems to be the most common. The newspaper texts repeatedly refer to children as incapable of controlling their responses to the images they see on television. In reporting the Council’s decision, for example, John Doyle notes that, “for kids deprived of their daily fix, there was no opportunity for rebuttal” (Doyle A11). Lee recounts the “abundant first-hand evidence of the way ... *Power Rangers* plays itself out in the behaviour of children” (Lee A25). Liam Lacey reports that the program “draws audiences of about 300,000 each night of the week” in Ontario (Lacey, “Power Rangers” A17). Daily fixes, playing out, drawing: the metaphors of addiction, compulsion, and hypnosis all imply states of psychological passivity or victimhood.⁴ Even Freedman, who writes to discount the conviction “that television violence makes children aggressive,” reinscribes the image of children as essentially inert material by merely inverting the formula: “Television violence does not make children violent” (Freedman A19).

But the attempt to read the *Power Rangers* debate as a structural “othering” of children by adults seems to break down at this point. While children are represented as powerless, adults do not represent themselves as powerful in these texts. If adult subjects use definitions of children to position themselves in relation to attributes they need or desire, then it would follow, in this case, that adults represent children as powerless in order to access their powerlessness. That might appear, at first consideration, an unlikely conclusion. But, indeed, adults are repeatedly figured as “lookers-on” in the commentaries and letters, watching children “erupting into frenzied kicks and leaps” in the schoolyard (Wilson A20); watching as *Power Rangers* “plays itself out” in children’s games (Lee A25); watching children watching television, but unable to break the circuitry between the TV images and children (Mellgren A4).

In fact, active agency is attributed primarily to abstract entities and corporate bodies in the articles. The Canadian Broadcasters’ Association “rule[s]” and “censure[s]” (Lacey, “Cable Operators” A12). Its decision “sends a signal” (Lacey, “Power Rangers” A17) and delivers a “deadly kick” (Doyle A11). But even that attribution is apparently overly hasty. According to Coyne, the Broadcasters’ Association itself is merely “a front” for a more amorphous agency, which he calls “the evil empire itself,” “the Mighty Morphin” Canadian

Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, which “suppresse[s],” “enforces,” and “kill[s]” (Coyné A18). Ronald Cohen, the chair of the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council, in his turn rejects Coyné’s claim and refuses to acknowledge the agency and responsibility of either the CRTC or the Standards Council, arguing that the first merely “proposed a set of guidelines” and the latter merely “administers” and “applies” a code put into place by broadcasters, a code which itself merely “reflected” a yet more general mechanism, “the Canadian *assumption* that the causal relation between on-screen images ... and behaviour existed” (Cohen A25). In short, at each level of this debate, there is a refusal of agency and a reiteration of powerlessness.

The terms of the *Power Rangers* debate invert Foucault’s theorization of the operations of power in culture. In a lecture entitled *Power/Knowledge*, he advises that, in analysing such operations, “power is not to be taken to be a phenomenon of one individual’s consolidated and homogeneous domination over others” and that individuals should be seen not only as the “inert or consenting target” of power, but “always also [as] the elements of its articulation.” “In other words,” Foucault concludes, “individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application” (98). The directive that follows from this is that an analysis of power should trace the process by which mechanisms of power are “invested, colonised, utilised, involuted, transformed, displaced, extended etc., by ever more general mechanisms” (99). In *The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* texts, however, there appears to be an investment in powerlessness rather than in power. The ascription of powerlessness to children in the first instance is involuted and displaced along the chain of power in these texts, with adult individuals and groups at every subsequent juncture representing themselves only as inert targets of power, as points of the application of power. Such representation provides a cover of powerlessness at each level, which works to foreclose an analysis of how the individual or group is also exercising power and constituting its articulation. Powerlessness itself becomes a mask of power in the debate.

In this reiteration of power masquerading as powerlessness, the discourse about the *Power Rangers* is peculiarly recursive, itself re-staging the terms of the story under dispute. In each episode of the first series of the *Power Rangers*, the Rangers, a group of “teenagers with attitude,” must fight an alien and amorphous evil represented by Rita Repulsa and the Putty Patrol. Their own skills and energies are invariably ineffectual. In the sequence of escalation that follows, they are increasingly displaced from their embodied individuality, choosing first to metamorphize — “morph,” in the vocabulary of the series — into sleek, uniformed, and helmeted ninja fighters, distinguished only by the colours of their Lycra suits. When, again invariably, this strategy fails to save the day, the Rangers “call” on the power of ancient but, at the same time, robotic dinosaurs, each of which represents an externalized and amplified characteristic of its Ranger. Their triumph is assured only when these creatures combine to “morph” into their ultimate corporate weapon, the powerful, giant, invulnerable, efficient, robotic dinosaur, the Megasaurus.

