

Philistines

DiPs at *The Blue Mugge*, Mon 9th May 2016 7.45pm > 9.15pm

Notes based on Wikipedia 'Philistines' and 'Dumbing Down';
Where Have All The Intellectuals Gone – Confronting 21st Century Philistinism by Frank Furedi
(Continuum, 2004) and *In Our Time*.

1. **Philistine**: 'A person deficient in liberal culture; one whose interests are material and commonplace' (OED, 1963).
2. '**The intellectual** is an endangered species' (Furedi). How would we define 'an intellectual'?
3. Going round: brief comments and anecdotes on 'philistines' and 'intellectuals'.
4. Ten years ago, in this Churchill Room we discussed '**Dumbing Down**' and Furedi's basic argument: 'In the age of the knowledge economy, we have somehow managed to combine the widest ever participation in higher education with the most dumbed-down of cultures'.

A quick up-date of views on this.... some, a decade ago, did not like the phrase 'dumbing down' though we all knew what it meant. The term originated in 1933 as movie-business slang, used by motion picture screen play writers meaning : "to revise so as to appeal to those of little education or intelligence". Is there a better phrase now to express the meaning?
5. Take Education: are Schools, Colleges and Universities involved in a 'dumbing down' process? Again, maybe, the situation is rather complex - some young people are remarkably well informed and very interested in social, philosophic and political issues...?
6. We have discussed what's happening with the BBC within recent months. Another up-date on media trends... including 'the social media', relating this to our theme.
7. Where do we place Donald Trump on the 'Philistine > Intellectual' spectrum. Implications for the USA and global politics...
8. A more positive vision of the future, maybe through the 'creation of an educated and participating democracy'....or will Philistinism reign supreme?

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