Reporting Death and Disaster: The Paradox beyond the Numbers

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Abstract

The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami killed over two hundred thousand people in the fifteen countries the tsunami struck. Amidst extensive media coverage, the New Zealand Herald published in excess of two hundred online articles focusing on the event and aftermath. Representations of death and the dead within these articles are often stereotypical and formulaic. Discourse analysis revealed that death and the dead are represented through both metaphorical images and abject descriptions on two distinct scales. Both the bodies and the characters of the dead are handled explicitly according to socially acceptable trends. The dead are also situated spatially with specific identities constructed and reported on. Utilising discourses from throughout the social sciences, analysis of online publications reveals the way perceptions of media consumers to death both inform and are informed by media producers.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Estelle Tepi Sutsakhan, died 30th December 2004, Indian Ocean Tsunami

On Sunday 26 December 2004 at 07:59 am local time, an earthquake measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale occurred off the western coast of northern Sumatra (Final Tsunami Fact Sheet, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), 2005). This was the fourth-largest earthquake recorded since 1900 (United States Geological Survey (USGS), 2007). The resulting Indian Ocean Tsunami, also known as the Asian or Boxing Day Tsunami, caught the attention of the world. According to the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), the tsunami killed over 280,000 people (*http://www.cred.be/*) and resulted in excess of $4.45 billion (United States Dollars) damage (Samarajiva, 2005, p.732) in the twelve affected countries (shown overleaf in Figure 1). The CRED disaster database, EM-DAT (see p.51 for more details), indicates that more than one million people in Sri Lanka were affected by the disaster and over a hundred thousand people were affected in Somalia, a distance of over five thousand kilometres from the earthquake epicentre (www.em-dat.net).
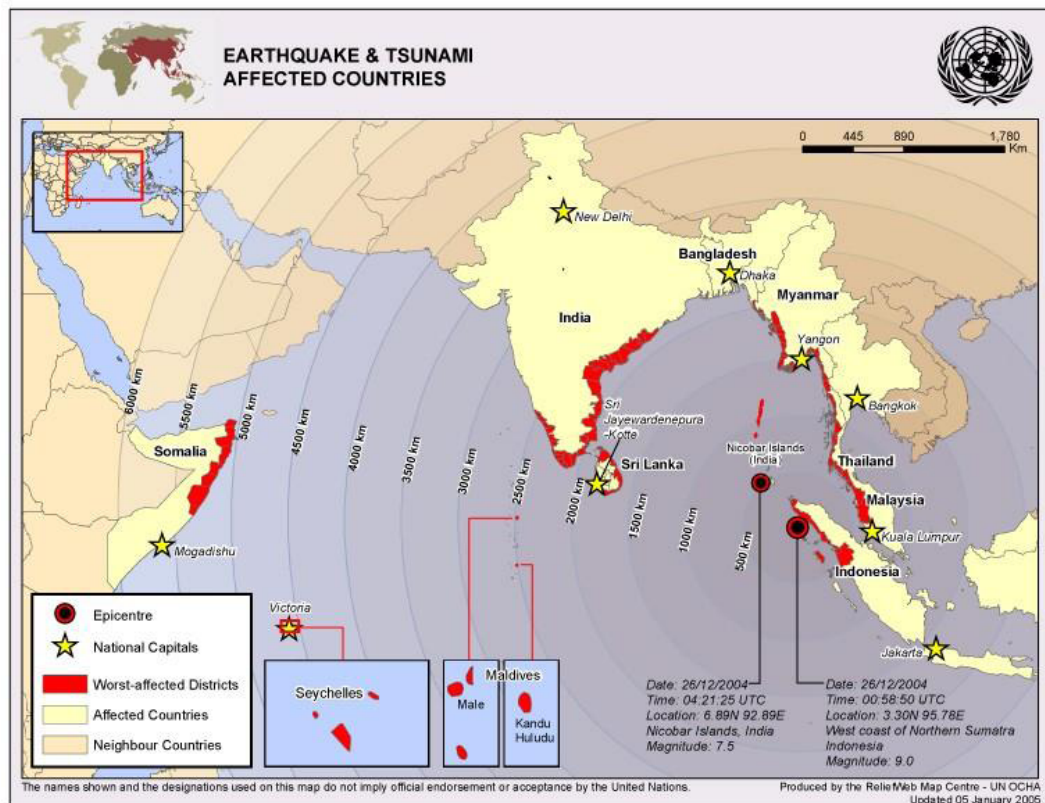
Figure 1: Earthquake and tsunami affected countries following the 26 December 2004 tsunami (ReliefWeb Map Centre, 2006)

Despite insurmountable odds, the United Nations Tsunami Special Envoy has compiled what may be the most accurate casualty list from fifteen countries affected by the event (shown in Appendix 1). The effects of the tsunami were also felt globally. International tourists were affected, particularly in Thailand (Findlay, 2005, p.432), while the broader economic effects were felt globally through business, all of which were reported through international media organisations. While the exact number of people killed may never be known (Mastrangelo & Lange, 2006, p.121), the sheer scale of the disaster in terms of the loss of human lives was staggering and available to worldwide audiences via the media almost immediately. Lack of reliable information in the first days following the

disaster meant the world failed to realise the horrific extent of the human

loss of life. Online news publications, such as the New Zealand Herald

did, however, convey that the death toll of the tsunami was in the

thousands and the number of people affected even higher. Yet the dead

appeared to be almost marginalised from the online media coverage. This

led to my primary research question: Why can death be described as the

(in)visible impact of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami?

Research Questions

In order to address the primary research question, a number of secondary

questions must also be answered. These consist of four separate but

interlinked lines of enquiry:
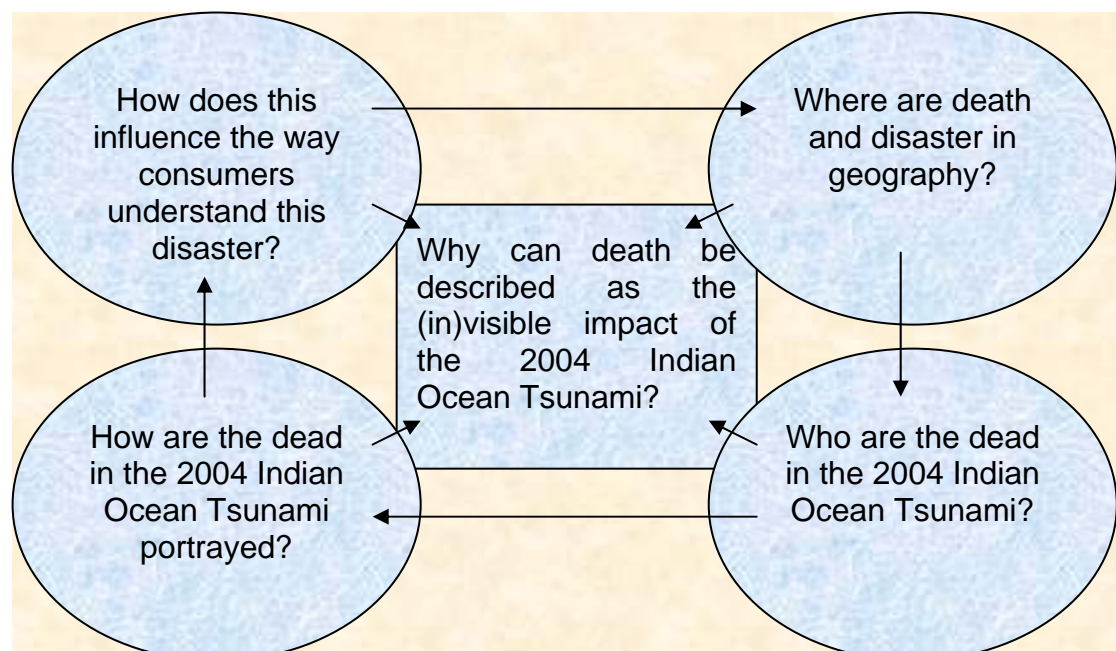
Not only will this research project attempt to answer these questions, I hope to also gain an in-depth understanding of contemporary geographical discourses focusing on death and, in particular, death in disasters.

Context

In every sense, catastrophic events are paradoxes, situated as they are at the 'interface of society and environment' (Oliver-Smith, 2002, p.28). Extreme events are products of both natural and human processes to the extent that a submarine earthquake is as responsible for the creation of a disaster as the combined 'product of social, political and economic environments' (Wisner & Blaikie, 2004, p.4). A catastrophic event can evoke images of beauty and wonder at the power of nature. It can also result in emotional or psychological distress among people with no physical link to the event (Wayment, 2004, p.515). Disasters can lead to the overthrow of government (Walker *et al*, 2005, p.249) or 'signal a deeper shared recognition of vulnerability' (Findlay, 2005, p.436). These paradoxes, or perhaps multiplicities, make extreme events uniquely difficult to define.

In this research, I do not intend to explore the philosophical debates of classification, nor the intricate processes at play in creating a catastrophic event. However, it is important to contextualise the topics of both disasters and death, an exercise based in classification and definition. Definitions of catastrophic events are as varied as the events themselves;

what is disastrous to one community may be considered a natural process to another. Designations of 'disaster status' from the physical sciences are often strictly quantitative, with a focus on requirements such as exceeding a set number of deaths or people made homeless. The changing emphasis placed upon the social impacts of extreme events has expanded on these quantitative measures. Just some of the many definitions of a disaster include:

- Events that are uncommon enough to be considered outside the range of normal human experience, and therefore present extreme challenges when they eventually do occur (Alagona, 2006, p.78).
- A naturally occurring or man-made geologic condition or phenomenon that presents a risk or is a potential danger to life or property" (Alexander, 1993, pp. 7).
- Situation or event, which overwhelms local capacity, necessitating a request to national or international level for external assistance (CRED, 2007).
- An unforeseen and often sudden event that causes great damage, destruction and human suffering (EM-DAT, 2007).
- Any situation in which the damages to people, property, or society in general are sufficient that recovery and/or rehabilitation is a long, involved process (Keller, 2000, p.88).
- I cannot define disaster, but I know it when I see it (Quarantelli, 1998, p.236).
- Processes acting through the environment to create a large number of unexpected premature deaths and economic damages (Smith, 2004, p.8).
- When the affected regions' ability to help themselves is clearly overstretched and supranational or international assistance is required (Tsoegl, 2006, p.5).

