

Tuesday, 16 September, 1997

The Wall Street Journal  
200 Liberty Street  
New York, NY 10281

Dear Letters to the Editor:

Thank you for letting me address your September 2nd editorial article by philosopher Mr. Scrouton (British), "A Victim of Democratization". I've replied to the article, line-by-line, for submission to your publication.

In order to read the following reply, you may refer to Mr. Scrouton's article.

Feel free to contact me after 9 pm for questions or discussion. 508 799 2918.

Sincerely,

Christopher Hagelstein,  
Worcester, MA.

# A Victimization of Democracy

*By Chris Hagelstein*

**F**or a brief moment, mediaticians will be examining their surgical parchments over the death of the Princess of Wales. Life is good copy, but the last bit of copy squeezed from the memory of a woman who was worth her weight in gold must equal the gold owed the mediaticians in their patient's afterlife. But these doctors of the media will be as guilty as they are symbolic. Many of those who have studied the economics of journalism, or who have considered the Princess fair currency, have been moved by something much sicker than profit. The tabloid press may single itself out as the truth. But these villains are merely responsible for the regulation of ironically-challenged markets, a curiosity that, if not rigorously controlled, will inevitably display tragic consciousness like those evoked by the control of more post-modern and self-reflective event in a serious photo-intoxicated catalepsy that have all but empowered the idea of a new sanctimonious media doctoring our wounded culture.

It is not one of the many symptoms of an American Cultural Democracy that people's desires and tastes ought to be engaged if they are to be satiated. Every now and then, some mediatician diagnoses a premise that profits are the savior of tabloid press, and more so, that diatribes are the salve to address these appetites. But instead, we hear what we have come to know as an unquestionable fact of all popular media-- a criticism of society and ordinary desires-- lacking the anesthesia of religious instruction and family

*continued next page*

discipline. However, in a cinematic-imbibed society, there is a public awareness reinforced by subtext after subtext that these observations are manufactured, not provoked. Citizens accept that there are certain conventions that are in business to protect public figures, legitimize information, and insure us against the veil of mystery offending our popular sentiments.

Democracy, however, has changed all that by laughing off the mystique of pedagogic powers. Democratic man wishes to uplift everyone to the level at which he mocks. He is there for curious about the public figures of figurative language who divulge their honest misperceptions. For it is in our interests that their opinions show themselves to be of some other abrogation other than his society. Hence these mediaticians whose business depends in part upon the elements of class elitism-- the mystery of royalty, for example, now become the pallbearers to an event that insures their survival, unlike Princess Diana, who died under their scalpel.

One response to this morbid profession is to turn its face a round. This is what the deconstructionists have tried to do: to face the Other with a cheerful mirror and say, here we are, an ordi-

nary Reader like you, but also, in our hopeless way, a mockery of our people. But the insistence of some didactic glare soon melted this makeup and buried its clothes, and the naked remains look just as those philosophers and thinkers operating upon the eyes of a people already blurred by words redux. After her divorce, Princess Diana proved to be an enhanced symbol of royalty. Indeed, symbolism means everything to the press, save the glitter of its newscasters detached from the real functions of journalism. This made the Princess financially attractive to the press. An innate desire between feed for fodder developed around her in minds imprisoned by this purposeless cycle. And because her value was bid up by camera angles, the Princess engaged in a perfect fairy-tale arbitrage by shorting the inflated reports of her life and going long the charities she supported. This strategy was doomed once the Princess transacted with intimacy, an attraction which triggered a public courting.

It was probably an illiquid market anyway. For these British linguistic brokers fail to recognize the fungibility of famous people in general, and royalty in particular in a marketplace so driven by the scarcity of an anachronistic civilization. Communications from such pontifical thinkers, until

recently, were governed by humility and word processors-- qualities that earn a fairly low rate of return. Now the Mediatic Man has triumphed, and with him the archetype of news copy, the old way of bringing down Editorial Man is by editing his insights. It is not just the mediaticians that should be sued for their social malpractice, for they were only capitalizing upon the moral plague of common nature. It is this commentary upon society in its entirety, whose style of writing is so surgically correct that the patient's own immunity system is read superfluous.

Under these circumstances, the medium of truth shall be through victimization. Were a words of journalism more accurately defined and subjected to government certification, some epic of a news industry could perhaps be envisioned here. But of course, universities would complain against such competition. There was a time when readers of newspapers would empathize along with the author over a very unfortunate event. But in losing its symbolic power and public function, the news has become orating-- the real news being always the same, always patronizing, namely, that people like us are always to blame. And the proof of it is there in a princess, killed like any other ordinary mortal, within the minds of magic kingdoms.