The recursion of the debate to the terms of the *Power Rangers* story suggests that the central conflict enacted in the popular TV text is recognized as

critically important by members of the post-industrial societies that produce and consume it. Winfred Fluck, in an attempt to articulate "the social and cultural functions performed by popular cultural forms," has proposed that "[p]opular culture gains appeal when the status of the values transmitted and affirmed by it has become a problematic, contested domain" (40). Its function is to stage "tensions and conflicts with existing values and meanings in such a way that the recipient is able to explain and to accommodate them within the social and cultural context in which he or she is living" (40). Using Fluck's terms, what are the "tensions and conflicts" that the *Power Rangers* and the texts about the *Power Rangers* exhibit?

The *Power Rangers* stories might be seen as staging a fundamental anxiety about identity itself. The status of the sovereign and unitary self is called into question by the Rangers' need to "morph" into the corporate Megasaurus to effect solutions to the dangers they face. Marsha Kinder argues that American commercial television in general is creating a postmodern subject:

the particular conventions of American commercial television, with its blatant emphasis on intertextuality, segmentation, and flow and with its pervasive popularity worldwide, have led subjects to see themselves as highly adaptable transformers or sliding signifiers — that is, to perceive their imaginary signifier as marked by an idealized protean malleability rather than by an idealized unity as in the Lacanian matrix. (37)

Jacques Lacan, to whom Kinder refers here, develops Freud's theory of "the mirror stage" as an account of the way in which identity is constructed. Children's experience of the forms of the external world allows them to create an idea of themselves as an objective whole, an idea which permits their (mis)recognition of themselves in an image. For postmodern subjects, the television acts as mirror and what such subjects see encourages them to create an idea of themselves as infinitely malleable and adaptable rather than as a unified whole. Malleability and adaptability clearly are values affirmed by the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers.

The Rangers' metamorphic ability to shift shape and fuse with each other, however, is contradicted by the racial and gendered differences among the Rangers insisted on in the framing sequences of the show. There is Zack, a black young man; Kimberley, a white young woman; and Trini, an Asian-American young woman. The only racial/gendered group to have more than one representative is the category of white male: Jason is distinguished by his athletic prowess from Billy, the intellectual "nerd." Following Fluck's formulation, we might say that *Power Rangers* stages the tension between the existing values of unity and identity and the new constellations of subjectivity Kinder describes, asking the question in what the self consists, in the particular embodied self or in the transformed corporate self? The popularity of the *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* among audiences of children, then, would indicate children's struggle with these problematics of identity. This is the modality of response I hear in the comment eight-year-old Kaleigh Warden makes on the controversy: "When the children watch it, it can come to life in their heads" ("Thoughts" D4).

A successful text of popular culture, according to Fluck, not only stages contested values, but also gives its audience a way of explaining contradictions in meaning and value. The solution proposed by the *Power Rangers* is, in part, the simple solution of narrative sequence itself, in which, as Theodor Adorno has noted, either-or relationships are turned into first-next relationships (qtd. by Fluck 41). The Rangers first attempt to solve problems with their individual skills and strength and, that failing, next transform into the Megasaurus. But there are bridging scenes between the framing scenes and the fight scenes which also give another, more comprehensive solution. These are the scenes in which the Rangers visit Zordon, who issued them their power badges in the original episode of the show, first to receive instructions and later to receive his congratulations on a successful mission. The ontological status of Zordon is unclear: he exists only as a talking head on a large television screen afflicted with bad horizontal hold controls and poor reception and housed in a control room suspended somewhere in outer space. In specifying this location, the text evokes the traditional image of the patriarchal god of Western culture. The solution proposed by the show, then, seems brutally clear: the most painful contradictions of subject positions can be accommodated by understanding them to be required by Big Daddy.

But the representation of Zordon as a television image/personality also cites the context of the technological revolution in information systems that grounds the globalized economy of the late twentieth century. Indeed, the malleability and adaptability affirmed in the "morphin" subjectivity of the show are widely-held values in the consumer culture of late capitalism, values which ensure that consumers continually will need to buy new props to support their re-creations of themselves. The "corporate" is, in fact, a key concept in the *Power Rangers* and carries multiple meanings: the Rangers literally are collected into one body in each story; the show itself is a fusion of an original American show with footage from Japanese martial arts films (Lacey, "Power Rangers" A17); and the popularity of the show and the merchandising spin-offs have made the *Power Rangers* "an important part of a huge global industry" for Saban International (Doyle A11).