One of the most effective definitions and the one used within this research is Kevin Smith's (2004, p.13) description of a disaster as:

> An event, concentrated in time and space, in which a community experiences severe danger and disruption of its essential functions, accompanied by widespread human, material or environmental

losses, which often exceed the ability of the community to cope without external assistance.

The echoes of positivist attitudes remain today and disasters are all too often classified in terms of how many deaths result from an extreme event. This simple categorization method is routed in cognitive processes where the brain 'groups' information based upon similarities (Willingham, 2001, p.7). Through association and social learning, catastrophic events and death have become intertwined to such an extent that the concepts may be impossible to separate. Although this organisational technique can be explained as a physical process sourced from experience, it also raises some significant questions: how many people must die before we have a disaster? If death and disaster are so completely entangled, is it possible to have a catastrophic event without deaths? Perhaps most importantly of all, where does this association between death and disaster come from?

Media may be broadly defined as 'modes of articulation through which knowledge is mobilized, manifested and materialized' (Witmore, 2004, p.133) or 'information and communication spaces, which enable communication and coordination within a community' (Seufert *et al*, 2000, p.2). Within this research, media refers specifically to news media; the various forms in which news or reports of current events is communicated to a public through mediums of published newspapers, televised news reports and online news publications. There is no shortage of material on the role the media have in shaping perceptions. The media is perhaps the greatest tool in representing both people and places (Findlay, 2005,

p.435); two vital factors in the social construction of a disaster. The unquestionable power of the media may stem from the wide variety of material to which we are exposed. Through television, radio, magazines and advertisements we cannot help but encounter a mass of highly tangible sources of information and persuasions. Advances in technology have added a further dimension to the media we are exposed to through the Internet. This medium offers 'the immaterial or incorporeal substance of digital rendering' (Smith, 2002, p.190); a process shaping perceptions of the material through the immaterial.

Media coverage of disasters serves a multitude of purposes, both intentional and unintentional. Current affairs mediums such as the news serve to service the public need for information. To take this role at face value is to miss much of the power of the media. It could be said that 'history is written by the victors', which rings true for current events as we struggle to analyse 'the overwhelming efficacy of electronic communication in constructing public discourse' (Kobayashi & Peake, 2000, p.398). What may appear initially as an image of destruction or annihilation, can also be re-read as representations of different vulnerabilities (Findlay, 2005, p.429). That the media does not always provide an accurate and balanced representation of events is not a new idea, as Brewin (1994, p.208) so eloquently states, 'the media have done more injury to the truth than was ever done by cover up or whitewash'. The challenge facing those investigating media is to explore why and for what purpose events are represented with or without bias.

In the case of catastrophic events, there is a drive to produce empathy in the consumer, creating the experience of 'collective loss' (Wayment, 2004, p.516) through perceived similarities between those involved in an extreme event and the consumers of media. The cynical but most probable explanation for this drive for empathy is capitalism; while individual journalists may 'argue that their work makes a difference' (Moeller, 2006, p.185), it is more likely 'the operation of a free market, combined with a popular thirst for dramatic news of disasters' (Brewin, 1994, p.208). The media portrayals of rapid onset disasters are geared to trigger responses influenced by emotion rather than assessments of needs (Griekspoor *et al*, 2005, p.250). These responses are tied inseparably to discourses of vulnerability; the poor "victims" of an extreme event. Not only does 'the mass media (generate) a moral obligation on behalf of Western nations' (Bankoff, 2001, p.27), it also serves to reinforce the differences between "us" and "them"; a far from subtle reinforcement of the power of the producers of media.

The socially constructed link between death and disaster is (re)created by the media. This research will examine the ways in which death is represented by the media. A simple example; the media encourages the fear that dead bodies will create epidemics, despite the conclusive evidence that this threat is minimal (Morgan & de Ville de Goyet, 2005, p.33; Skelton, 2006, p.23; Tierney *et al*, 2006, p.60). The media as a social construct addresses issues surrounding death that 'reflect many of

the concerns in the larger field of cultural geography' (Kong, 1999, p.2). In addition to matters of gender, sexuality, culture, ethnicity, class, (dis)ability and nationality, the topic of death encompasses issues of "the sacred", the taboo and eroticism. Both death and "deathscapes" are sourced within discourses on vulnerability (Findlay, 2005, p.430) yet the links between death, disaster and the media in terms of critical cultural geography remain relatively new territory.

As with the term "disaster", "death" is also surprisingly difficult to define considering that most people are likely to understand the concept quite clearly. The Collins Dictionary defines death as 'dying; end of life; end, extinction; annihilation' (McLeod, 1990, p.132). Definitions also vary widely from discipline to discipline, often without agreement. Within health sciences, biological death is determined by empirical evidence (Connelly, 2003, p.46). Prior to 1968, death was deemed to be the moment the heart stops beating. Increasingly neurological criteria are used to determine whether an individual is dead or alive through activity in the brain, such as is registered in a pain response (Morenski *et al*, 2003, p.211). Death is also defined as an ontological condition or mode of being (Heidigger, 1962; Feuerbach, 1980), provoking debate over the nature of existence.

These definitions raise as many concerns as they address. In the aftermath of a disaster when medical facilities are limited, are neurological responses measured or are different criteria applied. Margaret Lock's 2004 (pp.138-141) work on the ambiguous nature of the "brain-dead"

explores the issues of whether brain dead bodies are living bodies with human rights given that biological functions can continue with the aid of technology. It is possible for these brain-dead bodies to assume a 'hybrid status – that of a dead-person-in-a-living-body' (Lock, 2004, p.141). What then of those in the "ambiguous" state (Betz & Thorngren, 2006, p.360) of missing, presumed dead? How long must someone be missing before they can be deemed dead and who decides this? If death can be declared through customary practice or legislation, then death does not need to be biological but rather determined through social constructs. With so many hybrid states disrupting the dead-alive dichotomy, the fact remains that for this research, people will be considered dead through biological, legislative and social means.

With death such an integral factor of disasters, there has been a wealth of research in various aspects of death from extreme event. This research is not purely epistemological in nature; it is a practical issue in need of addressing. Not withstanding a 30 per cent decrease in the number of deaths by extreme events in developed countries (Walker *et al*, 2005, p.249), the 'global trend is towards more disaster-related deaths' (Smith, 2004, p.32). This is despite decades of research into avoiding or minimising the threat to human life (Keller, 2000, p.87). Improvements in communications, global awareness and technological advances have yet to eliminate the devastating impacts of disasters. The number of extreme events themselves is increasing, with a growing annual frequency (Smith, 2004, p.32). Although this increase in the number of disasters may be

attributed to improved communications and therefore reporting of events and increased population growth in hazardous regions, there is no denying that this growing trend of catastrophic events 'represents a very real phenomenon' (Walker *et al*, 2005, p.249).

With any disaster, invariably the first question asked in regard to the extent of the event is 'how bad is it?' As with defining a disaster, there are many ways in which impacts may be measured. The CRED disaster data, EM-DAT, quantifies the scale of a disaster in terms of loss of life, people injured, people made homeless, people affected and the estimated cost in United States Dollars. Other disaster databases offer similar criteria by which the extent of a disaster may be measured. In my opinion, the scale of a disaster is determined far more simply as how many people have died. Yet the dead seem to be conspicuously absent in much of the media and personal discussions regarding disasters. It is this paradox that gives rise to my primary research question: Why can death be described as the (in)visible impact of disasters?

The December 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami provided a sharp reminder of how vulnerable populations around the world really are. The 'official' death toll of 280,931 (EM-DAT, 2006) resulted in a mass outpouring of public sympathy in the form of financial and material donations, with IFRC fundraising targets being exceeded by 30 percent in the two months following the disaster (IFRC Operations Report 16, 4 February 2005). Media reports of the devastation revealed widespread destruction in the

form of housing and infrastructure. Footage from a video camera showed the tsunami sweeping into a tourist resort (Findlay, 2005, p.429). Survivors, wet and in shock, wept openly. With the passing of time, news reports began to show shots of people trying to identify bodies, placed in the open and covered by blankets. Yet still the death toll remained an intangible figure that bore little relation to the images revealed to the world. Instead, sanitized images of small-scale impacts conveyed a representative impression of the disaster. As the tsunami is the rapid-onset disaster with the highest death toll since the 1976 Tangshen earthquake in China (Smith, 2004, p.20), representations of the event provide insight into some of the many ways in which death is portrayed by the mass media.

The focus on death within research is not an easy undertaking. Death as a discourse within geography is relatively recent, but growing in momentum. In many ways, death has replaced sex as the latest tapu (taboo) topic to be deconstructed. However, the purpose of my research is not to shock, nor is it born of morbid fascination. Representations of bodies and people about to die often provide powerful, haunting images. Of the Pulitzer Prize winners for the Feature Photography category, many show images of the dead and dying, including this year's winner Renée C. Byer's photo essay of a young boy losing his battle with cancer (The Pullitzer Organisation, 2007). Photographs such as Eddie Adams' 1968 image of Nguyen Ngoc Luan executing a Viet Cong suspect and David Halberstam's 1963 photograph of Thich Quang Duc's self-immolation

remain to this day some of the most defining images of conflict and helped turn the tide of public opinion against military policies. Representations of death and trauma are not always voyeuristic; they can prompt change. While I do not presume that my research will have such far-flung consequences, I hope to justify my research as something positive and deserving of attention regardless of the issues of propriety maintained within Western discourses on death, or in the words applied by Sontag to a different disaster; 'let the atrocious images haunt us' (2003, p.103).

Chapter Outline

In Chapter 2, I will explore the various methodologies used in my research, with special focus on media texts. This chapter defines the research methods I employed as well as exploring the work of noted geographers and social scientists working within this field of research. I have also included a context sub-section within the methodology to situate myself within the study. Chapter 3 is a literature review, exploring theoretical understanding of geographical work on death and disasters. In addition to the evolution of the discourses and applications within my research, I examine some of the main tenets of embodiment, gender, culture, abjection and morality in terms of death. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the different representations of death within the tsunami coverage. In Chapter 5, I discuss the findings of this research, including how it relates to contemporary geographical discourses on death, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of changed portrayals of death. It

also provides some suggestions from outside the discipline as to

additional mechanisms influencing representations of death in the media.

Finally, in Chapter 6 I draw my research conclusions, including a critique

of this study and suggestions for future inquiry.

