

## **DUMBING DOWN**

David C F Wright, PhD

I have rather avoided this subject because I do not like the expression which, in itself, may be dumbing down.

The expression really means any process to appeal to those of limited education and intelligence or to those who have developed a limited intelligence and education so that things of little or no value now appeal to them. It also has to do with people's values. They are so indoctrinated and fed with matters of no real importance or value that this escapism blocks out the things that do matter.

Dumbing down is also an attack on the intelligence of normal people. It is often the over-simplification of issues and the degradation of artistic, cultural and intellectual standards. It is the banalisation of culture and of what is good. For example, it can mean programming to avoid any intellectual challenge to one's audience such as a classical music station that plays individual movements and excerpts and, like the Radio Times, does not publish what they are to broadcast but will give us the name of the presenter. Breakfast with Rob Cowan is more important than advance notice that Leslie Howard is to play the Second Ballade of Liszt at 7.35.

The degradation of what is artistic and culture is shown by the elevation of what is inferior. Pop music does not have any of the skill of a Beethoven or Bach nor do its performers have the skill and perfect voices of Callas, Sutherland, Domingo or Carreras. Pop singers scream, screech, shout, bawl and wobble on notes, have poor intonation and diction and are part of the insidious dumbing down process. The TV programme X Factor is not a talent competition but a search for a pop star who has image and little if any talent and can make money for some record producer.

One of the most alarming things about pop music is how some female singers dress with their short skirts and showing their underwear. Some girls as young as seven or eight, and right on up into their teens and, perhaps, beyond, emulate these fashions and wear revealing clothes. They are advertising sex and when you advertise something, some people will want it. It encourages sexual assaults on such girls which we, of course, condemn, but they must take a limited amount of responsibility for how they dress. Many girls say that wearing such clothes is a boost to their confidence and so don't care if they show too much! Promiscuity and its side effects go hand in hand with the pop music industry!

The dumbing down process is also shown in, for example, the claim that Elton John is a good pianist. Utter nonsense. Cziffra was a great pianist as was Rachmaninov and Liszt... so is Peter Katin, John Lill, Earl Wild, Byron Janis and others.

People claim that The Beatles were brilliant and the greatest musicians of our age. They were popular particularly among hormonal girls but they could not sing in tune and a lot of their material was stolen from others. They also sang awful songs about LSD and the girls who have their knickers down and said that they were more popular and significant than Jesus Christ. People counter this by saying that they made a lot of money and were famous.

So is that the paramount consideration? Money?

I taught girls when The Beatles were popular... girls of ten to nineteen. Some admitted to going to Beatles' concerts and sitting in the front row in their miniskirts and taking their knickers down and throwing them on to the stage to gain sexual attention from the group. It also meant that they went home without their underwear. Some were sexually assaulted as well.

Dumbing down and a wrong set of values!

It is largely in the pop world that we have the drug problem. Some pop groups actually recommend young people take dangerous drugs. The effect of some of them allegedly makes you have a sense of wellbeing and

allows you not to think or care. Even so-called mild drugs like cannabis can cause serious mental problems.

This dumbing down also features gossip, scantily dressed women, obsession with footballers and the promotion of programmes about cooking, gardening and antiques. We even have programmes to see how fast you can cook a given meal and endless quizzes to get you a cash prize. The National Lottery is appealing to your would-be greed and taking your mind away from things that matter. Gambling can be a pernicious habit.

The media has a lot to do with this decline in morality. People will watch soap operas like Eastenders and Coronation Street some to the extent that their lives depend on it. Eastenders cannot be missed; it is so vitally important. It is full of bad speech, atrocious diction, who is sleeping with who, unwanted pregnancies, violence, divided families, the abuse of adults and many other unsavoury matters and young children watch it and some emulate the people in the trashy programme. They talk like the uncouth characters and behave as badly. Eastenders appeals to those of limited intelligence and those without worthy values.