The linkage of the global economy with the sanction of traditional religion suggests one possible answer to the question of why the debate about the *Power Rangers* repeats the terms of the show. Linda McQuaig has argued recently that Canadians have been sold on the need to divest themselves of the liability of social programs and to embrace the global economy, particularly in its incarnation as "the money markets," by the reiteration that we are powerless to do anything else:

it's not just that we can't change things, but we can't even think about the possibility of changing things; to do so is to engage in old-style thinking... The new way of thinking ... requires an acceptance of powerlessness, resignation to a world without solutions — a world of inaction and helplessness. (12)

The conflicting versions of subjectivity played out by the *Power Rangers*, then, would seem to speak to a widespread tension in Canadian culture, and probably in Anglo-American culture more generally, between the pull to corporate identity

and the pull to expressive individuality. Both of these concepts, of course, can be construed in various ways, most of them referenced by the *Power Rangers*. The fact that such anxiety manifests itself in the debate over a children's text corroborates the observations of Kincaid, Nodelman, and Jacqueline Rose that one of the primary ideological uses to which the category of "the child" is put in Anglo-American culture is as a site on which subjectivity itself is defined.

No participant in the debate about *The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* ever locates or names the ultimate source and sanction of power in the way the *Power Rangers* show does; the silence on this question may indicate only that the adult participants have mastered more completely the mask of powerlessness on which power depends. Indeed, silence serves as the originary trope of power in the show: the Rangers are instructed explicitly by Zordon that their powerful secret identity is not safe if they speak about it to outsiders. In this context, the need to restrict children not only from seeing the show, but also from talking about the show, becomes more problematic — and more explicable. In a particularly telling comment, a day-care operator is reported to have "banned her charges ... from even discussing the show," because, she says, she's trying to teach children "to use your words, not your hands," to resolve conflict (Doyle A11). As the contradictory terms of her comment make clear, it is not any words that are wanted, but rather the correct words. Producing echoes, producing the replication of sound, depends on the silence of "the others." Taking on silence and powerlessness in this debate — agreeing to the role of inert target of power, to return to Foucault's terms — paradoxically enables vehicles of power to be utilized and extended by more general mechanisms of power.

I suspect that many of us would allow that it might be true that the adult disputants in the debate take on powerlessness, but would want to reserve a less interested and more transparent response for children. Such a reservation, of course, is predictable, given our habit of seeing children as different in kind from adults, as "others." But the evidence suggests that this is not the case. In January 1995, the *Winnipeg Free Press* published a group of responses to the *Power Rangers* controversy by students from a local grade three class. The responses demonstrate the manufacture of consent Althusser calls one of the primary effects of ideology. Of the ten children who write commentaries, five explicitly produce their own silence, either by reiterating the opinions of adults in authority over them — "my mom saw it [and] she said, You're not allowed to watch it," "[m]y mom and dad said I am not allowed to watch television," "[m]y mom thinks it's a little violent" — or by echoing the Standards Council's words that the show is "too violent" as their own opinion. Four children enter the debate by discussing the issues and producing evidence to support their position. Each of these more sophisticated commentators, however, also replicates the sounds of the debate; they have learned to silence the other in themselves, by alienating themselves as writers from themselves as children, so that their reports are *about* the other — about "the parents" and "their child," about "[t]he younger kids that watch it," about "the children" in whom the show "come[s] to life," about "you guys" who "just love it and get ideas how to hurt people." Only one of the children, eight-year-old Buisi Okwumabua,

seems to have failed to understand how to use his words “properly” in this discourse of power and powerlessness and naively reports his own response of pleasure and of control: “I think Power Rangers ... is cool when the five forces come together. I do not mind the kicking and the punching.”

But hearing the voices of ten children in this debate is also startling enough that it reminds me how seldom we permit, much less invite, young people to enter any of our public conversations about culture and morality, about texts and violence. Luce Irigaray, in her reading of the parable of Plato’s cave in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, observes that “the silent offer [the possibility of the replica] by taking the place of a reflecting screen” (257). What would happen, she wonders, if “everyone talked, and talked at once” (256): “The reflection of sound would be *spoiled* if different speakers uttered different things at the same time. Sounds would thereby become ill defined, fuzzy, inchoate, indistinct, devoid of figures that can be reflected and reproduced” (257). What would happen if we unmasked the first appearance of powerlessness in this controversy, the attribution of powerlessness to the children viewers? If all of these children talked, and talked at once, would it be less likely that the figure of the stable, self-consistent, and powerless “child” could be produced, appropriated, and reproduced?