Chapter 2: Discourses of Death and Disasters

David Sammann, aged 53, died 26th December 2004, Indian Ocean Tsunami

According to Bryman, there are two fundamental ways in which the relationship between theory and research may be formed (2001, p.3). In a deductive approach, theory guides the research, whereas an inductive approach is one where theory is the outcome of research. Both styles of research, inductive and deductive, are dependent not only upon the research being carried out, but also the researcher and their school of thought. It is in this way that the relevance of theory becomes apparent. Theoretical perspectives 'provide an account for the context within which people's behaviour takes place' (Bryman, 2001, p.278).

Disaster studies, through the modernist agencies which provided the focus for initial research into natural hazards, have often failed to grasp the importance of theoretical perspectives. Science-based disciplines have centred upon the biological, chemical and physical mechanisms of the hazard phenomena whilst paying scant attention to the ways in which society 'actualizes the potential of a hazard' (Oliver-Smith, 2004, p.19). Scientific works can effectively write all human elements out of the disaster equation. This modernist approach views society as something that merely intrudes briefly upon the natural order; 'a landscape without natural

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hazards would also have less variety; it would be safer but less interesting and probably less aesthetically pleasing' (Keller, 2000, p.96). While in terms of the philosophical debates of people as separate to nature this viewpoint is remarkably progressive, it offers an insight into the ongoing disregard of human social and cultural factors in the physical sciences.

Since at least the 1970s, disaster studies have challenged the traditional scientific approaches to the role of humans in extreme events. In geography, hazards have come to be explored as 'social phenomena that occur when a community suffers exceptional, non-routine, levels of disruption and loss' (Smith, 2004, p.12). Through the work of academics such as Ben Wisner, this re-classification of a disaster from a "natural process" to a "social phenomenon" may seem little more than a matter of semantics, yet it has opened the floodgates of study. Combined with the 'unprecedented vitality and diversity' (Warf, 2004, p.44) displayed by contemporary cultural geography, there has been a growth in the application of cutting edge issues to long-standing studies and disciplines.

This exciting engagement with theory drew me, like many others, to the discipline of human geography, the death knell of my perception of myself as a scientist still ringing in my ears. My own relationship with theory has mirrored that of other geographers. Dissatisfied with modernist thought, I have first embraced and then rejected meta-narratives. However, while the frameworks from which to view and interpret events are constantly in flux, there is no doubt that theory proves a fundamental tool in

understanding and interpreting aspects of the world. No geographic research can be complete without a review of the evolution, major tenets or applications of theory. As such, I have provided a brief overview of the main theoretical perspectives used in this research. This is not an in-depth review, nor an examination that could do justice to the authors of ground-breaking works. Similarly, there is a multitude of additional cultural discourses that are instrumental in shaping contemporary discourses. There is no clear separation between specific schools of thought and many of the tenets of the theoretical perspectives overlap. There is no specific order in which the sections are presented in order of validity or preference. This is merely an outline of the main concepts that have framed the way in which I have viewed the people and places of death and disaster.

Postmodernism

Formed in and against the concepts of high modernism, is the 'anti-theoretical culture' (Marshall, 2000, p.334) of postmodernism. In many ways, the 'celebration of fragmentation' (Squires, 1993, p.2) inherent in postmodernism seems to sit incongruously in the concept of research shaped by theory, such as this. However, postmodernism with its de-centred focus (hooks, 1991, p.31) allows a large degree of freedom within research itself. Not only does postmodernism allow an 'instant adaptation to context' (Dear & Wassmandorf, 1993, p.321), but also an excellent

position from which to produce the counter-hegemonic discourses that have brought such exciting challenges within geography.

Definitions of postmodernism are inherently problematised due to the very nature of the perspective, however, the principles of the position are easier to grasp as articulating 'a fuller recognition of multiplicity and difference' (Squires, 1993, p.2) among individuals and groups within and across societies. Warf's definition (2004, p.45) provides an excellent overview of the post-modern concepts, mechanisms and consequences of identity:

> A multiplicity of unstable, context-dependent traits, sometimes contradictory, which change over time and space. Individual and collective identities are constructed through difference, by defining what they are not: there is always an Other, and othering is a power relation.

Dear and Wassmandorf view postmodernism as 'three principal constructs: style, epoch, and method' (1993, p.321). It is these three aspects that are utilised in this research, with epoch providing a temporal position for my work. The methods of postmodernism are aimed at working 'harder to allow the voices of others to be heard' (Sheppard, 2004, p.747); working as, with and for those who are 'othered' by hegemonic discourses. The key method of postmodernism is based upon 'exposing the contradictions and assumptions within existing discourses' (Squires, 1993, p.4). The primary tool for this is deconstruction, a mode of critical analysis (Peters, 2000, p.335) aimed at exploring the ways in which 'the (multiple) positioning of an author (or a reader) in terms of culture, class, gender, etc. has influenced the writing (and reading) of a text' (Johnston *et*

al, 1994, p.466). It is these multiple positionings of identity that I have implemented widely throughout my research and will focus on further in this chapter.

The essentially 'destabilizing method' (Johnston *et al*, 1994, p.p.466-467) of postmodernism has 'enfranchised and empowered individuals outside the traditional centers (sic) of scholastic authority' (Dear & Wassmandorf, 1993, p.324). The invaluable contribution it has made to encouraging 'new ways of seeing, to relish participating at the cutting edge of social and philosophical inquiry' (Dear & Wassmandorf, 1993, p.324) provides an excellent theoretical starting point. Like Marshall, I believe the benefit of this theoretical framework is to promote   'ideas after the style of postmodernism' (2000, p.331). As Warf states (2004, p.48), every representation of the world is a simplification, too complex to be described through language alone. However, that is not to say we should not try; 'we stand at the dawn of a new era of ethnic, and social, justice. The voices straining to be heard are legion, and our potential contribution is immense' (Woods, 2003, p.66)

Critical Realism

Critical realism allows an acknowledgement that events such as disasters do take place, but mechanisms (systems of social practices) and structures differentiate and stratify these events (Johnston *et al*, 1994, p.500). This is in reaction to essentialist ideas of a grand, universal "truth" and instead recognises that 'knowledge is produced within specific

circumstances' (Rose, 1997, p.305), usually upon the foundations of existing knowledge or interpretations (Johnston *et al*, 1994, p.501). In terms of this research, this allows for the reality of a disaster, whilst considering that the interpretations both producing and produced by the disasters are socially constructed. While death remains an inescapable "fact" that no quantity of theoretical debate will alter, critical realism allows the scope for interpreting the discourses surrounding death.

Critical realism has been a key feature of many of the challenges to the hazard/event/behaviour focus of disasters. Environmental engineering approaches have been critiqued as 'putting too much emphasis on the natural hazards themselves, and not nearly enough on the surrounding social environment' (Wisner & Blaikie, 2004, p.4). Critical realism or analysis focuses on 'the conditions of inequality and subordination in a society' (Oliver-Smith, 2002, p.27). It is important to note that critical realism does 'not imply rejecting environmental "realism" – or the belief in a biophysically "real world out there"' (Castree & Braun, 2001, p.2), rather it involves the addition of layers of interpretation and understanding.

Disasters

The theoretical perspectives surrounding disasters have ranged widely over time and among disciplines. The earliest perspective regarding hazards as 'the manifestation of imponderable, unmanageable "Acts of God"' (Alexander, 2003, p.166) has long been replaced, primarily by a

process-based understanding of disasters. This traditional or 'top-down technocratic approach to disasters' (Castree & Braun, 2001, p.21) still holds sway in the vast majority of disaster studies. Engineering solutions to dam rivers, divert lava flows, irrigate deserts and a general focus on the natural process are 'the primary target of research' (Wisner & Blaikie, 2004, p.6).

There is no denying that these practical solutions have made invaluable contributions to the field of disaster mitigation and saved more lives than can be counted. I do not wish to launch an attack on a valid field of work struggling to counteract a global dynamic system with limited human knowledge and often lacking reliable data (Keller, 2000, p.92, Oliver-Smith, 2002, p.26). I, like many others, share the view that this work can only benefit from increased use of theoretical perspectives to broaden understanding of all of the processes surrounding a disaster. The use of Coulomb's equation to tackle 'one of the most costly hazards' (Keller, 2000, p.89), expansive soils, simply fails to address the 'issue of how society creates the conditions' (Wisner & Blaikie, 2004, p.10) that force people to live in areas with unstable soils and the human processes that led to the actions that created the situation.

One of the first challenges to this emphasis on engineering solutions came from Gilbert White (Smith, 2004, p.5). White responded to the flood control measures of the US Army Corps of Engineers with suggestions that human actions exacerbated but could also mitigate the impacts of

hazards (Alexander, 1997, p.295). This led to recognition of the role of interventions such as warning systems, zoning restrictions and insurance (Kates & Burton, 1986). This hazards-based approach introduced the concept of 'quasi-natural' hazards (Burton & Kates, 1964) and became known as the behavioural paradigm, which has dominated attitudes to extreme events in geography for decades. Despite some emphasis on human systems, this approach is still a technocratic model (Alexander, 1997, p.296), suggesting development in hazardous zones be avoided, that processes are contained through environmental engineering and relief operations conducted through military action (Hewitt, 1983, p.6). However, this perspective offered one of the first explorations of the interactions between human and natural systems in creating a disaster (Kates, 1970, p.3).

The primarily quantitative behavioural discourses (Alexander, 1997, p.289) came to be critiqued as 'a materialistic and deterministic interpretation that reflects undue faith in technology and capitalism' (Smith, 2004, p.5). While still dominant in managerial approaches to hazards such as planning in wealthy countries, behavioural discourse has failed to address increasing losses through disaster leading to a new philosophy (Zimmerer, 1994, p.108). Radical or structural interpretations view disasters as sociological structures, with the extreme events acting only as catalysts of a situation long in the making (Torry, 1986, p.5).

In addition, behavioural discourse beliefs in the role of individual choice are challenged within the structural paradigm. Rather than blaming those living in hazardous zones (Gray & Moseley, 2005, p.9), the role of other actors and processes are examined. For example, people drifting into areas where they are unfamiliar with or ill equipped to handle hazards are viewed as resulting from pressures such as rural unemployment or land degradation (Torry, 1979, p.517). Failures to develop effective responses to hazards in developing regions do not occur from "backwardness" (Hewitt, 1977, p.358) but rather such responses are limited by access to resources through external pressures (Hoffman & Oliver-Smith, 2002)

Radical interpretations draw extensively on Marxist and structuralist discourses, particularly regarding development. As a result, institutional and economic dynamics are seen as key influences on the impact of hazards on populations (Adger & Kelly, 2004). Rather than a 'technocentric worldview by which blueprints based on external policy interventions can solve global environmental dilemmas' (Adger *et al*, 2001, p.681), structural disaster discourses seek to mitigate impacts through redistributing power and wealth (Smith, 2004, p.6). One of the most striking features of radical discourse, however, is a rejection of modernisation theory in favour of local knowledge (Blaikie *et al*, 1994).

