Media Studies

Democratic Potentials of Media Entertainment: Reading 'The Pyramid'

ZLATAN KRAJINA*

Goldsmiths' College, University of London

Summary

Contesting a tradition deeply ingrained in media studies, which conceives of news and current-affairs programming not only as a reliable, but also a sufficient platform for a mediated enhancement of the democratic ideal of plurality (in a representational realm which many members of society find devoid of enjoyment and consequently ignore), this paper seeks to explore how 'mass' entertainment texts are able to provide subsidiary platforms for debate on society's relevant issues. From this standpoint, the 'reading' of popular media texts on the micropolitical level (the capitalist consumerist setting notwithstanding) is potentially useful to democracy on the macropolitical level. Although popular texts are ardently condemned by 'mass culture theory' and confined to the realm of mere profit-motivated irrational pleasures, they are nonetheless involved in rational deliberation of popular culture consumers engaging with texts as active citizens. The powers and limitations of "democratic entertainment", a paradigm recently emergent in political communication, will be assessed in a case study of the game/talk show "The Pyramid", co-produced by Croatian public service Television ('HRT') and 'Castor Multimedia', as a text which boldly confronts entertainment audiences, prime-time celebrities and current-affairs politicians in informed discussions on the nation's pertinent issues.

* *Zlatan Krajina*, Ph.D. candidate at Goldsmiths' College, University of London. Before earning MA degree in Media and Communications at Goldsmiths in 2007, he had been working at Croatian public service radiotelevision (HRT) as news producer, presenter and documentary author for seven years.

Mailing address: Cmrok 3, HR 10000 Zagreb.
E-mail: zlatan.krajina@gmail.com

Introduction

There is a tradition deeply ingrained in media studies, which conceives of news and current-affairs programming as vital to democracy inasmuch as it provides not only a reliable, but also a sufficient platform for mediated enhancement of the ideal of plurality. At the same time, theoretical debates impregnate this classic notion of the role which 'informational' programming plays in society with a value-laden denotation of 'rationality' – the corner stone of democratic 'debate' and 'choice'. The ardently guarded limitation of reach of these so-called pillars of democracy to the genres of 'information' – a representational realm generically devoid of imagination, and therefore, needless to say, of interest amongst many members of society – paved the path to an affirmation of an impervious dichotomy of 'rationality' (reserved for the news and current affairs) and 'irrationality' (as the domain of entertainment is commonly labelled). Therefore, what is at stake here is not only the question of whether entertainment, as many venture to speculate, really *is* or *is not* the news' second best[1], but also the constant tendency to associate the entire range of mass-appealing texts with the notion of an ever impotent and powerless domain of mere amusement. Our starting point, and one of the key theoretical contributions in this respect, is Raymond Williams's assessment of the usage of the prefix *mass* in terming media as *mass-media* and democracy as *mass-democracy*, whereby 'the mass' is effectively substituted for 'the mob' – traditionally depicted as fickle, gullible and of questionable taste and habits (1973: 297-301). Thus, having in mind Williams's denouncement of "massing" as "less a product of democracy than its denial" (ibid. 304), our consideration of democratic potentials sublimed in the socially shared enjoyments must reach beyond the primary effect (and etiquette) of 'amusement'.

A closer look at media entertainment uncovers a field of intense exercise of power over the selection, access and use of mediated social representations in countless socially relevant ways, either as class maintenance, market development, or citizenship performance, to mention but a few. This paper advocates the latter understanding, by exploring some possibilities of how 'mass' entertainment texts can function as subsidiary platforms to the renowned 'informational' fields of debate on society's relevant issues. Such an approach focuses on 'democratic uses' of entertainment, for which the term

---

[1] Expression borrowed from David Hesmondhalgh (2005).

"democratic entertainment", coined by James Curran[2], seems to be the most serviceable sublimation of various interdisciplinary inputs. Generally, I am inclined to group them in three respective and overlapping planes: cultural studies, political economy of media and political communications, the trajectories of which are addressed in the first and the second parts of this paper. The third part consists of a case study, in which I analyse the game/talk show "The Pyramid", broadcast on Croatian public service television ("HRT"), as a text that successfully engages entertainment audiences, prime-time celebrities and current-affairs politicians alike, in informed discussions on the nation's hot-button issues of the week. The case study will serve to assess the possibilities of entertainment-driven debate to nurture choice steered towards democracy.

Entertaining consumers and citizens

Negotiating Culture

There seems to be a conceptual overlapping in the meaning and reach of how media theory conceptualises entertainment. Neither of the domains directly connected with entertainment, namely, *cultural industries* (Hesmondhalgh, 2002), with the corresponding discussions drawing upon political economy, and *popular culture* (Strinati, 1995), which stems from cultural studies[3], provides a clear definition of *media entertainment*. However, the three strands share a working logic, which secures an insightful contextualisation of the place of media entertainment in the present moment. Dick Hebdige's observation of "popular culture" as "a set of generally available artefacts" including clothes, television programmes, music records, means of transportation, and many other exemplifications of the Western 'popular' (1998: 47) and 'quotidian' (Fiske, 1989a), signals such a relation. Communication theory instructs us that all of this variability is underpinned by the effect of providing the audiences with *enjoyment* (Vorderer *et al.*, 2004: 390-394). Still, ever since the medieval emergence of market economy, and up to contemporary "hypercommercialism" (McChesney, 1999: 77), the publicly produced and dispensed enjoyments are often publicly denounced as 'bread and circus', according to the byword that originated in ancient Rome. Possi-

---

[2] From the lecture delivered at Goldsmiths College, University of London, on 5 February 2007.

[3] Hesmondhalgh utterly rejects such a classification (or simplification, as it were), insisting, quite rightly, that it neglects a whole range of debates pertaining to fields which cannot be unequivocally assigned to political economy or cultural studies (2002: 41-42). In this paper, however, a simplified approach is maintained in order to provide the reader with a readily available overview of the most outspoken enquiries. The case study throws into sharp relief the intertwining nature of all above-mentioned strands.

bly this largely coincides with the view that media entertainment, when studied as part of 'popular culture', is inextricably linked to the advent of 'mass culture' in the 1920s and 1930s (Strinati, 1995).