Notes

- 1 Perry Nodelman read and commented on this argument at several stages of its development. As always, our discussions about studying and teaching children’s texts were invaluable to me as I thought through the issues and implications involved.
- 2 Judith Butler is theorizing such interruptions in her ongoing work on performativity. See, in particular, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. I prepared a first version of this paper in the context of studying with Butler at the Dartmouth School of Criticism and Theory in the summer of 1995.
- 3 I focus only on the Canadian texts, although it seems likely that these constructions of “the child” might be similar in many post-industrial societies. Wire service news stories at the time of the Canadian controversy referred to a similar debate about the Power Rangers under way in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark (Mellgren A4) and the cancellation of the show in New Zealand was cited by the Standards Council in their decision (Doyle A11).
- 4 The use of metaphors of consumption, ingesting, eating, and addictive behaviour for reading have been common in the representation of children’s mass-produced cultural texts since the beginning of the century, according to Nancy Romalov, in a paper delivered to the annual meeting of the Children’s Literature Association at Trinity College in Hartford, CT, in June, 1992. Romalov links the use of these metaphors with “anti-democratic discourse.”

Works Cited

- Althusser, Louis. “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses.” 1970. *Critical Theory Since 1965*. Ed. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle. Tallahassee: Florida State UP, 1986. 238-50.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Ed. John B. Thompson. Trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1991.

- Butler, Judith. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. New York and London: Routledge, 1997.
- Carey, John. "The Age of Innocents." *Sunday Times* (London) 7 March 1993: 8-9.
- Cohen, Ronald L. "TV's Violence Code: The System Works." *Globe and Mail* 24 Nov. 1994: A25.
- Coyne, Andrew. "The Day the Power Rangers Met the Mighty Morphin CRTc." *Globe and Mail* 7 Nov. 1994: A18.
- Cummings, Charles C. Letter to the Editor. *Globe and Mail* 9 Nov. 1994: A23.
- Doyle, John. "Why Their Plug Was Pulled." *Globe and Mail* 7 Nov. 1994: A11.
- Fletcher, Ken. "Just Turn Off the TV." Letter to the Editor. *Globe and Mail* 9 Nov. 1994: A23.
- Fluck, Winfried. "Popular Culture As a Mode of Socialization: A Theory About the Social Functions of Popular Cultural Forms." *Journal of Popular Culture* 21.3 (Winter 1987): 31-46.
- Foucault, Michel. "Two Lectures." Trans. Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquale. In *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. Ed. Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980. 78-108.
- Freedman, Jonathan. "The Folly of Forcing Power Rangers Off the Air." *Globe and Mail* 7 Nov. 1994: A19.
- Irigaray, Luce. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. 1974. Trans. Gillian C. Gill. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1985.
- Kincaid, James R. *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- . "Producing Erotic Children." In *Human, All Too Human*. Ed. Diana Fuss. New York and London: Routledge, 1996. 203-19.
- Kinder, Marsha. *Playing with Power in Movies, Television, and Video Games: From Muppet Babies to Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1991.
- Lacey, Liam. "Cable Operators Won't Take Power Rangers Off the Air." *Globe and Mail* 9 Nov. 1994: A12.
- . "Power Rangers Suffers Body Blow to Programming." *Globe and Mail* 2 Nov. 1994: A17.
- . "Sick of TV Violence?: Call This Number ..." *Globe and Mail* 18 Jan. 1995: A11.
- Lee, Patrick. "Put Children's TV Violence in Context." *Globe and Mail* 18 Nov. 1994: A25.
- "Magazine Ranks Power Rangers in Top 10." Further Notice. *Globe and Mail* 9 Nov. 1994: A10.
- McQuaig, Linda. *The Cult of Impotence: Selling the Myth of Powerlessness in the Global Economy*. Toronto: Viking-Penguin, 1998.
- Mellgren, Doug. "Child Killers Imitating TV?" *Winnipeg Free Press* 19 Oct. 1994: A4.
- Nodelman, Perry. "The Other: Orientalism, Colonialism, and Children's Literature." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 17 (Spring 1992): 29-35.
- . *The Pleasures of Children's Literature*. 2nd ed. White Plains, NY: Longman, 1996.
- Romalov, Nancy. Address. Annual Conference of the Children's Literature Association. Trinity College, Hartford, CT. June 1992.
- Rose, Jacqueline. *The Case of Peter Pan; Or, The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*. 1984. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1993.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon, 1978.
- Salutin, Rick. "Shades of the Soviet Bloc, and Other Oddities." *Globe and Mail* 25 Nov. 1994: A12.
- . "The Spread of Mighty Morphin Anxiety." *Globe and Mail* 11 Nov. 1994: A13.
- Tavuchis, Nicholas. "Parental Responsibility." Letter to the Editor. *Globe and Mail* 3 Dec. 1994: D7.
- "Thoughts on Christmas and Power Rangers." *KidSpeak*. *Winnipeg Free Press* 8 January 1995: D4.
- Wilson, Janet L. "Superhero Wannabees." Letter to the Editor. *Globe and Mail* 11 Nov. 1994: A20.

Mavis Reimer is an assistant professor of English at the University of Winnipeg, where she teaches children's literature and Victorian studies.