

# “Tittytainment”

Giancarlo Livraghi – December 2010

There is no end to learning. I am fifteen years late in discovering that in September, 1995 Zbigniew Brzezinski had coined a new word: *tittytainment*. I also didn't know, until today, that in 2007 a Spanish author, Gabriel Sala, had developed the concept (calling it *entetanimiento*) in his *Panfleto contra la estupidez contemporánea*.



This isn't a new subject for the readers of this website – or my books. Here as well, it has been discussed, in different ways, for fifteen years. Anyhow, it isn't only a matter of “contemporary” stupidity. Information and communication systems have always been used to distract, confuse and deceive. Tough now the disease is developing on a new scale, with new tools, often disguised as “fun”. There is no harm in laughing about it, as long as we understand that the problem is quite serious.

Of course this isn't just a matter of “tits”. Or other display of parts of a human body. There is nothing wrong with people dressing or undressing as they wish. Enticement, per se, isn't reproachable. It becomes a problem when it's overused in entertainment, not only blurring all other content but also diverting attention.

And it's not the only tool. The distractive devices can be pleasant or unpleasant, funny or scaring, attractive or repulsive. There are many ways to lull or fuss, delude or worry, cuddle or threat, amuse or distress, with the same purpose: to deceive us into ignorance and obedience.

# Tittytainment

There is a website called tittytainment.com – actually it's only one page, placed online in August, 1999 and never developed any further. This is how it explains the meaning.

*The inventor of the word "tittytainment" is Zbigniew Brzezinski, who was Jimmy Carter's national security advisor for four years, from 1977 to 1981. [He was also co-founder with David Rockefeller, in 1973, of the Trilateral Commission, "a private organization established to foster closer cooperation among the United States, Europe and Japan". He is now a senior advisor in President Barack Obama's staff.]*

*He first used the word at a discussion with several world leaders who gathered at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco at the invitation of the Father of Glasnost and Perestroika, Mikhael Gorbachev, late September 1995.*

*The discussion concerned "the future of work". They sketched out a new social order and everybody there seemed to agree that in the society of the 21st century, 20 % of the people will have work and 80 % will be kept docile, as if in a state of semi-hypnosis, by means of what Zbigniew Brzezinski called "tittytainment": a mixture of deadeningly predictable, lowest common denominator entertainment for the soul, and nourishment for the body.*

*The word "tittytainment" is built up from "tits" and "entertainment", akin to mothers nursing and conditioning children with a plug-in drug.*

Fifteen years later, there is no memory of that meeting – as of other meaningless forecasting for the 21st century. We are having quite different problems with the economy and work (and also with "glasnost" and "perestroika".) But *tittytainment* is, indeed, with us – and getting worse.

The easiest way to enforce the will of power is violence, combined with no freedom of information. It's still used with remorseless cruelty in many parts of the world. But, when and where such brutal control isn't possible, "tittytainment" becomes a prevailing tool. It's interesting to note that, when the word was coined, the implied meaning wasn't only cleavage – but also the breast-feeding of acquiescence (and therefore stupidity.)

The metaphor is perversely clear. Cuddle into obedience. Lull to deceive. Good parents, as well as good teachers, know that their role is not only to educate and protect children, but also to help them in growing up and becoming independent. This is not the intention of those who wish to keep us "childish" for all our life.

Is there something basically wrong with entertainment, fun, play, relaxing, amusement? Of course not. But they become a disease when they are used to disguise information and to replace knowledge, thought, freedom, culture – and responsibility.

Before we try to reach a conclusion, let's see how Gabriel Sala defines *entetanimiento* in his "pamphlet".

*«"Entetanimiento" is a mixture of mediocre and trivial entertainment, intellectual garbage, propaganda, psychological and physically nourishing elements, with the purpose of satisfying human beings and keeping them conveniently tranquillized, perennially anxious, submitted and servile to the will of the oligarchy that decides their destiny without allowing them any opinion on the subject.»*

*«"Entetanimiento" is the best alibi provider that has ever existed, the prism through which we can observe the world without feeling guilty or obliged to take responsibility for our actions.»*

I that comfortable? So the tittytainers would like us to believe. But if we allow them to lock us into a mental prison, we can't choose the environment. And our nourishment is whatever muck someone decides to feed us.

Is it done deliberately? Obviously. But not only. The pushers are intoxicated by their own poison. By spreading foolishness, they become foolish. I had explained this syndrome in 2002 as *The Vicious Circle of Stupidity* – that later became chapter 18 of *The Power of Stupidity* (with more diagnoses of the contagion in other parts of the book.)<sup>1</sup>

There are relevant reasons why some observations on this subject are also in *The contradictions of "meritocracy"* (April 2011) – and, fifty years ago, something quite similar to "tittytainment" was suggested by Michael Young, as the repressive tool of a new oligarchy, in *The Rise of the Meritocracy* (the book in which, in 1958, the word "meritocracy" was used for the first time.)<sup>2</sup>

This isn't a new problem. We can trace it back to the origin of humanity. But now it has reached a different size and perspective, with the "abundance paradox".

The quantity of information is enormous – and growing. If we aren't prevented by prohibition or censorship, we can all find access to "almost everything". But seeking and finding isn't easy. And, in addition to the limitations and warping of our environment, there is more misinformation being constantly generated around the world. Nonsense and silliness, deceit and manipulation, can reach us by means of someone who isn't trying to confuse us, but didn't have the time, or the ability, to check the source or understand the meaning.

Should we fall into a state of anxiety and fear, mistrust everything and everybody, suspect mischief and trickery even where they aren't? No. The remedy could be worse than the illness.

There is a simpler, and less uncomfortable, solution. Insatiable curiosity. An unceasing desire to learn and understand, seizing every opportunity to think with our own mind. Is it challenging? Yes – but pleasantly. With a bit of practice it becomes instinctive, spontaneous, intuitive. When we succeed, it's always stimulating. Often interesting – and also quite amusing.

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1 *The vicious circle of stupidity* [gandalf.it/stupid/chap18.pdf](http://gandalf.it/stupid/chap18.pdf) *The Power of Stupidity* [stupidity.it](http://stupidity.it)

2 *The contradictions of "meritocracy"* [gandalf.it/stupid/meritocr.pdf](http://gandalf.it/stupid/meritocr.pdf)