Theoretical debates have largely been directed by the divide between the camps of 'mass culture theory' and its 'critique' (cf. *ibid*.). Mass industrialisation that fostered increasing urbanisation and introduced the means for mechanical reproduction of art, such as photography and film (Benjamin, 1999), caused an irreversible demise of direct, communal identity breeding through the village, the church and the family, in favour of the social and moral 'atomisation' of individuals (Strinati, 1995). The process was understood as:

> [an] amoral immediacy of rational individualism and secular anomie associated with the rise of mass consumption and mass culture, the moral placebos of a mass society (*ibid*. 4-10).

As citizenship rights were expanded and elementary education was made universal, the 'mass culture' theory was shocked by the collapse of the system which strictly separated 'high art' and 'folk' cultures from 'mass culture' (*ibid*. 7). Bringing into connection the mass production of cultural artefacts, based on standardised formulae that are bound to create mass appeal (cf. Adorno, 1969), all of which evokes the idea of industrial assembly lines, the said theory argued that 'mass culture' ubiquitously destabilised the uniqueness of art and folk, with unprecedented consequences to the aesthetic hierarchies of the time (as determined by the intellectual authorities, such as the Frankfurt School) (*ibid*. 8, 11, 42). The fundamental objection was, at least performatively, based on the argument that 'mass culture' markets its products solely to make profit, and incites its consumers to indulge in "trivial, … immediate and false pleasures" (*ibid*. 10-14)[4]. Here the audience is perceived as a mere "mass of passive consumers, prone to the manipulative persuasions of the mass media", that lack any intellectual challenge (*ibid*. 12, 14).

Most of the 'mass culture' theory has largely been rejected. Critics have denounced it as an expression of the intellectual elites' aim to maintain their class position (*ibid*. 34)[5], in fear of what Hebdige termed a "cultural de-

---

[4] Compare with Richard Hoggart's (1958) classic account on the cultural 'threat' of mass culture and the alleged 'Americanisation' of the post-war British working-class community.

[5] The argument correlates to the post-Marxist accounts of the "symbolic struggle" (Bourdieu, 1992) between classes, being a part of the omnipresent battle over defining the world through media in accordance with specific interests (Hall, 1977). These approaches have gone through a considerable decline in theoretical discussions, but have been offered scarce alternatives (cf. Couldry, 2003) in more recent debates. Here the paradigm services an operational consideration necessary for the subsequent assessment of the potential of the popular to contest the field of dominant discourses (cf. Fiske, 1989a). See also Thompson (1995) and Storey (1999).

cline", which would bring about a discontinuation of "moral and aesthetic absolutes" (1988: 66, 71). In this way the 'mass culture' theory light-heartedly overlooked the principal social contexts in which mass culture was not only consumed, but also appreciated (Strinati, 1995: 39-40). The theory also neglected palpable tensions that arose within 'mass culture' itself, such as the feminist and minorities' discursive critiques (cf. *ibid*. 184-196). At this point, the 'mass culture' theory critique is well aware of the growing spectrum of genres and texts, which are being interpreted in a variety of ways by different groups (cf. *ibid*. 40). Moreover, it is now commonly acknowledged that (the uniqueness of art notwithstanding), popular culture also engages with "symbolic creativity", as Hesmondhalgh termed it, which "*can* enrich people's lives – even though it often doesn't" (2002: 5, original emphasis). Therefore, it would not be an overstatement to claim that the shift in the 'mass culture' discourse makes it evident that "politics are central to the analysis of popular culture" (Strinati, 1995: 46). Evoking Williams's (1973) contention from the Introduction to this paper, it becomes clear that the 'mass culture' theory exercises its symbolic power precisely when it claims to be speaking for the masses (cf. Bourdieu, 1992), or "attempting to set down guidelines for cultural discrimination" (Strinati, 1995: 42)[6]. In Strinati's words,

> it is the power of the mass, not its lack of power, which is emphasised [by the theory of mass culture], but it is not welcomed or celebrated (1995: 42, 9).

Media entertainment functioned as a symbolic transposition of identity and class struggle, deconstructed in the light of the mass culture theory and its critique. That which the intellectual elites at first associated with disempowering the public (Adorno, 1991: 98-106), was later recognised as power-endowing (Fiske, 1989b: 161) to all members of society[7]. Thus, the initial critics were recognised as short-sighted and almost mythically abstract (Strinati, 1995: 74-85), and they failed to keep entertainment-related texts outside of academic relevance. Popular media contents are nowadays studied[8], and appreciated[9] as invaluable reservoirs of cultural identity negotiations[10].

---

[6] Cf. Bourdieu (1984).

[7] Jim McGuigan conceptualised this kind of social inclusiveness as "cultural populism", which conceives of ordinary people as "active pleasure-seekers and trusts in the good sense of their judgement", whereas the 'elitists' are, in this context, thought of as "disrespectful of ordinary people's tastes" (1992: 38, 2). See also Williams (1997), and Harrington and Bielby (2001: 2-11).

[8] See McGuigan (1992). For instance, Clint C. Wilson II and Félix Guitérrez resorted to media entertainment texts in their study of the social portrayal of American 'non-Whites' in films and series from World War I onwards (1995: 61-106). Still, this did not exhaust the possi-

In line with the premises of the 'mass culture' theory, which emphasises profit-driven cultural production, the American model of mass audiovisual entertainment has been singled out as highly instructive (if not *disruptive*, for Frankfurt school's pessimists) in understanding media entertainment as a cultural and economic force[11]. More specifically, the American system is often thought to be exemplifying the geography of cultural relations wherein "[television's] primary customers are the advertisers whose business is to rent the eyeballs of the audience" (Gitlin, 1983: 3). In a classic media studies account on fierce struggles in which restless producers of three major USA television networks fight for market shares, Todd Gitlin's informant asserts: "I am not interested in culture. (…) I have only one interest. That's whether people watch the program" (*ibid*. 25, 31). In such a market-determined cultural production, determined by the urge to predict what mass audiences really want, extensive audience research seemingly minimised the risk of failure[12], but, in turn, increased the producers' uncertainty about what would attract most viewers (ibid. 47-55, 19-23). Although Gitlin's exposition runs the risk of degrading into a blind alley of the 'mass culture' theory, where it could remain autistically ignorant of the abundance of audiences' activities practiced upon the texts, his account goes beyond perceiving the noted cultural products as dedicated exclusively to profit-making. Script writers were indeed compelled to obey the producers' directives and write conventionally in order to endorse mass appeal, rather than challenge it, but the films and series still managed to cast some light on American social agendas, or, as Gitlin himself acknowledged, to draw upon certain aspects of 'reality' (*ibid*. 12, 104-105). As revenues flourished, the thrust of competition and public

---

bilities of reading media entertainment texts as active social platforms for negotiating the recurring agenda.

