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# Editorial

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Sartre called it 'bad faith'; that opting out of personal responsibility by thinking in terms of paradigms, abstractions, labels: like - 'I have to behave like this because I am a policeman, emancipated woman, Liverpool football fan. It's the cop-out that allows bureaucratic sadists, religious fanatics, political extremists, Oliver Norths to break any moral rule because 'they are only doing their jobs.'

We all know about it. We all deplore it. What I am wondering is, why there seems to be so much more of it about. And my first answer is that it's all down to Journalists who may no longer write shorthand, but who still think in shorthand. 'Glasgow housewife, 39' 'Croydon company director, 45' 'Hampstead editor, 72'. Dramatic single event disasters call up all the crocodile cliches - the Nation's Grief, the Country in Mourning, Our Hearts Go Out To . . .

This sort of instant myth-making sells newspapers, from the Sun to the Independent. And Television doesn't ever want to get left out. But those who do get left out are all those victims who die or are mangled on their own. 95 people killed in a single public accident is a tragic loss of life and each death is a cause of loss and tragedy for their immediate relations and to a somewhat lesser extent to their friends and acquaintances. Beyond that the emotion has to be screwed up by journalists and publicity seekers. If the Whole Nation and specifically the Prime Minister, Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Queen are expected to join in, this is phony and unreal and 'bad faith'

Consider: every week on the roads, ninety people or so are killed. They die alone. They are mourned only by their close relatives and friends. There is no million pound fund to ease the grief for the bereaved. Mrs. Thatcher doesn't go to a memorial service. The leader of Liverpool council doesn't complain that the Queen isn't coming in person. There is nothing but the real feelings of those directly involved.

And if your answer to this is that starting a fund for one disaster doesn't preclude giving money to another, please let me know when was the last time you gave money to the family of a road casualty.

Vivian Milroy

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