Critics may refer to such theoretical challenges as interesting but largely irrelevant, with issues remaining unsolved due to "academic over-

specialisation" while shortcomings on the "practical side" remain unaddressed (Alexander, 1997, p.284). However, there is a growing field of study that addresses both the traditional natural hazards field and wider concepts from within the cross-hazards field (Smith, 2004, p.7). Notable writers such as Ken Hewitt, Ben Wisner and Noel Castree have explored concepts such as vulnerability analysis in the context of both physical and social processes. The inclusion of society as a factor allows for fuller understanding of the ways in which 'disasters are also both socially constructed and experienced differently by different groups and individuals, generating multiple interpretations of an event/process' (Oliver-Smith, 2002, p.25).

This multi-disciplinary approach can also be described as weakly constructionist, where 'risk is an objective hazard but is always mediated through social and cultural processes' (Castree & Braun, 2001, p.19). Through this perspective, disasters and people's vulnerability or capacity to survive and adapt in a disaster can be seen as a result of the multiple contributing factors identified by Wilches-Chaux (1989:3:20-41, Cited in Oliver-Smith, 2002, p.29):

- Natural processes
- Economic situation
- Social structure
- Political mechanisms
- Technical capabilities
- Ideological stances
- Cultural beliefs
- Education levels

- Ecological perspectives
- Institutions in place

With so many contributing factors, this theoretical perspective highlights the extreme inter-disciplinary and multi-dimensionality of disasters.

In addition to critical realism, a theoretical perspective currently widely applied in opposition and reaction to traditional scientific views of disasters is constructivism. While it is 'difficult to use it to contribute to the prevention or mitigation of disasters and improvement of relief and reconstruction' (Castree & Braun, 2001, p.19), constructivism allows for an exploration of the products of 'historically, socially and politically created 'ways of seeing'' (Castree & Braun, 2001, p.19). The groundbreaking work developed by Arnold and applied to disasters by Bankoff, the concept of tropicality is one such example of a strong constructivist perspective. Bankoff (2001, p.19) states that:

> Inadequate attention has been directed at considering the historical roots of the discursive framework within which hazard is generally presented, and how that might reflect particular cultural values to do with the way in which certain regions or zones of the world are usually imagined

Reactions to such an extreme removal from traditional views of the causes of disasters are wide ranging. Tropicality may be seen alternately as a dangerous distraction from valid, practical work, to an interesting, if not practically helpful piece of research, to a long-awaited challenge to traditional discourses. Regardless of perceptions amongst academics, this research and others like it are a far cry from the 'one-dimensional

construction of the processes that transform a hazard into a disaster'
(Bankoff, 2001, p.30). Far from being a surplus and unnecessary
academic reflection, constructivism 'can result in more focused political
demands on authorities to address what we could call the 'root causes' of
vulnerability' (Castree & Braun, 2001, p.18), demanding change from
those with the ability to control the top-down technocratic solutions.

Geographies of Death

The focus on death and deathscapes other than in terms of mortality rates
is a relatively recent development in geography. Analysis of death within
disasters aside from logistics and demographics is effectively non-existent.
According to French geographer Jean-Robert Pitte (2004, p.345), dying,
death rituals and spaces for the dead have primarily been the province of
anthropologists and architects rather than a preoccupation for
geographers. Despite a growing interest in death and the dead from
geographers, this field of research remains firmly set aside from Judith
Squires' (1993, p.3) earlier assessment of the 'playful world of postmodern
cynicism'. While contemporary cultural geography has explored all other
aspects of life and identity with irreverence for tradition, style or methods,
death alone is deconstructed 'without any trace of humour' (Pitte, 2004,
p.350). It would seem that the geographies of death are exempt from
such frivolity and light-hearted treatment.

As with all other theoretical focuses, it is short-sighted to view research as set apart, independent of the subject, researcher and society within which it takes place. Death and deathscapes are no exception; research is often bound within sensibilities and cultural or social constraints. Like disasters, death is situated at the intersection of nature and culture (Pitte, 2004, p.345) and as such 'reflects many of the concerns in the larger field of cultural geography, such as the social construction of race, class, gender, nation and nature' (Kong, 1999, p.2). For example, life expectancy and therefore the 'where and when' depends on factors such as 'wealth, health, the way of life and thus, the level of education and culture of personas and societies" (Pitte, 2004, p.345). Like the living, the dead too hold multiple if 'post-mortem identities' (Oliver, 2004, p.235). As such, the theoretical perspectives applicable to other focuses of cultural geography also apply to the dead. There are, however, a number of additional literature themes that apply primarily to the geographies of death.

Death and dead bodies are strongly linked in Western discourse with the notion of 'abjection'. A concept pioneered by Kristeva in 1982, abjection is primarily centred on a fear of bodily fluids breaching their acceptable locations, especially an individual's exterior surfaces. For example, mucus and faeces are considered normal, natural items, only to become objects of abjection when no longer part of the body. Dead bodies with their permeable bodily fluids are the height of abjection. Expanding gases, loss of muscle rigour, putrefaction and decay are concepts that provoke feelings of fear of contact. In European, Protestant societies 'the dead

become abstract and should return as quickly as possible to a mineral and water nature' (Pitte, 2004, p.347) to avoid continued risk of abjection. It is, of course, worth noting that there are numerous attitudes to death and the dead, varying across cultures and territories (Pitte, 2004, p.345), yet the sense of abjection is widespread. Where some cultures embrace ancestor cults, the use of relics or even cannibalism, others hold an almost irrational fear of the dead and expect that bodies be sterilized and removed as quickly as possible to 'erase all trace of their despised existence' (Pitte, 2004, p.345).

Death and deathscapes, like all aspects of life, reveal meanings and values sourced in multiple narratives that invite interpretation (Kong, 1999, p.2). While abjection and extreme fear of the fluids of dead bodies abound on one hand, on the other there is a certain taboo or tapu surrounding death. All civilizations maintain specific rituals to not only dispose of dead bodies but also to bear witness to affection for the deceased and to signify the relationship that continues after death. The rituals vary from 'spectacular shows to the conjuring away of the dead in sterilised hospital settings' (Pitte, 2004, p.345) at the time of death and differences continue in remembrance of the dead. A comparison between the festive meals and parties of the Mexican Dio de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) with the Jewish sombre recitations of Kaddish (mourner's prayer) on the Yahrzeit (yearly anniversary of death) or the Maori tikanga (protocols) surrounding people at an urupa (cemetery) reveals the extent of different concepts of taboo or sacredness surrounding death. This wide variety among

practices emphasises the 'contestations between different constructions of sacredness' (Kong, 1999, p.4) and the levels of sacredness attributed to 'the artefacts of death' (Kong, 1999, p.5)

Amidst the myriad wealth of death perspectives that are 'more or less frightening depending on the significance that human beings give to life' (Pitte, 2004, p.345) there has emerged an additional viewpoint on the dead and dead bodies. Resulting perhaps from an improved communication system that offers the prospect of anonymity, there has been an increased quantity of 'technological traffic in eroticised death' (Smith, 2002, p.187). The concept of the macabre is not new or revolutionary to current perspectives; rather the combination of aspatial cyberspace has combined with the search for new taboos to break (Kay, 2002, p.155). The Internet offers a chance to indulge in morbidness, where 'explicit or tacit disapproval does not exclude fascination' (Pitte, 2004, p.346) and sites may be found or paid for, offering a wealth of images of the dead and the dying. Whether your interest is in the famous dead, the autopsies of the dead, the internment of the dead, the most violently killed or sex with the dead, images, sounds and videos are only a mouse click away. In the physically, if not mentally, disjointed place of cyberspace, 'there is no return of the dead here, no haunting, and no pity. Only further digitalisation' (Smith, 2002, p.192).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Tusmar Snah Sangeeta, died 26th December 2004, Indian Ocean Tsunami

Overview of Research Methods

The complex nature of this research requires multiple methods to triangulate a conclusion. Social research is influenced by a variety of factors, namely theory, values, ontology, epistemology and practical considerations, which can 'intrude at any or all of a number of points in the process' (Bryman, 2001, p.22). These points include; the choice of research area, formulation of research question, choice of method, formulation of research design and data collection, analysis, interpretation and conclusion. Quite simply, there are too many variables for a researcher to be able to rely on a single method of information collection.

To determine common themes within this study, I used three separate methods to triangulate the research. These methods consist of a literature review of works from the social sciences, statistical analysis of media publications and media text deconstruction, all of which will be discussed in detail in this chapter. My own positionality is also highly relevant to both my research and my methodology, particularly given the potentially "sensitive" nature of the research. The growing appreciation of the subjective nature of research (Widdowfield, 2000, p.199) makes setting

research within a personal context highly relevant to any critical cultural geography. In research based largely upon subjective analysis, it is imperative that the methodology should include this positionality as a surrounding influence on all aspects of my methodology.

Research triangulation, an idea first proposed by Denzin in 1978, provides a highly adequate technique for negotiating epistemological and methodological tensions in research (Perlesz & Lindsay, 2003, p.25). Based upon a navigational practice of locating positions based upon three distinct points in space, research triangulation is defined as 'the mixing of data or methods so that diverse viewpoints or standpoints cast light upon a topic' (Olsen, 2004, p.2). Similarly, multiple researchers, theories and perspectives may also be triangulated (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This is a particularly useful tool when operating outside of the quantitative-qualitative dichotomy (Graham, 1999, p.p.82-83). In research endeavouring to explore 'the patterns and interactions of human culture' (Johnston *et al*, 1994, p.111), conflict over methodology is almost unavoidable. Triangulation, however, serves a greater purpose than simple validation of information; Olsen (2004, p.1) reminds us that triangulation can also deepen and widen understanding on a variety of levels.