[9] Contrast, for example, an early condemnation of rock 'n' roll music as "mindless pap" (quoted in Strinati, 1995: 46) with a recent news headline stating: "The Rolling Stones as National Heritage" (Net.hr, 2007; my translation). The latter refers to the proposal of the American Congress to preserve the Rolling Stones music in the National Recording Registry as a historically important cultural artefact. *Nota bene*, the candidature was initiated by American *'mass audiences'*.

[10] This strand of debate falls outside the scope of this article. For a more detailed outline, see Frith (2000).

[11] See also Croteau and Hoynes (2000).

[12] Perspectives on this matter are not unified. Nord (2006) pleads for stronger recognition of the producers' power over the content of cultural products, insisting that the formulae which the producers hold on to in order to minimise the risk and increase their profit are more likely to reflect their values, than those of the audience. The producers, as Nord argues, standardise production and impose formulae that "may only approximate what people 'really want'" (*ibid*. 219, original emphasis). Nord suggests that standardization increases along with a producer's market power and his ability to control risk (*ibid*.).

response of minorities allowed for palpable, albeit still minor detachments from the money-gaining formulae.

The advent of new technologies offered new possibilities that, arguably, contested the inherited *status quo*. Cable and satellite broadcasting, especially with the growing range of digital programmes, allowed for a considerable multiplication of channels. Television business launched 'premier channels', viewed by monthly subscribers. This has led to what Curran recognised[13] as " maximising intensity of satisfaction, so that viewers are persuaded to pay extra for a different and better product", or, more broadly, a "new wave" in American television business. One of the most outspoken programmes recognised in academic debates are series such as "Sex and the City" and "Sopranos", which have been providing media studies with a readable texture of contemporary cultural discussions on 'third way feminism' and postmodern identities (Henry, 2004), and morality and psychoanalysis, respectively (Willis, 2002). However, if history teaches us about the present and the future, the possible "new wave" episode could sceptically be linked to Gitlin's conclusion from the early 1980s: "[when] technology opens doors, (…) oligopoly marches in just behind, slamming them" (1983: 332).

We cannot take into account all the complexities characterising contemporary cultural industries, because it would take us too far from the outlined agenda, but for the purpose of supplying a tenable context in which we may consider how media entertainment actively works within Western democratic systems, we must note some basic issues in recurring debates. On the face of it, the vast majority of studies agree that, since the 1980s,

> cultural industries have moved closer to the centre of the economic action in many countries and across much of the world (Hesmondhalgh, 2002: 1).

Cultural industries operate across national borders, acquiring commercial development hand in hand with new communication technologies, advertisement practices and audience researches (Hesmondhalgh, 2002). Niche markets, with television texts as most prominent entertainment providers, and with stars as their key promotion attributes, are some of the main continuities which have been affected over the past two decades by changes such as policy deregulation and increasing segmentation of audiences (*ibid*.). By inter-relating the economic aspects of cultural production and its social effects, in the recognition that "culture is produced and consumed under capitalism as a fundamental issue in explaining inequalities of power, prestige and profit" (*ibid*. 30-31), critical political economy effectively makes it eas-

---

[13] From the lecture delivered at Goldsmiths College, University of London, on 23 February 2007.

ier to delineate the scope of research into the democratic potentials of media entertainment.

It is a common place in critical political economy that the modernist increase in leisure time and spare income have given rise to a considerable growth of entertainment production, with high costs of producing original texts, and low costs of reproducing them innumerably (Hesmondhalgh, 2005: 161; 2002: 4-19). Since, however, the audience does not have an infinite amount of time, more and more products are fighting for one's attention (Wolf, 1999: 24-26), pushing entertainment, in the words of Michael J. Wolf, American entertainment business consultant, to "the forefront of economic growth" in a number of countries (*ibid*. 4-5)[14]. On the other hand, entertainment is still identified as "a small component of a country's economy – though not, of course, of its culture" (Hesmondhalgh, 2005: 162). Thus, political economy of mass media is well aware that entertainment products "provide us with recurring representations of the world and thus act as a kind of reporting" (Hesmondhalgh, 2002: 3), which brings the discussion of entertainment and society closer to the contentious field of political communications, an aspect to which I now must turn.

Challenging power and politics

Similarly to the 'mass culture' theory, political communications also took a considerably long route to recognising entertainment's democratic potential. The theoretical domain that is in question has been conceptualising the media in relation to the process of democracy as the vital force in enabling the citizens' 'rational choice', by providing them with different views on relevant occurrences in their environment (McNair, 1999: 17, 21). However, the fulfilment of that task has been securely kept within the realm of informational programming (news, current affairs, panel discussions, etc.) and its operational imperatives. To a certain degree, the genesis of such an assumption takes us back to the modernist positions of intellectual elites that insulate media entertainment on the grounds of its alleged detrimental effects on democracy (cf. van Zoonen, 2005). This assumes various forms in public discourse, such as "video malaise", "mediocracy", "dumbing down",

---

[14] Extant data favor this claim. According to Pricewaterhouse Coopers' outlook forecasts, by 2010 revenues will jump globally, reaching, for instance, $104 billion in 'filmed entertainment', $117 billion in magazine publishing, $48 billion in 'recorded music' and $226 billion in 'television networks'. This reflects a 3 to 12 percent compound annual growth rate (PWC Publications, 2007). A Crisil report suggests that the media and entertainment industry in India is expected to double its revenues to Rs 744 billion (Economic Times-India Times, 2007).

"soundbite politics", or "celebrity politics", to name a few (*ibid*. 123, 143)[15]. In par with the development of oral and folk culture, to which the advent of popular culture is inextricably linked, the roots of political participation are found in literacy, which allowed political elites to claim that popular culture and political communications developed as fundamentally separate domains (*ibid*. 144-145, 189-190), and ultimately to leave entertainment outside the rational realm (Curran, 2000: 139). This, to a certain extent, appears to be reminiscent of the previously discussed persistence of 'elite intellectuals' in defending the modernist system of values and hierarchies from a constant challenge lurking in the realm of the popular. Discussions in the last several decades have made it irrevocably evident that reduction of the potential for nurturing civic ideals through media to the realm of informational program-ming leaves scholars blind to a tacit exclusion fostered by the old approach, in which citizens highly indifferent to the modes and aesthetics of news and panels were excluded from the information and discussion arena (van Zoonen, 2005: 2-4, 144). For self-evident reasons, this tendency was deemed dangerous to the principles of participation and inclusion, and, albeit the elitist prejudicial thinking is still present in various forms, there is an ever-stronger agreement regarding the need for democratic politics to acquire the interest of more general citizens via 'mass media' texts (*ibid*. 7). The latter approach ascertains that the source of representation is fundamentally "the people" (*ibid*. 144).

