



## A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

PAUL CARROLL

**‘has all this grieving gone just a little bit too far?’**

**Press comments on public reaction to Fabrice Muamba heart attack, March 2012**

**Hugh McIlvanney, *The Sunday Times***

“We were in the midst of another manifestation of our society’s endless appetite for choreographed lamenting, the phenomenon embedded in our culture by the excruciating exhibitionism that marked the mourning for Princess Diana”

**Matthew Syed, *The Times***

**Public grief ... moves into soap opera territory**

But the wider question is: where does it all stop? At what point does grief morph into something different and rather more questionable?

All of which is well and good, perhaps, but it also raises: do these rituals any longer have anything to do with grief? What happened to quiet reflection, the inward coming to terms with the loss of a loved one, or a cherished icon? It is almost as if grief has morphed from a private emotion into a very public competition. Who can display their hurt most graphically? Who can deliver the most extravagant tribute? This is not merely about sentimentality; it is about the fetishisation of grief.

It is as if, in this post-Diana age, we have started measuring the scale of inner hurt by the scale of public anguish. It will no longer do for anyone, following Tennyson, to “dwell quietly”.

**Richard Littlejohn, *Daily Mail***

**Is it too much to hope that this sobfest will soon come to an end?**

One (nation) cleaves quietly to the traditional British qualities of reserve, resilience, self-restraint and the stiff-upper-lip. The other is sanctimonious, self-indulgent, sentimental and given to showing off in public. There is no tragedy too small which they can’t manage to make all about them.



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### **PRESS PACK**

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