Rationalizing Entertainment, Re-Enchanting Education: Edutainment

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Abstract: The concept of edutainment, which expresses the combination of education and entertainment, came to the agenda with the 1970s, and its application in different fields spread quickly. Changes within the understanding and institutions of education and entertainment itself have been effective in developing the edutainment approach. This coupling at the same time is an important component of environments in urban locales such as touristic places, shopping malls, museums, theme parks, and art-skills workshops that are affiliated with and resemble one another by being renewed on the axis of culture, entertainment, and education. Edutainment practices are also important elements of a series of transition processes to each other in urban consumption venues. This study aims to understand how the edutainment approach and application areas affect the understanding of entertainment and education by evaluating the process in which they spread within the changes in consumption culture. For this purpose, the study examines the educational approach in three steps that develop in connection with one another alongside Ritzer's concepts. Firstly, the coupling of education and entertainment is evaluated through the intertwined process of consumption tools. Then, the states of "rationalizing" entertainment and "re-enchanting" education are addressed in the new understanding of consumption that develops through this process. Lastly, the possible effects on learning processes from the edutainment processes where rationalized entertainment meets the understanding of education as a show are discussed. As a result, edutainment practices have spread an understanding about the need for education to be entertaining and entertainment to also be educational and have become an important component in the fields that intertwine in consumption locales. These new applications that increase the validity of daily life through consumption venues are seen to be located in a structure that constantly produces new needs where the individuals who live in the modern city, although they have created a view that is suitable in form to their new needs, remain qualitatively inadequate.

Keywords: entertainment •implosion in consumption tools • rationalizing • re-enchanting • consumption culture • consumption venues

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Edutainment, which expresses the combined use of education and entertainment, entered our lives in the 1970s through television and computer programs. The idea that education can be enjoyable and that entertainment needs to be educational has become an approach whose validity has increased through its areas of application diversifying and becoming widespread. The edutainment approach is applied nowadays in a wide range of entertainments, from different media tools to education environments and entertainment and consumption venues such as theme parks. The origins in social change of the development of edutainment and the prevalence it has gained and its echoes in daily life are a topic that will require rather extensive and detailed consideration. This study evaluates the edutainment approach and its areas of application on the axis of changes in consumption culture; the study purposes to understand how edutainment has affected the understanding of entertainment and learning.

The validity and prevalence using education and entertainment together has gained, as well as the various ways it impacts and transforms the two sectors within itself, also brings the development of new spatial possibilities and practices. Edutainment represents the "diffusion" of the two sectors approaching one another (Addis, 2002, p. 1). This convergence is observed in two ways in urban spaces. While one way has educational environments (i.e., museums, galleries, libraries) being renewed more interactively through technology and entertainment, the other way has entertainment centers (i.e., shopping malls, theme parks) also emphasizing educational elements.

Consumption, entertainment, and cultural venues have become centers of attraction in restructuring today's cities; at the same time, leisure activities develop at the focus of these centers. An important factor in developing edutainment is the intersection of the processes for renewing educational and cultural elements by including them within the entertainment sector and more generally consumption venues for attracting more consumers with a leaning toward differentiation within the market and covering the orientations of the age and for renewing the consumption venues through urban policies. In parallel wıth the development of new consumption tools and venues, the emergence of the consumer type that possesses new needs has accelerated the validity gains edutainment has made. On this axis of new consumer life styles, the one who cares about how they spend their free time (in fact the one who is self-taught on this) is not passive; they come across as a type who takes an active role in consumption, one who is self-conscious and open to self-discovery and learning on the topic of developing one's potential. How culture, entertainment, and leisure activities have gained importance in urban space shows parallels with the new regulations in the intertwining of production and consumption in consumption tools. Featherstone (1999) noted a series of affiliations to exist on the axis of consumption and entertainment in urban spaces when analyzing postmodern urban culture.