Contemporary practice in political communication has been registering extensive evidence that the politicians engage with practices of popular cul-ture in order to reach voters. This is sufficiently illustrated by, say, their us-age of private language (i.e. of the rhetoric that refers to private life) in tele-vision talk shows, and the utilisation of popular songs in presidential cam-paigns (van Zoonen, 1998). Obviously, political elites are prone to acknowl-edging the social importance of popular culture when voting results are at stake. A variety of genres (from satire, chat shows, punk and rap music to conspiracy films) draws on and engages with politics (Street, 2001: 61, 79). Thus discussions on mediated opinion-making and the inherent power rela-tions shed light on the "democratic potential of popular culture" (Hermes, 2005: 4), whereby media entertainment works as one possible wherewithal of "collective self-management" (Curran, 2000: 139), providing the society with "cognitive maps of reality" (*ibid*.).

Liesbet Van Zoonen offers some tenable operationalisations of the pro-posed concept of 'democratic entertainment' by exploring "what kind of civic virtues can be evoked and maintained through popular culture" (2005: 15). Van Zoonen (2005) looked at Internet discussions following the broad-cast of 'West Wing', an American television drama, which spotlights every-

---

[15] Compare with Strinati (2000: 152-158).

day politics in the White House. After viewing the show, fans would engage with critical discussions on extant politics, linking the real office-holders with their fictional transpositions in the television drama (2005: 123). Thus, the screened material of 'West Wing' functioned for van Zoonen's informants as a resource for "discussing, criticizing, and imagining politics for the performance of citizenship" (*ibid*. 124). For instance, a discussion after viewing the film "Primary Colours", in the eyes of the viewer unfolded resemblance of the film plot to Bill Clinton's presidential career and his misbehaviours in personal life, which, in turn, helped the viewers understand his presidency better (*ibid*.). The following excerpts will serve as an illustration:

> The story does an amazing job of explaining the unexplainable Bill Clinton. Can a good politician win without doing some amoral things? … This film made me think about Clinton as well as politicians in general. What is admirable, what is it we really want our public officials to be? (quoted in van Zoonen, 2005: 128-129)

Van Zoonen's analysis suggests that the participants in these discussions drew on resources of a much wider scope than the film itself was able to provide; in other words, the entertainment content tended to help the viewers to compile a much broader media discourse (*ibid*. 129), thus creating a platform for discussion. The open and critical exchange of ideas signposted an effective means of performing citizenship (*ibid*. 137).

However, the reach of post-screening discussions was not unlimited. They remained confined to a rather general ground, sharpening the individual views, but not linking the ideas extracted from the viewed programmes to more particular issues in real politics (*ibid*. 138-139). This brings us to another key instance in considering 'democratic entertainment', namely the need to examine what the voters do with entertainment, rather than what entertainment does to voters (*ibid*. 123). As van Zoonen points out, much of the 'non-democratic representations', such as sexism and racism, remain present to a varying degree in the entertainment texts (*ibid*. 150). For this reason, greater caution is required in assessing the democratic potentials of consuming entertainment texts. It is important to bear in mind, as John Fiske noted, that, "just as power is not distributed equally in society, so potential meanings are not distributed equally in texts" (1989b: 168). The latter contention serves not to redirect our discussion to the questions of mass media effects and audience research, but to signal a set of arguments that – stemming from the contentious field of media consumption – necessarily complicates our treatment of media entertainment texts, if we are to remain in the field of media studies.

On the one hand, entertainment is seen as the ultimate tool of the ruling ideologies for manipulating citizens, whereby, as Michael Parenti (1992:

198-213) outlines, entertainment audiences are virtually nothing more than passive masses. Fiske, on the other hand, has no doubt about a progressive potential of popular culture on the micropolitical level, where popular culture can empower the citizens to redistribute power in their favour (1989b: 161). This particularly takes effect when people, as Fiske details, selectively and productively talk about a viewed programme; when, in fact, they talk "back to the media" (*ibid*. 174). This embodies much of what Fiske recognises as the "productivity of popular culture" (*ibid*.). An exemplifying case are 'gossip networks' through which women can evaluate and discuss pro-feminine and anti-masculine meanings in a soap opera, and thus establish a form of solidarity with others (*ibid*. 172). Fiske argues that such micropolitical resistance may induce social conditions for macropolitical action (*ibid*.). The third line of arguments, to which our approach is mostly inclined, holds considerable reservations to such an opposition (e.g. Robins, 1994), because the suggested bifurcation tends to oversee the need to be "sensitive to both the 'vertical' dimension of power and ideology and the 'horizontal' dimension of television's insertion in, and articulation with, the context and practices of everyday life" (Morley, 1993: 276, original emphasis). Transposed into the outlined agenda of this paper, the latter synthesis obliges us to attend the interdisciplinary nature of 'democratic entertainment', precisely at the intersection of cultural studies, political economy and political communications, all of which will be considered in the following case study of a television show. In 'reading' the programme, we will not focus on media consumption *per se*, but on the representational qualities of textual exemplifications, in grasping some aspects of the implied mode of social self-maintenance. This approach rests on a limitation immanent to such textual 'reading', which, as Fiske wrote, "may be able to identify a text's popular potential, but it can only speculate whether or how this potential will be actualised" (1989b: 189).

Popular entertainment with triangular arguments

Decades have gone by since the BBC, the European flag-bearer of public service broadcasting (cf. Scannell, 1989), started nourishing the idea of dispassionate public debate as rational deliberation, recognised by many as "the cornerstone of democratic culture" (Murdock, 2002: 202). Political elite members that normally appear in news and current affairs on Croatian public service television are also invited to discuss a wide range of national and international issues in the programme "The Pyramid", but in a manner that demystifies much of what has long been reserved for 'elite' political programmes in the media. "The Pyramid" is a prime time entertainment television programme, which centres around heated discussions of the week's topics in the news. They are rendered as a game, in which the contestants

win the viewers' votes, the viewers win cash, and the process of democracy, as I seek to imply, wins an increased popular interest in critical evaluations of politics.