While triangulation has in many ways 'become 'common sense' for researchers' (Perlesz & Lindsay, 2003, p.26), it is not a technique without fault. In particular, there is the assumption that the three (to maintain the

triangulation analogy) methodologies will highlight a single, fixed reality (Perlesz & Lindsay, 2003, p.26). Subjectivities and differences in lived experiences make this assumption almost laughable as "reality" is interpreted on an individual basis. Yet more problematic is the fact that 'the research outcomes of triangulation are not always easily interpreted' (Perlesz & Lindsay, 2003, p.26). This is especially evident when fundamentally different research methods are utilised, such as combining qualitative research with the more codified statistical analysis (Bryman, 2001, p.283). As such, the parallels created 'may be illusory rather than real' (Crang, 2002, p.652), although the same could be said of any research methodology. Despite these faults, however, triangulation, or perhaps as it should more correctly be termed, multi-method research, remains one of the best tools to explore multiple realities and stories (Kwan, 2004, p.758).

Although my research methods are primarily sourced within critical cultural geography, I have attempted to effectively utilise methods that are both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Graham states that 'we must at least be aware of the range of possible methods and how we might combine them' (1999, p.77). After careful consideration, I decided to use published statistics as a basis for comparison with qualitative reports as a means of interpreting the disaster. This comparison is not to attribute the statistics with an unquestionable authority, nor is it to dismiss the value of qualitative research. I feel that often within critical human geography research 'there is a risk of the researcher becoming too embroiled in

descriptive detail' (Bryman, 2001, p.278), a sentiment echoed by Crang (2002, p.647), who recognises that qualitative research may have 'gone too far'. That is not to say that all qualitative research is descriptive and quantitative research can be extremely descriptive. Amid growing recognition of the validity of qualitative research, 'we are seeing debates within qualitative methods' (Crang, 2002, pp.647-648) regarding establishing standards for qualitative research. The call for standards, however, is at odds with qualitative research as a method that 'offers the prospect of flexibility' (Bryman, 2001, p.280).

Although the methods I use within this research do not include direct contact with human research subjects and as such I am not restrained to the protocols of an ethics committee, ethics are an integral consideration in both the methodology and content of this research. Hay defines ethical behaviour in geographical research as acting in accordance with notions of right and wrong, maintaining that 'all people and places deserve to be treated with integrity, justice and respect' (2003, p.38). While Smith (2002, p.189) offers the question 'what impact does our looking have on so-called dead bodies?' I believe that there is more ethically at stake than exploring philosophical debate within this research. Instead, I am trying to provide a positive response to Hay's (2003, p.41) queries; am I doing good? Am I showing respect?

As a result of these ethical concerns all of my methodologies are being conducted with the knowledge that "the dead" are neither solely numbers

in a casualty list nor unknown figures in a picture. Instead, these people and their bodies deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. It is for this reason that each chapter of my research begins with an acknowledgement of one of the tsunami dead, a simple reminder of the people behind the dead. This in itself raises questions over the ethical rights of the dead to privacy; a question to which I can provide no satisfactory answer. Journalists have long struggled with the ethical dilemmas posed by writing about "victims" and protection against intrusion onto their privacy and it is standard practice in journalism to extend the rights of the dead to their families (Kieran *et al*, 2000, p.159). The names and actions of the dead are a matter of public record and I have no way of knowing if the dead are willing participants in my research. Likewise, I do not know whether this research intrudes upon the privacy of survivors or families of the deceased. All I can hope is that the dead in my research are treated with respect and dignity.

Qualitative Research: Literature

As Graham states, dominant paradigms in both theory and methodology 'set the agenda for disciplinary cultures until they are displaced' (1999, pp.76-79). Nowhere is this more obvious than in the methodology of literary research, which remains a key element of academic research (Healey, 2003). Despite growing recognition of alternative texts, academic authority remains strongly centred upon the written word (Crang, 2002). While this may initially appear a somewhat obvious feature of research, it

is important to apply as much consideration to the deconstruction of written work as any other form of methodology. Crang (2002, p.652) discusses 'the fragile nature of any understanding', a concept I fully agree with having deconstructed just some of the literature on death, disasters and the media.

With a wealth of written information immediately available at the University of Waikato library (Te Whare Pukapuka o Te Whare Wananga o Waikato), I began my literature search with a list of keywords, which formed the basis of my search through the library catalogue as well as the electronic databases. While Healey (2003, p.27) is somewhat dismissive of the usefulness of the Internet with its 'vast number of sites of variable quality', the Google Scholar search engine also provided an excellent means of accessing published, peer-reviewed literature. With so much research material, I decided to focus specifically on the component of the research I was preparing to undertake. For example, prior to writing this methodology, I focused my literature search on social science methodology texts. I established a "cut off point" of the 1st October 2006, by which time the bulk of the literature research was complete, ensuring adequate time for the analysis and presentation of data. However, this meant that my literature research was primarily an ongoing project rather than an initial task; a choice I felt would be extremely beneficial as my specialised knowledge of the subject would grow and therefore shape my later literature searches. This research strategy was designed specifically

for both the purpose of this research and my personal working preferences (Healey, 2003, p.19).

The search terms I used varied depending upon which component of the research I was undertaking at the time, although there were some keywords which were used consistently throughout the research. These included terms such as "disaster", "hazard" and "catastrophe" as my primary research focus, used in conjunction with other terms such as "media", "death", and "bodies". This general research was often inter-disciplinary, drawing on not only material from throughout the social sciences, but also the biological and natural sciences. For more focused investigation, I implemented refined search terms for specific topics. These secondary search terms were developed as a result of my initial reading around the topic and from knowledge gained in previous study. For example, research on the body and death included searches such as "embodied research" and "geographies + death". With these highly specified searches, the literature was centred more within the field of human geography.

In addition to searching literature by subject, I also used author name as a search term. As I read more on a topic, I was able to search for material where the author's name is synonymous with the research area. For example, Kristeva is associated almost entirely with abjection and so the search term "kristeva + abjection" produced highly focused material. This style of research was particularly helpful as it ensured I accessed useful

literature quickly and easily. There were some complications with this methodology, particularly when searching for prolific writers such as Gillian Rose, in determining which works would be particularly beneficial to my research. Likewise, obtaining material from lesser-known writers often proved time-consuming and difficult due to issues of availability.

Once I identified material that was possibly helpful to my research, I then applied a variation on Healey's (2003, p.33) criteria for usefulness, shown below in Table 2:

Table 2: Healey's criteria for usefulness.

Factor	Indicators
Relevance	Does the title include any of my keywords?
Date	When was this published? Priority to last five years (2002-2007)
Authority	Does this cite previous work? Who does this cite?
Reliability	Has this been peer reviewed? Is this from a well respected journal?
Originality	Primary research conducted? How was the research carried out?
Accessibility	Is this easy to access?

Having established particular pieces of literature that would be helpful to my research, I then applied a number of set questions to any text examined. These set questions were aimed at increasing the level at which I analysed the text and consisted of:

- How and why has it been written?
- Who is/are the writer/s?
- Who is the intended audience?
- What theoretical framework does it work within?
- What is the main aim of the text?
- What is absent?
- Who might it detriment/benefit?
- What are the assumptions made by it?
- What part does it play in wider discourses?

These questions, although primarily created to analyse literature, were also applied to the deconstruction of statistics and images. While it may initially seem difficult to determine the wider discourses surrounding the casualty lists of a disaster, the outcome was that these questions ensured I interrogated all material that I encountered. For example, exploring seemingly simple issues such as data pertaining to those killed in a disaster may not include those who died indirectly, perhaps through interrupted medical procedures or from having committed suicide following the event. These issues are currently being explored in the excellent work conducted by John Mutter, deputy director of The Earth Institute at Columbia University in relation to Hurricane Katrina (Columbia University, 2006).

This application of a qualitative technique to quantitative data proved indispensable in my research rather than creating an 'ongoing problem' (Olsen, 2004, p.1). Obermeyer (1997) refers to a 'continuum' (cited in

Graham, 1999, p.77) of methodologies ranging from purely qualitative to quantitative, with methods located at any point between the two points. While this implies a problematic linear link between positions, it is a valuable tool for understanding methodologies that challenge the qualitative-quantitative binary.

The key feature of analysing both literature and media texts is critical discourse analysis. Norman Fairclough (2005, p.916) describes this method of investigation as part of the interrelation of social phenomena and social construction. As such, the role of text within socio-cultural practices can be both conditioned and constitutive (Kuronen *et al*, 2005, p.252). In this sense, the context in which texts are set needs to be interrogated as part of the 'multiple sets of overlapping goals, values, discourses, tools, and other residue of social life' (Smagorinsky, 2001, pp.136-136). This in turn depends on an interpretative framework 'that deflects, denies, and distorts alternative constructions or definitions of social reality' (Croucher, 1997, p.329, cited in Abu-Laban & Garber, 2005, p.524). This mode of analysis, or deconstruction, of reading texts as part of a wider context offers a more critical method of examination and provides better understanding of the meanings of texts.

Quantitative Research: Statistical Analysis

Statistics, both in geography and general use, are 'primarily a form of communication' (Dorling, 2003, p.369). While qualitative research tends to

centre on 'words rather than numbers' (Bryman, 2001, p.264), quantitative research 'generally is taken to be embedded within an empiricist, (logical) positivist and 'normal science' approach to the field' (Sheppard, 2001, p.535). While there is no doubt that the flexibility provided by qualitative research has allowed for pursuit of the intangible (Johnston *et al*, 1994, p.491), there is also a danger of "throwing out the baby with the bath water". Just as the criticisms of quantitative analysis are valid, so too are the short-comings of qualitative research.

Statistics still command a political power in both the academic and wider world despite their generality, questionable reliability and the manner in which variables are selected. As a result of this, research with a statistical analysis component must strike a careful balance of simultaneously appreciating the weakness of statistics and utilising them effectively (Dorling, 2003, p.369). Quite simply, human geography is not limited to qualitative methods but can also 'take advantage of quantitative practices' (Sheppard, 2001, p.536). It may possibly be seen as little more than antagonistic to take a stand in the middle of 'the old debate between quantitative and qualitative methods' (Rodríguz-Pose, 2001, p.17), which is why I am taking particular care to defend my position.

Methodology has long been tied to the identity of geographers, both quantitative and qualitative, which has 'served the interests and identities of both sides' (Sheppard, 2001, p.539). Kwan states that combining qualitative and quantitative research methods may be limited in extent due

to fundamental differences (2004, p.758). However, such a combination is not only possible, but highly beneficial as long as the evidence is properly evaluated (Johnston *et al*, 2003, p.158) in terms of deconstructing both the data and its interpretation.

