

Dianamania

John Moore

1998

The labyrinth of power has many entrances but few exits, and many lose themselves within it. Should we feel pity for the lost as we ignite the flame that burns down its dry thickets?

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Frankenstein's Monster. Created by the media, killed by the media, given an afterlife by the media. Meanwhile, a body lies bleeding, mangled in the machinery.

Media's children. Britons look into their tv mirrors, see themselves — dead — and mourn.

A vicarious death. In weeping for Diana, Britons subconsciously weep for their own deaths, their living deaths — the deaths of their hopes, dreams, desires.

A measure of vacuity. The more one mourns the death of one's masters, the more one affirms the evacuation of one's self.

An inverse ratio. The more repressed people are, the more hysteria lurks just below the surface, waiting to erupt. The greater the obsession with privacy, the greater a people's prudity — but also their prurience.

The real tragedy of Diana's death remains the media-orchestrated spectacle of British slavishness and obedience to authority.

We all mourn. Like an ugly jingoistic mob, moral fascism stalks the land, policing this lie — belligerently glaring, righteously intimidating, and hysterically awaiting any hint of dissent — eagerly desiring an opportunity to pummel with disapproval.

Heard the sick joke about the death of Diana and Dodi? The institutions they symbolise — state and capital, respectively — still exist.

The events following Diana's demise: Albert Speer's finest hour.

Apotheosized as St. Diana, the 'people's princess' joins the pantheon of the gods of New Labour.

Blair's project: modernisation; i.e., an intensified, more integrated form of capitalist totalitarianism. Diana is cast as the Queen of Hearts, virgin mother of a demonic child.

A national(ist) disgrace. 'There is [a] kind of tears that rise from shallow springs and flow or dry up at will: people shed them some as to have a reputation for being tenderhearted, so as to be pitied or wept over, or, finally, to avoid the disgrace of not weeping' (La Rochefoucauld).

The new logo for UK PLC: 'Charity shall cover the multitude of sins'

Contrary to all appearances, Britons yearn for human regeneration. Naïvely hoping that Diana's death would mean that nothing would ever be the same again, they feebly tried to effect apocalypse through public despondency and social passivity, then meekly returned to working and consuming. A very English, very reactionary equivalent of May 68 resulted merely in more of the same. Nothing changed, it just got worse.

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