Three contestants are selected for each episode from a range of public roles: politicians, athletes, artists, celebrities, pundits, commentators, economists, theorists, historians, etc. Each contestant takes position on one of the three corners of a triangular studio setting, with three groups of studio audiences behind each speaker, ready to react on verbal fires shot within. In the middle stands a moderator, who embodies both an appealing television host and a renowned journalist, moderating the programme and stirring the debate with follow-up questions. The winner is the contestant for whom most television viewers vote via telephone lines. One of the viewers is selected randomly by the computer from the incoming telephone calls and is awarded a cash prize. The programme is organized as a tournament consisting of rounds, leading 'pyramidically' to the grand finale, in the 40th episode.

From the very opening to the last second of the broadcast, the show producers are eager to entertain their audience (and themselves), and simultaneously enhance the citizens' position-taking. The camera opens from the back of the studio, exposing the backstage technical equipment, with guests chatting in the lobby of the building and a nervous stage assistant, who gives signals to the workers to start opening the pyramidical set in which the debates take place, and shows the guests into the studio. During the show the cameras briefly cut to the assistants with headphones in the darkness, who are often seen laughing at what is being said, or to backstage preparations of the female singers trio, which pops in three times between the topics with a sixty-second advertisement-like song, which comments on the development of the competition and implies possible ratings of contestants. These and other cut-aways, I would argue, play one of the key roles in contributing to the democratic quality of the entertainment text of which they form a part. The effect is threefold:

- Firstly, the cut-away shots *entertain the viewers* by exposing to them private reactions of the individuals that take part in the production of the show; in this way the cut-aways also help in fighting the threat of boredom;

- Secondly, the cut-aways *blur the classic distinction between the mediated front stage and the back stage* (cf. Thompson, 1995), creating an impression (however illusionary it may be) that there is no hidden 'backstage', no tacit 'producer-receiver' divide, and that everyone who appears before the viewers and whom the viewers may imagine is left unseen (e.g. the assistants) *is* involved, which may effectively work as a subtle invitation to the viewers to join in the gathering; and

- Thirdly, the cut-aways *comment on what is being discussed*. For example, when the topic was euthanasia, quick close-up shots enabled us to see what speakers with particular standpoints wore around their necks (some had Christian crosses, others tattoos, etc.). Thus, the visual collage additionally communicated or attempted to comment on verbal political position-taking by providing specific cues for comprehension. This helped to increase the viewers' sensibility for visual details, which, at times, may reveal more than the speakers would normally allow, and are otherwise inaccessible to the inattentive eye.

Each of the five topics is an issue selected from the previous week's news items that strongly stirred public attention. The issues are decomposed in nine-minute discussions, after being introduced by a thirty-second video clip accentuating the proposed intrigue. One of the guests is entitled to start and has one minute to introduce the debate, and no one has the right to interrupt them. Immediately after that, other guests can start with their sixty-second expounding of views, and they all have an additional 'right on rebuttal', which enables them to interrupt the current speaker and immediately expound their own views[16]. Normally, the contestants call upon the moderator to let them speak, but often they subtly manage to bypass him and interject a murmured or quick remark to their opponents' views. The cameras do not fail to show it. Nonetheless, the debate in "The Pyramid" is promoted to the mass audiences as a rule-governed, meaningful and, quite simply, interesting public practice. Diversity of meanings is foregrounded as necessary; each opinion is treated as highly contestable and worthy of attention. All the more so since, as theory instructs us, the arrangement of "talking 'head to head'" implies "the excitement of the unrehearsed, the spontaneous and the authentic" (Murdock, 2002: 199). The contestants, supported by the cheering audience, strive throughout the show to elaborate their particular positions, often using dialect, slang, personal stories, jokes, metaphors and general knowledge (or lack of it). This is not unusual for a game-show format, as it is developed in the Western television culture: it has always featured "a combination of slapstick, humour, public humiliation and practical joke" (Whannel, 1992: 191). The contestants in "The Pyramid" often draw on common meanings that have already been affirmed as such in everyday public debates, then they critically evaluate them and, finally, juxtapose them to some trivial or (in their view) similarly relevant occurrence in contemporary national and/or world history.

In "The Pyramid", celebrities are seen expressing their political views, thus making an exceptional public appearance *per se*, whilst politicians are seen doing it in an exceptional way: here they do draw on demagogic utter-

---

[16] From "Excerpts From the Rules of the Pyramid", available on www.pyramid-show.tv.

ances, but they do not make promises, and do not hesitate to show agreement with and support for an opponent's view. Consequently, this is where viewers can see a politician and a celebrity in quite a different register than one would expect in the standardised forms of news on the one hand, and celebrity features on the other. In this way, I would argue, the presented opinions manage to attract more viewers' attention, which is accentuated by the fact that the show is broadcast *live*. From these instances, another important aspect is derived.

The studio set, with so many people reacting to the current speaker, but respecting his say, gives a sense of a group setting in which – regardless of the kind of view that is being expressed – the members are at the very least acknowledged on the grounds of group (i.e. show) membership. It is not my intention to romanticise an entertainment-driven discussion that sometimes turns into a small communicational chaos, but to recognise a formation, which, by means of prime-time national broadcasting, facilitates diverse evaluations of shared social shortcomings. No guest in "The Pyramid" seriously believes that they could offer a panacea for the problem that is in question, but they approach their participation as an opportunity to speak humorously of problems by letting countless aspects of a topic amuse them, from a speaker's strong accent or their outfit, to associations, metaphors and examples they may use. On the face of it, every member of the studio audience also participates, by cheering, laughing, gesturing approval or disapproval, whispering to a person they sit next to, etc. If such reactions also take place in the micro-spaces of television viewers, 'democratic entertainment' is given an important additional impetus. In line with van Zoonen's (2005) exposition, as soon as a viewer hears an opinion regarding a relevant political issue on an entertainment show and works on it in its own micropolitical space (Fiske, 1989b), the entertainment starts to fulfil a democratic function. It is perhaps enough, at the very least, to register an ardent disagreement of an audience member with a particular politician, expressed straight in their face, in a unique opportunity to talk back to them, as it were (cf. *ibid.*).

For the purposes of this case study I will provide three illustrations of the outlined points, with excerpts from the debates, which generally consist of:

- Evaluating public behaviour,

- Debating politics, and

- Negotiating national identity.

In one of the episodes[17], a noted press commentator and editor Ivo Pukanić, a right-wing politician Anto Đapić and a left-wing politician Željka

---

[17] From: *The Pyramid*. A television programme. Production: Castor Multimedia and Croatian Television. HTV1, 19 December 2004, 2100hrs.