Mathematics is, ultimately, a language, 'framed by our cultural context' (Sheppard, 2001, p.536) and far from infallible. In a 'world dominated by quantification' (Johnston *et al*, 2003, p.159), statistics are not only powerful tools but also a near-universal means of communication. There is no doubt that the collation of data on the frequency and impact of disasters 'provides an invaluable tool to governments and institutions in charge of funding planning and relief activities' (Tsoegl, 2006, p.5). Simple logistics require an understanding of factors such as magnitude and frequency, but there are a number of specific problems relating to disaster data in addition to standard issues surrounding empirical data. Tsoegl (2006, p.5) describes just some of the limitations inherent in disaster data as:

> Along with the complexity of collecting information in disasters due to the constraints of time, funding, and the complexity of the situation there also remains huge variability in definitions, methodologies, sources, and data points collected

There are a number of disaster databases available online, established and maintained by relief organisations, academic institutions and insurance companies. Some of the most significant of these databases are the University of Richmond Disaster Database Project, La RED, EMA,

NatCat and EM-DAT. To determine the extent to which each of these

would prove useful as a component of my research method, I investigated

and evaluated each database as one of the earliest stages of my

research:

University of Richmond

The University of Richmond Disaster Database Project has only 1,552 entries, but does sort disasters into natural disasters, conflict-based disasters, and human systems failures. It has a detailed description of the factors involved in each event, but the means of data validation is not clearly demonstrated, thus calling into question the reliability of the data.

DesInventar/La RED/EMA

Regional and national databases, such as DesInventar and La RED (Latin America) and EMA (Australia) are useful in providing recent, reliable statistics on disasters. For example, La RED has 44,000 entries covering the past thirty years. This close focus provides more in-depth information on events than any of the international databases.

EM-DAT

EM-DAT, accessible through the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) website is one of the largest disaster databases publicly available. There are presently over 15,000 entries, dating from 1900 to present. While not all entries are complete, especially in older records, this database provides information on the date, location and nature of a disaster. In addition, where possible, the database displays information on the human cost through number of deaths, injuries, homeless, affected and the economic cost in terms of insurance claims, shown in United States Dollars (USD).

NatCat/Sigma

Databases such as NatCat (Munich Reinsurance Company) and Sigma (Swiss Reinsurance Company) provide information on natural and technological disasters. NatCat has in excess of 20,000 entries and also provides scientific information such as wind speeds. Sigma has only 7000 entries, perhaps due to a strict inclusion criteria of insurance losses exceeding USD 14 million and/or total losses exceeding USD 70 million.

UNEP-APELL

UNEP-APELL covers numerous disasters from 1970-1998, with strict inclusion criteria requiring an event to result in 25 or more deaths, 125 or more injured, 10,000 or more evacuated or 10,000 or more deprived of water. Although this database has an excellent search function, it is not possible to browse the entire database. The major obstacle to the database, however, is that it only covers what may be termed "technological disasters" such as explosions, vapour clouds, transport accidents and dam failures.

Having carefully evaluated the advantages and disadvantages of each disaster database, I finally selected EM-DAT as my primary source of statistical data. Ultimately, it was neither the size of the database nor the spatial focus of the database that governed my decision. Rather, it was the fact that EM-DAT publishes disaster data only once the validation of data is complete. In the case of EM-DAT, verification of data is completed through multi-agency comparison and the use of "official" reports and documents such as death records.

While I have already referred to Tsoegl's recognition of the difficulties in determining accurate disaster figures (2006, p.5), verified figures provide data that is as accurate as possible under difficult circumstances. These figures cannot be used as entirely factually accurate but rather present a general guide to the scale of disasters, especially in comparison to other events subject to the same scrutiny. There is also an aspect of social construction with regard to the data and considerations such as who chooses the criteria or determines validity of figures are highly political. For example, there is the question of who decides how many people have been "affected" by an event and how is this confirmed? The influences on those with the power to categorise are political and ultimately can shape

understanding of a disaster and, practically, response and allocation of resources. As this research does not rely heavily upon statistical analysis, there is no need for a full interrogation of this data; however, it would be irresponsible to acknowledge the political aspects of statistics.

The analysis of the disaster data was purposefully limited, in part to avoid the over-interpretation described by Johnston *et al* (2003, p.158), but mostly because to have engaged in a full scientific statistical analysis would have been superfluous. The EM-DAT statistics were required as a basis for comparison between the "actual" catastrophic events of 2004 compared to the popular representations and "facts" provided by the media. To achieve this, I simply exported the 2004 data from EM-DAT to Microsoft Excel, where the data could be manipulated. Once converted to spreadsheet form, I sorted the data in decreasing order for number of deaths and recorded the ten extreme events with the highest mortality figures. This process was repeated to obtain the highest figures for number of people injured, number of people homeless and economic damages (USD). As an additional point of comparison, the figures for the years 2000-2005 inclusive were also "treated" in this manner to situate the disasters of 2004 within a wider context.

At this point it is important to note that these figures refer to people directly killed, injured or homeless, from the immediate effects of the disaster, rather than people affected by secondary aspects of the catastrophic events. While it could well be argued that secondary effects are often

more widespread and long-term and therefore higher impacts than primary impacts, this would not provide an accurate basis for comparison to media reports, which are predominantly concerned with primary impacts, although lengthy consideration is also given to psychological affects.

I also utilised statistical analysis in the interpretation of the media coverage of the disaster. The statistics I used were very basic and provided a tool for producing simple observations from a large data set. To achieve this I converted each media report to text format and through 'find' and 'word count' functions completed the spreadsheet shown in Appendix 1. This methodology was designed entirely as a personal research aid, providing "at a glance" information. The spreadsheet allocated a single row for each report, recording basic data such as the article dates, the source news agency, the geographical location that the article focused on and the general theme of the article. I identified these themes by first reading all of the articles to gain an overview, which made the emphasis on certain recurrent trends more apparent. For example, I noted that many of the articles consisted almost primarily of anecdotal coverage of relief efforts by Western aid organisations and so all articles with a main focus on relief were labelled under the "relief" theme. Further analysis of the articles was also entered into the spreadsheet, including deconstruction of any pictures included, the length of the article, the death toll cited at the time of publication and the frequency of certain words within each article such as 'victim', 'dead' (including 'death' and 'dying'),

'killed' (including 'kill' and 'killing'), 'body' and 'corpse'. Finally, any quotes that referred to death and the dead were copied to the spreadsheet.

Once this spreadsheet was complete, I conducted simple statistical analyses, such as the relationship between the changing death toll and the size and number of articles. The mathematics I used was highly simplified, involving no more than sum, mean and mode functions. This analysis was not aimed at creating facts based upon statistics, but rather a way of storing and interpreting the data. The strength of this research is in the deconstructed media texts and the academic literature I draw upon. The use of these quantitative measures provides an aid in deconstruction; one of the many ways in which researchers can use quantitative measures without sacrificing the invaluable qualitative methods that have become a key feature of current critical geography.

Qualitative Research: Media Text Analysis

Locating the cultural texts was perhaps the simplest aspect of this research method. The Internet provided a wide range of media texts, ranging from archived newspapers and images to digital movies. The New Zealand Herald provides an extensive range of up to date online articles that mirror the hard-copy periodicals circulated each day. A search on "Indian Ocean Tsunami" with a date range of 2004-2005 resulted in 207 separate articles. Due to the large number of articles and their web-based nature, I have referenced them using a chronology-based

code with the prefix "NZH" followed by a number, with the numbers sequentially related to the articles identified in the search. These codes are contained in Appendix 3 with a full bibliographical reference for each article that they relate to. The extensive coverage of the tsunami by the New Zealand Herald is one of the reasons that I initially selected the Herald for analysis. In addition, the New Zealand Herald has the widest circulation of any paper within New Zealand, read daily by 547,000 people (Newspaper Publishers Association, 2007). I gave priority to this form of "mainstream" media as being possibly one of the most influential on a daily basis as well as the ease of access compared to, for example, television items.

In her 1999 publication on multi-method research, Elspeth Graham (1999, p.79) poses the question 'what constitutes data?' Since the "Cultural Turn", definitions of text and data have been 'expanded to include types of cultural production other than writing' (Johnston *et al*, 1994, p.621), or more simply, 'anything that refers meaning' (Doel, 2003, p.505). Meaning and sense can and do result from any form of stimulus and as such are 'an interpretation rather than a culmination of reading a text' (Doel, 2003, p.505). Likewise, what is absent in text is also a valuable factor in constructing our knowledges.

This growing recognition of the importance of cultural texts, that is, popular culture and the media, is unfortunately 'still informed by common sense notions of it as trivial and banal' (Jones, 1990, p.59). However, work

within "new" cultural studies has heightened awareness of the construction of cultural texts (Brooks, 1997, p.142). Amidst a myriad of positions regarding the relevance of cultural text analysis, undertaking a media analysis initially appeared to be entering a waiting minefield of issues regarding the ways in which deconstruction both informed and is informed by the researcher. Initial literature-based research did little to calm my fears as at every turn I found yet more obstacles to deconstructing media coverage of disasters. The by no means simple tasks of unravelling texts appeared almost insurmountable as I discovered that interpreting the text was insufficient and instead I had to analyse media texts as 'agents in action' (Smith, 2002). Likewise, the medium through which I conducted this aspect of the research, the computer, proved to be a factor influencing not only how I carried out my research, but also how it situated me in my research. While there are currently only 'the beginnings of a commentary in geography' (Crang, 2003, p.500) on the role of electronically mediated communication, I was confronted with 'the idea of reclaiming the power of modern technoscience for emanicaptory purposes' (Kwan, 2004, p.758).

Not only was I painfully aware of my situation in my research, in culture, in consumption of text, in reaction to agents and in an emanicaptory resistance, but I was also temporarily relocated in space. Amidst the plethora of locations and positionalities, I had also been transported 'to a place where the listless blanche of the computer screen effects its own expressive surface' (Smith, 2002, p.190). This isolated space within our house, away from the distractions of other people left me feeling disjointed

from physical space. Within cyberspace I was able to connect with the images and identities with whom I formed a personal and at times, quite emotional, relationship free of the constraints of time, place and language, all within the diminutive 30x23cm screen that had become my primary focus for hours each day.