According to Ritzer (2016, p. 30), entertainment became an indispensable consumption tool through commercialization; education institutions, hospitals, casinos, museums, theme parks, and shopping malls are surprisingly similar. This situation Ritzer (2016) described as implosion in new consumption tools is one of the elements of "creating a show" to attract more attention. Ritzer, by reassessing within the consumption system Weber's thesis on disenchantment from the result of rationalizing as a quality of the modern era, advocates that the new consumption tools that force one to consume more are methods of "re-enchantment." One of the forms that enable re-enchantment is the creation of shows by implosion the tools of consumption. According to this, the distinction between shopping and entertainment has completely disappeared (shoppertainment) and the form "eatertainment" has emerged by combining eating-drinking with entertainment; while education institutions have gradually approached closer to theme parks on one hand, edutainment has emerged on the other by entertainment venues also emphasizing education (2016, pp. 198–210). According to Ritzer (2016, p. 205), shopping centers accelerate the implosion process by appearing in more places. By rationalizing the entertainment and games that have a magical quality and by including show elements in the rationalized education system, a "re-enchantment" can be said to have been created in edutainment, where the two fields intertwine.

These days, in order to present the understanding of entertainment with various benefits within consumption tools, to separate these benefits into separate stages (e.g., cognitive, social, psychological, physical, and emotional), and to make each stage more efficient, developing techniques means rationalizing by adapting to the principles of rationalization such as efficiency, accountability, predictability, and control. Disenchantment is a result of rationalizing entertainment. Purposelessness and idleness have no place in the entertainment understanding of consumption venues. Educational-entertaining activities are presented within the purposeful, calculated, and benefit-oriented approach; the idea of aimless fun is negated. According to Ritzer, efficiency and magic oppose each other in a way where they cannot coexist at the same time. According to Weber, eliminating purposelessness and idleness is also one of the reasons why rationalized systems are disenchanted systems. "Enchanted worlds may well exist without a clear purpose. Efficient systems, again by definition, do not allow these types of idleness. Designers and practitioners will do all that is necessary to destroy them" (as cited in Ritzer, 2016, p. 155). Modeling entertainment and games in line with the principles of rationalism require they be introduced through their various benefits. These benefits are often based on the views of the social group that we may call the expert pedagogues, child developers, or new culture mediators.

The edutainment approach rationalizes entertainment using elements such as benefit, efficiency and accountability; re-enchants education through show elements

such as games and entertainment; and brings together the development of new attitudes and perceptions related to learning. Two types of critical approaches are available regarding the learning process edutainment. The first proposes that learning is already fun in itself, individuals will get information that needs to be naturalized in their field of interest, and no need exists to create a structured environment (Bruckman, 1999; Resnick, 2004). The other approach suggests that the situation of learning alongside enjoyment harms the learning process by neglecting it (Okan, 2003; Postman, 2004). Bruckman (1999, p. 75) explained edutainment using the metaphor "broccoli dipped in chocolate." According to this, covering broccoli in chocolate leads to internalizing that learning is something "undesirable" and "must be hidden" within a chocolate coating. Simultaneously, a perception will also develop toward the need for learning to be presented in an interesting an pleasing manner. Bruckman suggests that instead of common edutainment environments such as video games, "Learning by doing something is a useful approach that is both entertaining and educational" and that learning "naturally becomes enjoyable" by underlining the fact that open-ended tasks are more engaging and encourage creativity (p. 78).

Educational activities organized in entertainment venues do not acknowledge an opportunity to learn where repetitive skills can be developed though content that constantly undergoes a change. In consumer venues, continuity is not in earning essential skills, it is the continuity of the customer. They have content that appeals to this general purpose, that doesn't force the user, and that is not boring. Therefore, the opportunity for more experience is shaped around short-term goals.

As a result, the unity of education and entertainment can be viewed as the rationalization of entertainment and education as re-enchantment using entertainment. The educational element that as a result holds an important place in consumer venues is the providing re-enchantment by creating a show. This situation develops a new understanding on the need for entertainment to be beneficial and educational and for learning to be entertaining and show-based. Consumption and entertainment venues are preferred for their rationalized elements and educational aspects. However, edutainment affects the transformation of educational understanding by accelerating the acceptance process of new applications in educational institutions.

Edutainment practices are seen to be used in different areas (e.g., media, shopping malls, theme parks, educational venues, cultural products), and the two elements within it are seen to be used at different levels. From this perspective, another result from the study is the importance of understanding the role social change has in the various uses of edutainment and the necessity for new studies.

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