Antunović were to discuss the case of the then Minister of Health, a right-wing politician Andrija Hebrang. He flew to Austria for a prostate operation, with the justification that their methods would allow him to return to work with the shortest delay. The prime time entertainment condemned the move:

Pukanić: Hebrang's act is an insult to all Croatian doctors and nurses. He should resign, just as the Slovene minister did in a similar case!

[Audience cheering very strongly]

...

Antunović: It wasn't until he became a patient that he became aware of the serious problems facing the health system here in Croatia!

Pukanić: Of course, because he is responsible for them. He criminalized the reform that was under way before he became minister.

...

Đapić: But why not apply the same principle to all ministers? According to the same logic, the minister of tourism should not go abroad for his holiday.

Pukanić: Mr Đapić's theory does not hold. We should be allowed to travel where we please, but these are health issues! If the man at the helm doesn't trust those he's responsible for, why should we trust Hebrang or the national health service?!

[Audience cheering very strongly]

A short news item was here deepened by a range of views, contesting the news actor with a kaleidoscope of individual understandings. Much more complex political issues were also debated, such as the issue of privatising the grand tourist facilities on the southern coast of Croatia[18]. A right-wing politician Đuro Perica, a left-wing literary Branislav Glumac, and an eccentric aerobics trainer Nataša Bebić, were given time to discuss the news that secret deals had been struck with a Luxembourg company to privatise hotels on the island Hvar.

Bebić: We put everything on sale nowadays! They say politics is a whorish business. Well, to avoid the dirty word, I'll use 'the winding road' – a Slove-

---

[18] From: *The Pyramid*. A television programme. Production: Castor Multimedia and Croatian Television. HTV1, 17 January 2007, 2000hrs.

nian equivalent. There are many winding roads to be sold in Croatia, and seemingly we have to invite others to buy them.

[Audience applauding and cheering]

Glumac: Politics is not a whore. We are! We make the deals!

Bebić: It has to stop! Why do our [right-wing] elites go around the world to make business, they should spend their money here, in their homeland! They spend their holidays on Bali...

Perica: Why don't you join them?

Bebić: ... and they allow foreign citizens to buy our beautiful country!

[Audience cheering very strongly]

...

The moderator: Reportedly, we get paid twice the salary in Romania and Bulgaria, although they already entered the EU. But they are 'open' to foreign investment. Is that why we still haven't joined the EU?

Perica: We'll get there for sure. But it's not an easy path for us Croats – look at the diversity of political opinion among us. They appreciate their countries more than some of us do.

[Audience boos emotionally]

Glumac: Isn't it time that politicians, starting from the ignorant Prime Minister, stop saying "we Croats" and refer to "Croatian citizens", who include numerous minorities!

[Audience cheers very loudly]

Glumac: ...because that's what Europe is about: being a citizen. But – a great peril looms in the future. Intellectually, I cannot accept globalised Europe, where small nations always loose, but I will, for the sake of my sons, as I'm sure many of you will.

(...)

Bebić: We should all be acting like citizens of Croatia!...

Perica: We "should", yes, but why don't you?

Bebić: ...Eurosceptics are so hypocritical!...

[The sound announces the last three seconds of the show before the votes are stopped being taken in.]

Bebić: ...just look at what they wear! Max Mara, Versace! Why don't they buy Croatian?!

[Audience laughs and applauds]

In the above-cited case, the information about a move in the national political economy was expanded with a set of standpoints that suggests variability in situating the piece of information in question in a number of cultural and social contexts. Croatian political culture and the issue of national identity were questioned when the same contestants discussed a public announcement by two Croats (opera diva Munitić, and an influential economy professor Stojanov), who claimed that, as Bosnian citizens, they could not cope with harassment in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that they would come back to live in Croatia[19]. Croats are one of the three ethnic constituent peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Croatian ethnicity in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been abundantly supported by the taxpayers' money collected in Croatia, which was a matter of controversy after the Yugoslav war in the early 1990s.

Perica: You know, all this scepticism about their exodus tends to forget that Bosnia and Herzegovina is the homeland of Croats…

[Audience boos]

Glumac: Rebuttal! This dangerously echoes imperialistic plans from the recent past of this region! BiH is a separate state. It is NOT the Croatian homeland!

[Audience applauds]

Perica: I'm sorry that Mr Glumac doesn't understand the difference between 'country' and 'state'. In my Croatian country I have lived in four states. The Kingdom of Yugoslavia, nationalistic NDH, Tito's guild…

Glumac: But should we then support all of our diaspora? Croats live in Australia, France, England. Do they pay Croatian taxes? No!

[Audience applauds and cheers]

Bebić: Rebuttal! Oh, please! If you don't want her in [the capital] Zagreb, let her come to [the coastal capital] Split and sing for the worker-teams refurbishing the city quays! They will work better!

[Applause, laughter and cheering]

Moderator: Do you think this is a start of an exodus trend?

Bebić: Croats live all over the world and they won't just pack up and leave. Being a Croatian patriot is the easiest when you live somewhere else. Why don't they return and live on the low salaries we have here?

---

[19] From: *The Pyramid* . A television programme. Production: Castor Multimedia and Croatian Television. HTV1, 17 January 2007, 2000hrs.

The show fostered general discussion on a specific topic. It did not offer substantial insight into the essence of a given political issue, but it met the liberalist demand that the media should deliver a plurality of different opinions as

> a way of promoting not truth, but public rationality based on dialogue; not rule devoid of error, but a system of self-determination informed by freedom, choice, and a tradition of independence that comes from a civic debate (Curran, 2000: 138).

However, political communication has never treated entertainment without reservations.

"The Pyramid" manages to provide a framework for debate about the social meanings of the surrounding realities, but at the same time it poses problems for the same democratic purposes it strives to serve. Although "The Pyramid" skilfully demonstrates that rational debate about a certain problem – albeit under the shiny studio lights and the demand for maintaining visual appeal of appearance – may be transposed into a mediated space and time that fosters enjoyment, the programme may still leave the viewer only partly informed on the issue in question. In other words, it seems that the discussions tend to pose more questions than they are able to suggest answers. A serious social issue disperses in a rush of capricious comments, fun-motivated interruptions and momentarily imposed digressions from the outlined topic. Critics can read such debates as oversimplifications of serious issues, or, in Graham Murdock's words, as "replacing rational deliberation with emotive expression, and placing sensation above the search for feasible solutions" (2002: 202). However, this should not make us blind to the fact that, as Fiske asserts, popular texts are such

> to the extent that they avoid a more precise and preachy social realism; they do not propose a "party line" of socially correct meanings, but offer contradictory and controversial representations, thus allowing for producerly readings (1989b: 184).