Within this somewhat atypical research method more than any other, I was most strongly governed by the role of theory in shaping methodology. Failure to appreciate the importance of theory in qualitative research would, according to Graham (1999, p.80), render any discussion of research methods 'at best, partial'. To attempt to address this issue, I was forced to re-evaluate the set questions used in my initial reading strategy. While the basic questions relating to the aims, representations and assumptions contained within remained accepted approaches to deconstruction, I realised that additional features of investigation were required for all components of the text, including not only the written or verbal, but also images and aesthetics. In particular, I had to specifically examine the problematised relationship between the consumer or reader of media texts and the consumer as producer. Media texts have 'material and discursive, social and cultural consequences for readers' (Smagorinsky, 2001, p.136) but are also formed and driven by these same material, discursive socio-cultural practices.

Positionality

According to Perlesz and Lindsay (2003, p.26), for the analogy of triangulation as a research method to be accurate, there must be at least three data sets or research methods. My positionality is not a research method, rather the way I observe and participate in the world (Laurier, 2003, p.133), which does influence my research and methodology.

My dual academic focus on physical and human geography results in an often uneasy negotiation of quantitative science and post-modern deconstruction, leaving me feeling what Kwan (2004, p.760) refers to as a geographer of 'the third kind'. This stance, located somewhere between the binary of 'social theorists and postmodernists on the one hand, and spatial analysts, quantifiers, or GISers on the other' (Kwan, 2004, p.756) is as important to my positionality as the 'essentializing attributes of class, age, ethnicity and gender' (Cupples, 2002, p.383). To establish my positionality, I must also state that I am a twenty-five year old heterosexual female 'Other' from an educated, middle-class background, currently working in the public sector.

Feminist geographers have led the way in acknowledging that the researcher is not the 'shadowy figure set apart' (Widdowfield, 2000, p.199). The 'truth' of the detached observer within 'peopleless quantitative geography' (Fuller & Kitchin, 2004, p.1) is neither valid nor appropriate.

Spry's 2001 (p.720) work on embodied research describes the detached observer beautifully:

> The researcher as a detached head – the object of Thought, Rationality and Reason – floating from research site to research site, thinking and speaking, while its profane counterpart, the Body, lurks unseen, unruly and uncontrollable in the shadows.

Instead, geography now largely recognises that 'the sort of knowledge made depends on who its makers are' (Rose, 1997, p.p.306-307). In 1997, McDowell noted that her research was intrinsically linked to her positionality 'as a classed, raced and gendered being, as a member of a particular social group' (p.381). Similarly, I must also make my situation regarding my research 'known rather than invisible' (Mattingly & Falconer-Al-Hindi, 1995, pp.28-29). As a starting point in recognising and taking account of my own position (McDowell, 1992, p.409) I explored some of the influences on my research. To follow the factors Rose (1997, p.308) describes as possibly impacting on my positionality, I will explore the aspects of race/ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, social and economic status and sexuality.

There is a great danger in attempting to analyse how the essential attributes of age and gender impact on my research as I may do little more that confirm or reflect stereotypical representations. For example, the idea that I may feel a greater degree of empathy towards the people involved in a disaster as a woman is distinctly essentialised. What I can establish is that I am both advantaged and disadvantaged in my position. In terms of race/ethnicity and nationality, I see myself as an 'Other'. This is not an

attempt to be cryptic or vague; rather it is the way I see myself and the only category in official forms that I fulfil. I am not willing to discuss my ethnicity in a publicly accessible document, which in itself reveals that my culture impacts on my research.   However, in regards to this particular research, I may have a greater empathy and connection with many of the people affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami through cultural similarities and experiences.

As a woman, I am subject to constantly challenging stereotypes and regardless of the lip service paid to equality, do not have the same privileges as a man in our society. That said, I am privileged to some degree through education and subsequent social status (Kobayashi, 1994, p.76). I also feel compelled to address my sexuality in terms of positionality. This is an attempt to acknowledge 'the significant ways in which both the sexuality and the erotic subjectivity of the researcher impact on the research process' (Cupples, 2002, p.382) are often overlooked in geography. However, while my sexuality does make up part of my identity, I do not believe I use it to constitute my research nor, given the topics, is informed or shaped by my research.

I must also address my positionality in terms of the topics and themes of this particular research project. I have neither seen nor experienced a tsunami or large-scale disaster first-hand. My exposure to hazards has been limited to hurricanes/cyclones and earthquakes resulting primarily in economic damage rather than human loss of life. I have never seen the

aftermath of a catastrophe, nor have I been to any of the areas affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami, although members of my family have lived and worked in many of the areas that were affected. While I have experienced the death of individuals such as close family members, I have never experienced the kind of extensive loss that the tsunami inflicted on others. I have also never seen a dead body and, truth be told, I do not want to. From my comfortable position, I can feel empathy with those affected by the tsunami, but to claim to understand the physical, emotional and economic impact of this disaster would be nothing short of insulting.

It is particularly important in this research to acknowledge my emotions. Widdowfield's (2000) excellent work on the role of emotion in affecting the research process explores the mutually constitutive relationship between researcher and research. While I do not wish to indulge in 'a level of self-absorption which privileges the voice of the researcher(s) over that of the researched' (Widdowfield, 2000, p.202), to ignore the role of emotion in a subject as emotionally charged as death and disasters would be more than negligent. My first exposure to the events of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami through televised news reports was emotional. Subsequent access to reports on the tsunami still evokes emotion and empathy. These emotional responses were not entirely negative; 'the human world is constructed and lived through emotion' (Pain & Bailey, 2004, p.324, McDowell, 1997, p.382). I realise that my research may appear somewhat critical of the media and the language I use is often emotive and I have, in the words of a critical supervisor, a tendency to be melodramatic. For this

I make no apologies; I am not the 'invisible, omnipresent narrator' (Crang, 2003, p.499).

Establishing my positionality within my research also requires addressing the 'relations between the philosophy and the practice of geography, going beyond the concern with how the latter reflects the former' (Simandan, 2002, p.285, original emphasis). Like many geographers, I tend to 'prefer the excitement of exploration to any calm reflection' (Graham, 1999, p.77) and escape any attempts to impose a sense of discipline (Sheppard, 2004, p.744), particularly in questions of ontology. However, my position reflects my academic focus and its shift from quantitative science to human geography with a combination of deconstructive techniques in a framework of critical realism.

Chapter 4: New Zealand Herald Coverage of the Indian Ocean Tsunami

Anna Margri Thupukler, died 26th December 2004, Indian Ocean Tsunami

Before exploring representations of death in the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami in the New Zealand Herald, an overview of the online articles provides a useful context for further analysis. Like many other media organisations, the New Zealand Herald covered the events following the Indian Ocean tsunami extensively. From the massive earthquake off the coast of Sumatra to the one year anniversary, the New Zealand Herald published 207 articles either focusing on the tsunami or with clear reference to the events. These articles produced a total word count of 120,228, the equivalent of three large masters' theses. To put this total in perspective, the 2005 Kashmir earthquake with a death toll in excess of 73,000 deaths (EM-DAT, 2005) resulted in 82 articles. Figure 3 shows the number of articles focusing on the tsunami during the first month:
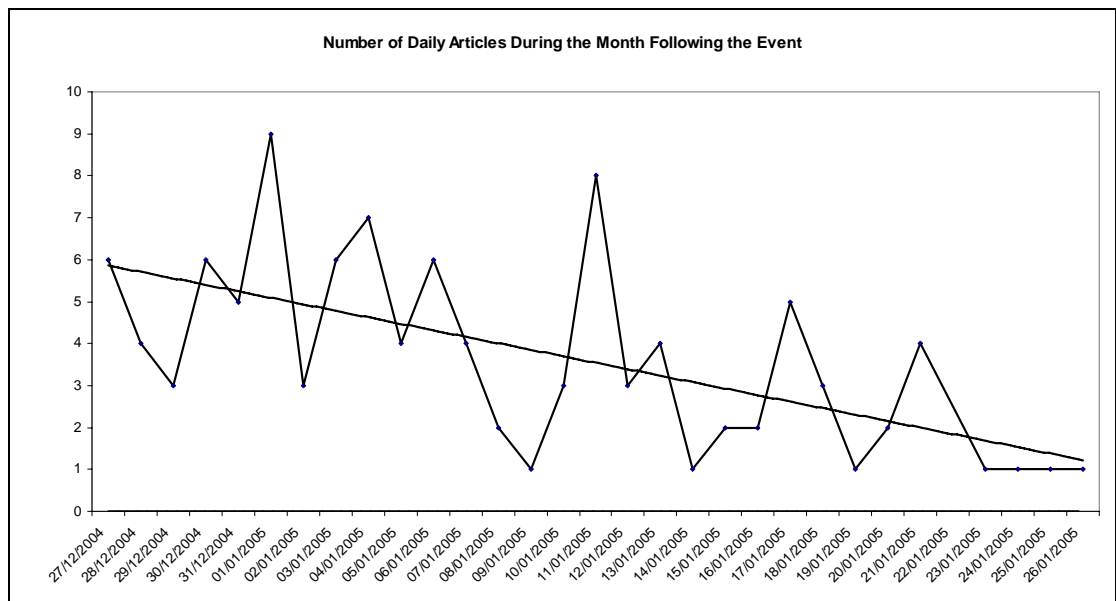
Figure 3: Number of articles focusing on the Indian Ocean tsunami
published during the month following the event.

In addition to staff reporters, the New Zealand Herald uses the New

Zealand Press Association and international news agencies to provide

articles. The agencies covering the Indian Ocean tsunami and the

percentage of total articles are shown in Table 4:

Table 4: Agency contributions to tsunami coverage

Agency	Total Articles	Percentage of Total
Australian Associated Press	10	5
Agencies	6	3
Independent	17	8
Newstalk	1	<1
Northern Advocate	1	<1
New Zealand Press Association	22	11
Reuters	100	50
Staff	44	22
TOTAL	201	100

The extensive coverage of the Indian Ocean tsunami by international news agencies is neither surprising nor unusual. Both early reports and continued reporting are far more likely to source from journalists either already on site or with the resources at their disposal to travel to distant locations. However, it is worth noting that these international news agencies are primarily from English speaking, Western developed countries, which will of course influence what news is reported and how. To separate the agencies from their historical, cultural and economic roots is to ignore the 'socially constructed intentions' (Findlay, 2005, p.435) of those agencies in representing people and places. However, it is the New Zealand Herald editors who choose which stories to publish, a choice primarily informed by their understanding of reader interest. This choice allows us to view the articles as not only as "Western", but also as representative of, and for, New Zealand.