If you go back fifteen years you would not have James Bond movies on television until after the watershed, nine o'clock in the evening. The films are often violent where the villains die awful deaths and the films have sex scenes. Bond is licensed to kill and that in itself is immoral and an example of dumbing down. This is fed to us and to children and young people as well, and it does influence some of them but not for their good.

The dreadful TV programme Big Brother also made the front pages of newspapers. All night the cameras were showing the housemates asleep. How utterly boring, and when the housemates were awake they were awful people with bad language and racism.

Some TV programmes are grossly crude and distasteful such as Never Mind the Buzzcocks and Celebrity Juice. And what are buzzcocks?

Some presenters are simply awful like the lecherous Bruce Forsyth who always has to touch the female dancers in Strictly Come Dancing and do a silly dance at the beginning of the show and utter that infuriating and inane comment, "It's nice to see you; to see you nice."

Jonathan Ross always wanted to introduce sexual matters and Russell Brand was also offensive. And Terry Wogan is so full of himself and while he demands money from us for Children in Need, he apparently gets paid a four figure amount per hour for doing the show. That is obscene!

What also is worrying is that people like these presenters although 84% want Forsyth off our screens.

Films have become more violent and sexually explicit and there is a market for this and the range of violence and sexual content will continue to grow. Why do people like violence?

The increase in pornography is alarming and children can watch it freely on the internet and digital television. Pornography is said to be watched regularly by 33% of people. It brings in a lot of revenue in government taxes and one owner of a porn empire donated a very large sum of money to Tony Blair and the Labour Party.

The dumbing down in movies is shown in disaster films which are deemed as entertainment. It seems as if these films are presented as things that could happen so be prepared. Often they are irresponsible films creating fear and distress as well as nightmares for children!

Television advertisements are an attack on our intelligence. How many health products kill 99.9 % of all germs? I want to know what is the 0.1% is it cannot kill. Do we need adverts for sanitary towels so that a little boy of seven bothers his mother to know what they are?

Why do we have to have advertisements in the programme. Here is an episode of the 1950s TV series Wagon Train and ten minutes in we are told about the softness of Andrex toilet paper, what to read in The Sun

tomorrow, an advert for shampoo in which a pretty young thing tosses her hair about irritatingly, and then we see the new model Vauxhall car followed immediately by Indians attacking the wagon train.

Governments are very good at dumbing down. They deliberately withhold information from people. Caroline Iserbyt was formerly a State Policy Advisor for the Department of Education in the USA. She blew the whistle on the government in the 1980s because of activities and controversial changes that were to be withheld from the public. The attacks of 9/11 on the twin towers was said to be the work of terrorists but some believe it was an inside job to disgrace oil producing countries and that the illegal invasion of Iraq was merely to secure oil supplies to the USA.

In the UK, homosexuality was illegal until the mid 1960s when Harold Wilson legalised it. Previously it was a crime and said to be grossly immoral and those involved in this could go to prison. But the moral question was not important to Wilson. If he legalised it he would get more votes and stay in power. Part of the continuing dumbing down is to make morals and decency unimportant.

When Tony Blair was Prime Minister he amassed a personal fortune of some 45 million pounds. He now owns several mansions and is still a multi-millionaire. He said that our economy was in great shape (I have him on video saying this in 2004) and yet he and Gordon Brown left us 392 billion in debt. He lied to us about Iraq; he lied to us about the financial state of the UK. He was dumbing us down.

Blair and his Labour government were always attacking the Christian faith and its morals. Science was the only answer and the new religion that everyone should worship. The Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments were offensive and indeed obnoxious and very few people liked them. God did not create the universe and life. Atheism is true and, as such, each one of us can do our own thing.

The morality of Christianity is not wanted even though it is sound and wise. Debunking Christianity is dumbing down. It is the most popular 'sport' of our times.

The Bible predicts that one day we will all be the same if we are to survive governed by atheistic authority. This was known in the first version of the Bible which existed before the Church was formed under Constantine.

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