Locating further problems, we are faced with the self-evident fact that only individuals previously acclaimed as public figures are endowed with the eligibility to discuss. Since the show does not recruit contestants from the audience, the question arises of social accessibility to the production of the entertainment text (cf. Curran, 2000; Hesmondhalgh, 2002). Notwithstanding the fact that attentive viewers are awarded money prizes, the audience members are dislocated from the triangular arena, either to rooms where they sit in front of their TV sets, or behind the backs of the contestants, limited to participation merely in collective reactions. Nonetheless, all these arguments do not annihilate the democratic potentials of media entertainment, which "The Pyramid" introduces in our discussion.

"The Pyramid" started in Croatia in 2004 as a public/commercial collaboration, in which the public service broadcaster treats its viewers as citizens, but with the help of commercial media management skills. The show is co-produced in Croatia by 'Castor Multimedia', a small independent television production company, which provides the original format, whereas Croatian Television ('HTV') secures the technical personnel and the studio. 'Castor Multimedia' sold the show as a licensed programme to commercial and public service broadcasters in five other South-East European states, bringing revenues to television companies by securing high viewership for the niche advertisers and by collecting money from the viewers' tele-voting for contestants. "The Pyramid" reached the peak of its success when it was named the world's best at the 2007 "Rose d'Or Competition" of distinguished entertainment productions, in the category of game show formats. Thus, hand in hand with the thrust for economic success in reaching top market shares, the show does perform an important *civic* move in entertainment[20]: the viewers are attracted to watch the show as consumers (cash baits in trailers offer prizes for the ones that call to vote), but then they are treated as citizens in an arena where every opinion, however controversial it may be, is welcome, and where there simply is no single truth[21].

Conclusion

In response to a tasteless joke by a comic at a party rally, Margaret Thatcher said that she wouldn't take the joke seriously, since, as she asserted, humour is only humour (quoted in Street, 2001: 79). She could not have been more wrong. Nowadays, social science insists that "popular culture is part of the times, and indeed does not merely reflect it, but helps produce it" (Whannel, 1992: 199).

Cultural studies and political communications have embraced entertainment texts as containers of relevant social representations, but at the same time the two strands made evident that the conflicted modernist and postmodernist understandings of entertainment have their respective limitations (van Zoonen, 2005: 150-151). Drawing on relevant writings (van Zoonen,

---

[20] This is accentuated even more by the fact that in 2006, of all European public-broadcasting systems, compared to their commercial competitors, Croatian public service Television (a part of Croatian Radiotelevision, "HRT") had the highest public television viewership (Index.hr, 2007). According to media commentators, one of the main assets which brought about such a success was the broadcast of "The Pyramid" (*ibid*.).

[21] Hence, "The Pyramid" could be seen as an extension of the public sphere, realised under conditions of television market competitions and commercialisation of appearances. Thus, the previously noted exclusions may only bring a postmodern twist to the exclusions already objected to Habermas's (1989) model.

1998, 2005; Curran, 2000; Hermes, 2005), it is possible to conclude that media entertainment can apparently be effective for democracy, albeit it is initially meant to serve profit and mere pleasure. When soap operas, sit-coms, music videos, dramas, series, talk shows, even game shows, are read on the viewers' micropolitical level, they enclose potentiality to support the process of democracy. Popular texts, previously condemned as residing in the realm of irrationality, are found in the realm of rational deliberation when consumers work with them as active receivers, or consequently as informed voters. As Curran put it,

> people who are informed and active participants in civil society are a much more formidable and less biddable force than those who are only 'active' at the level of consumption (2000: 140).

In the case of "The Pyramid", we saw that its contestants and audience members alike clearly *are* interested in 'serious' issues, but also that they think they need not be bored while these topics are being discussed. This does not legitimate media entertainment to be given responsibility of playing a substitutionary role to the traditional resources for participation and deliberation. But it does indeed legitimate it to function as a working *subsidiary* platform for democratic practices. The stakes are rather high, since "an entertainment-only diet displacing public information and political debate is a recipe for passivity and social control" (Curran, 2000: 140). Social change, as Curran notes, requires "public information and political involvement" (*ibid*.). Yet, here we need to go a step further from the classic duality of information and entertainment, and recognise that they are closely interrelated within the framework of "democratic entertainment", which, in this respect, calls for further theoretical development. The noted instance reflects a larger social process in which citizenship and consumerism reside in an ever-destabilised opposition and whose divide is increasingly difficult to discern. Kees Brants *et al.* (1998: 1-5) recognise the common mediated form that this acquires in a conflation of mere information and entertainment – in *infotainment*, which encompasses all profit-driven media contents that draw on 'public' objectives, scooping such diverse forms as news, current affairs and talk shows. Heejo Keum *et al.* (2004) provided some empirical support. Their quantitative research into the influence of both news and entertainment media on American consumer and civic cultures led them to conclude, with some reservations, that individual consumption and communal affiliation were not mutually opposed, but interconnected and mutually supportive forces, which was most 'readable' from the news texts (2004: 370, 383-384). Only by acknowledging this is the discussion about civic qualities of consuming media able to face the contemporary trends, in which they go through unprecedented restructuring, the further effects of which are yet to be explored.

The case study of "The Pyramid" sought to demonstrate that "pleasures of popular culture not only have material impacts on the organization of social life, but they can be valued for their contribution to citizenship" (Hermes, 2005: 156), which touches at the heart of *democratic entertainment.* It fosters civic engagement in a media text by securing a platform for expressing otherwise neglected viewpoints. Being refreshingly devoid of intense outfoxing present in life-or-death battles for citizenry votes, as is usually seen in the standardised television panels, "The Pyramid" strives to keep the viewers' interest in the show, by intersecting, quite successfully, the fight for popularity votes with entertainment. The viewers embraced such a concept, because they know, with impeccable lucidity, that there is much more to media entertainment than it may commonly seem.

References

Adorno, T. W., 1969: Television and the Patterns of Mass Culture, in: Schramm, W. (ed.), *Mass Communications and Society*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana: 594-612

Adorno, T. W., 1991: *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, London and Routledge, New York

Benjamin, W., 1999: The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, in: Benjamin, W., *Illuminations*, Pimlico, London

Bourdieu, P., 1984: *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London

Bourdieu, P., 1992: On Symbolic Power, in: Bourdieu, P. *Language and Symbolic Power*, Polity Press, Cambridge and Malden, MA

Brants K. *et al*. (eds.), 1998: *The Media in Question: Popular Culture and Public Interests*, Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, California

Couldry, N., 2003: *Media Rituals: A Critical Approach*, Routledge, London

Croteau, D. and Hoynes, W., 2000: *Media / Society: Industries, Images and Audiences*, Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oaks

Curran, J., 2000: Rethinking Media and Democracy, in: Curran, J. and Gurevitch, M. (eds.) *Mass Media and Society*, Hodder Arnold: London

Fiske, J., 1989a: *Reading the Popular*, Routledge, London and New York

Fiske, J., 1989b: *Understanding Popular Culture*, Routledge, London and New York

Frith, S., 2000: Entertainment, in: Curran, J. and Gurevitch, M. (eds.), *Mass Media and Society*, Hodder Arnold, London

Gitlin, T., 1983: *Inside Prime Time* Pantheon Books, New York

Habermas, J., 1989: *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Polity, Cambridge

Hall, S., 1977, Culture, the Media and the "Ideological Effect", in: Curran J. *et al.* (eds.), *Mass Communication and Society*, Edward Arnold, London

Harrington, C. L. and Bileby, D. D., 2001: Constructing the Popular: Cultural Productions and Consumption, in: Harrington, C. L. and Bileby, D. D. (eds.), *Popular Culture: Production and Consumption*, Blackwell Publishers, Malden, MA and Oxford

Hebdige, D., 1988: *Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things*, Routledge, London

Henry, A., 2004: Orgasms and Empowerment: Sex and the City and the Third Wave Feminism, in: Akass, K. and McCabe, J. (eds.), *Reading Sex and the City*, Taurus

Hermes, J., 2005: *Re-reading Popular Culture*, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA

Hesmondhalgh, D., 2002: *Cultural Industries*, Sage Publications, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi

Hesmondhalgh, D., 2005: The Production of Media Entertainment, in: Curran J. and Gurevitch M. (eds.), *Mass Media and Society*, (4th edition) Edward Arnold, London

Hoggart, R., 1958: *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-class Life With Special Reference to Publications and Entertainments*, Penguin in association with Chatto and Windus Harmondsworth

Keum, H. *et al.*, 2004: The Citizen-Consumer: Media Effects at the Intersection of Consumer and Civic Culture, in: *Political Communication*, 21: 369–391

McChesney, R.W., 1999: *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times*, The New Press, New York

McGuigan, J., 1992: *Cultural Populism*, Routledge, New York

McNair, B, 1999: *An Introduction to Political Communication*, Routledge, London

Morley, D., 1993: *Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies*, Routledge, London

Nord, D. P., 2006: An Economic Perspective on Formula, in: Popular Culture in Hinds, H. E. *et. al*. (eds.), *Popular Culture Theory and Methodology: A Basic Introduction*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, Wisconsin

Murdock, G., 2002: Talk Shows: Democratic Debates and Tabloid Tales, in: Wieten, J. *et al.* (eds.), *Television Across Europe: A Comparative Introduction*, Sage, London

Parenti, M., 1992: *Make-Believe Media: The Politics of Entertainment*, St. Martin's Press, New York

Robins, K., 1994: Forces of Consumption: From the Symbolic to the Psychotic, in: *Media, Culture and Society*, Vol. 16: 449-468

Scannell, P., 1989: Public Service Broadcasting and Modern Public Life, in: *Media, Culture and Society*, Vol. 11, No. 4: 135-166

Storey, J., 1999: *Cultural Consumption and Everyday Life*, Arnold, London

Street, J., 2001: *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy*, Palgrave, Hampshire and New York

Strinati, D., 1995: *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*, Routledge, London and New York

Strinati, D., 2000: *An Introduction to Studying Popular Culture*, Routledge, London and New York

Thompson, J. B., 1995: *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*, Polity Press, Cambridge

Whannel, G., 1992: The Price is Right but the Moments are Sticky: Television, Quiz and Game Shows, and Popular Culture, in: Strinati, D. and Wagg, S. (eds.), *Come on down? Popular Media Culture in Post-War Britain*, Routledge, London

Williams, R., 1973: *Culture and Society: 1780-1950*, Columbia University Press, New York

Williams, R., 1997: Culture is Ordinary, in: Gray, A. and McGuigan, J. (eds.), *Studying Culture*, Edward Arnold, London

Willis, E., 2002: Our Mobsters, Ourselves, in: Lavery, D. (ed.), *This Thing of Ours*, Columbia University Press

Wilson, C. C. II and Gutiérrez, F., 1995: *Race, Multiculturalism and the Media: From Mass to Class Communication*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi

Wolf, M. J., 1999: *The Entertainment Economy: How Mega-Media Forces are Transforming Our Lives*, Penguin Books, New York and London

van Zoonen, L., 2005: *Entertaining the Citizen: When Politics and Popular Culture Converge*, Ronman and Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, MD

van Zoonen, L., 1998: A Day at the Zoo: Political Communication, Pigs and Popular Culture, in: *Media, Culture and Society* 20: 183-200

Vorderer P., *et al.*, 2004: Enjoyment: At the Heart of Media Entertainment, in: *Communication Theory* 14: 4: 388-408

Internet sources

Economic Times – India Times, 2007: Media, entertainment revenues to double by 2010, in: *Economic Times – India Times* [on-line] Available from: http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/603148.cms [Accessed 23 March 2007].

Index.hr, 2007: HTV's ratings still unreachable, in: *Index.hr* [on-line] Available from: http://www.index.hr/xmag/clanak.aspx?id=338693 [Accessed: 24 March 2007].

Net.hr, 2007: Rolling Stones as National Heritage, in: *Net.hr* [on-line]. Available from: http://www.net.hr/film-glazba/page/2007/03/07/0173006.html [Accessed: 20 March 2007]

PWC Publications, 2007: Entertainment and Media Outlook Articles, in: *PWC Publications* [on-line] Available from: http://www.pwc.com/extweb/pwcpublications.nsf/docid/C987CEB2D179131F852572090083B4B3?opendocument&vendor= [Accessed 23 March 2007].

Television programmes

The Pyramid. A television programme. Production: Castor Multimedia and Croatian Television. HTV 1, 19 December 2004, 2100hrs.

The Pyramid. A television programme. Production: Castor Multimedia and Croatian Television. HTV 1, 17 January 2007, 2000hrs.