The New Zealand Herald coverage of the Indian Ocean tsunami was not only extensive in size; it was also far-reaching in the range of themes covered. In the year following the tsunami, the articles covered thirty different themes. These themes ranged from animal rescue to official visits by foreign dignitaries to environmental impacts of the earthquake and tsunami. The ten most commonly recurring themes account for seventy percent of all tsunami coverage. These main themes of occurrence frequency are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Most common themes of articles

Theme	Number of Articles	Percent of Total
Relief	27	13
Disaster, reference	22	11
Western relief	16	8
Self assessment	15	7
Catastrophe	13	6
Memorial	11	5
NZ response	11	5
Warning sytem	11	5
Recovery	9	4
Morality	7	3

The remaining thirty percent tended to be individual articles such as critiques of capitalism as a driving force of Thai vulnerability or themes with a short duration such as 'survivor stories' from the first month following the disaster. The full range of themes is shown overleaf in Figure 6:

Main Themes of Articles Featuring Tsunami Coverage
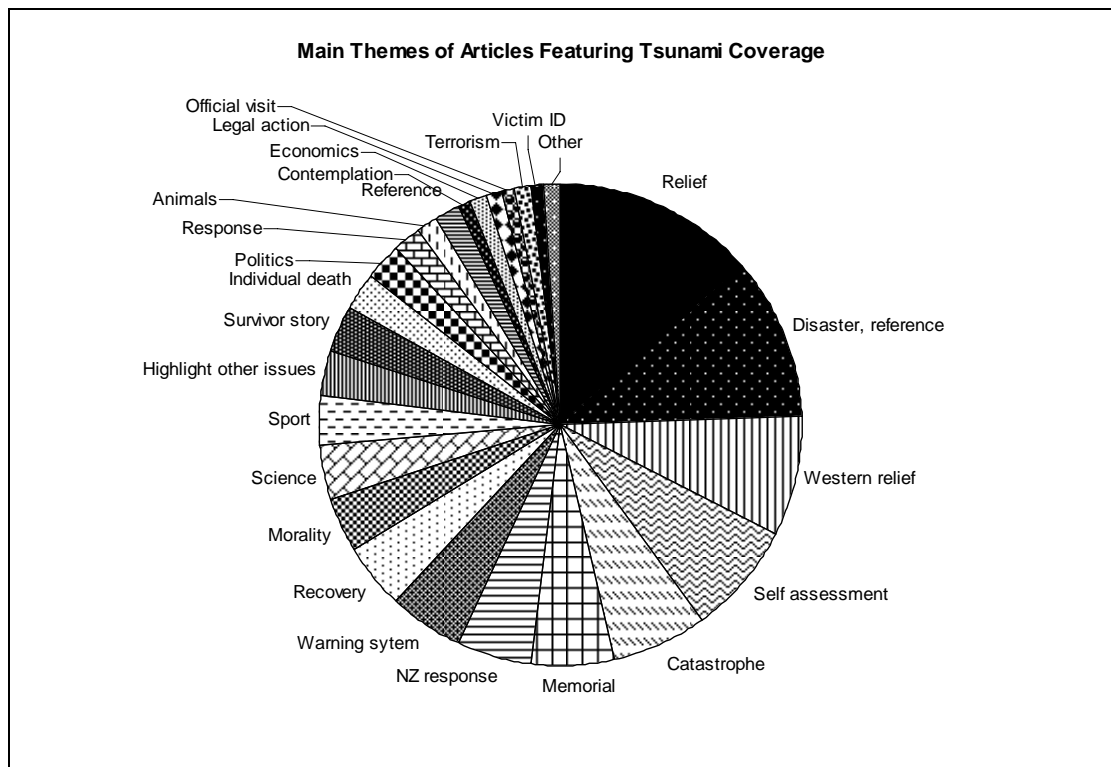
Figure 6: Complete range of themes within New Zealand Herald articles covering the tsunami

Relief in general and Western relief in particular comprised a full 21 percent of all articles, followed by 11 percent being references to the tsunami in coverage of other disasters. The eight percent of articles within the theme of self-assessment tended to focus on probability of a tsunami event in or preparedness for, New Zealand in particular. This leaves a mere six percent of articles focussing on the catastrophe itself, indicating a limited representation of the factual aspects or mechanisms involved. Finally, memorials to the dead comprise five percent of the total, individual deaths two percent and victim identification just one percent. That is not to say that death as a theme is not prevalent in the coverage. In the 207 articles there are 414 references to death or the dead, with as many as 45 references in a single article. The terms "bodies", "corpses" and "cadavers" occur 154 times, with a maximum of 25 occurrences in a single

article. With the exception of the word 'tsunami', no other word is more frequently occurring within the texts.   Within the first week following the disaster, the topic of death appeared 74 times in the New Zealand Herald.

Clearly, death was very much the central preoccupation of the New Zealand Herald coverage of the Indian Ocean Tsunami. From the 'unbelievable initial under-estimate of the scale of the tragedy' (Findlay, 2005, p.434) to the almost inconceivable confirmed death toll of over 230,000 (Moeller, 2006, p.177), the strong focus on death is not surprising. The interesting feature of this focus on death is in the ways it was portrayed; covering not only who died and how, but further framing and being informed by social constructs of death and the dead. It is these constructs that I explore in the following sub-chapters.

Metaphorical Images and Abject Descriptions

This section explores some of the most powerful New Zealand Herald representations of the dead from the Indian Ocean tsunami, the use of highly metaphorical images and graphic abject descriptions. These two styles of portraying the people involved in the disasters are vastly different. Through images, the dead are invisible, with only metaphorical imagery representing those killed, while descriptions in the text offer overt representation of the abject nature of the dead.

The Graphic Dead

Throughout this research, the majority of my deconstruction focuses on the text of the New Zealand Herald coverage of the Indian Ocean tsunami. The primary reason for this is that there is a wealth of text within the 207 articles available, yet only 53 of them feature pictures. Twenty-nine photographs were used during the two months following the event, with a gradual decline in numbers thereafter, with the exception of a resurgence in December 2005 at the one year anniversary of the catastrophe. International news agency Reuters had the highest number of images accompanying articles with 29, followed by NZPA with 12. Deconstruction of the images revealed seven distinct themes, identified in a similar way to themes within the general text of the articles by viewing them all and exploring similarities and differences between them.

Photographs of a symbolic or representative nature comprised 26 percent of the total and contained strong ethnocentric metaphors. Images of destruction of buildings, infrastructure or areas represented 19 percent of the total. The scientific theme comprised 17 percent of images and showed scientific diagrams, maps or images to explain the mechanisms and extent of the physical event. Photographs of relief operations in affected areas and fundraising in New Zealand represented 13 percent of total images. Photographs of people in mourning comprised 11 percent of the total; nine percent showed recognisable people such as politicians or sportspeople and four percent were portraits of people killed in the disaster taken before the Indian Ocean tsunami. In 81 percent of the

articles with images, the image theme coincided with the primary theme of the article.

The quantity and content of the images accompanying the New Zealand Herald coverage of the tsunami invites deeper analysis beyond mere reflections of the nature of media coverage, with its minimal images promoting extended text. Initially, this may appear to be counter-productive, particularly in the case of the Indian Ocean tsunami, where the visual impact of the disaster is imprinted so strongly upon media consumers. Findlay (2005, p.429) describes how the televised images of the waves pouring into a Thai holiday resort and the resulting destruction were the two most personally significant images of the disaster. As media consumers, we can perhaps all visualise the tsunami and its devastation through what Susan Moeller (2006, p.182) refers to as 'image multiplication'; extensive media coverage that creates a representation of an event, such as a disaster, that through repetition becomes accepted as a "true" version of events. However, to explore the use of photographs in relation to death and disaster, it is crucial to understand the use of imagery in the media in general.

As Garoian and Gaudelius state, 'images teach us what and how to see and think (2004, p.298), yet do so in such a way that consumers may be unaware that their responses are being directed (Griffin, 2004, p.381). Media images such as newspaper photographs allow readers to 'see for themselves' (Huxford, 2001, p.45) the events that are being described; a

'visual proof of events' (Trivundza, 2004, p.482). The visual images utilized in media coverage of disasters are themselves highly specific. This is similar to the way that war photographs have evolved to be dominated by images 'that most readily present themselves as symbols of cultural and national myth' (Griffin, 1999, p. 123). With disasters increasingly commanding the interest of Western media in particular (Bankoff, 2001, p.19), specifically unforseen natural disasters (Moeller, 2006, p.180), media producers must ensure that the consumers' need for information is met and enhanced by more than fact or anecdotal narrative. Journalists have long since recognised the importance of aesthetics in production and the influence of this on consumers (Griffin, 1999, p. 123). As such, images have become an 'intrinsic value of modern journalism' (Domke *et al*, 2002, p.3), which in the case of disasters requires constant negotiations.

Images of disasters are problematic in a number of ways, not least complicated by the selective treatment of catastrophe by Western media (Castree & Braun, 2001, p.28), including coverage restricted to "telegenic" disasters (Moeller, 2006, p.180). In addition, as Skelton states, it is vital to place maximum impact in early narratives of an event as these 'the ones that embed in the collective memory' (2006, p.25). This is further complicated by the fact that in most catastrophes, the media are only able to present images from after the event (Moeller, 2006, p.177). These logistical problems are also entangled within dilemmas about what the media feel can or should be shown. The following extract from a journal

written by an Australian news editor (Pollard, 2005, p.11) following the

2004 Indian Ocean tsunami highlights the journalistic evaluations

regarding images of the disaster:

> How much of the horror should you show on screen? How many bodies? With so much death everywhere, how do you protect the dignity of the nameless thousands whose bodies lie in front of the world's cameras? The answer, I suppose, is that you simply do your best with decisions big and small.

Concerns such as these prompted a study in the United States by the

Associated Press Managing Editors National Credibility Roundtables

Project (APME). The organisation received opinions from 2,461 regular

readers and 419 journalists regarding the use of graphic images in the

news (Pitts, n.d.). Although by no means sampling a representative

group, as newspaper readers and staff voluntarily completed this study,

this research revealed a number of interesting points regarding attitudes

towards graphic images. In particular, the study showed that journalists

were generally more willing to utilise graphic images than the readers out

of a sense of journalistic duty (Pitts, n.d.). There was also a wide

acceptance of the necessity of some graphic images; 'it is impossible to

tell a story of death and destruction on the scale of the tsunami without

showing some pictures that include death and destruction' (Pitts, n.d.).

Perhaps the most useful revelation of the study was that a number of

journalists 'cited newsroom policies that specifically prohibit publishing

photos of dead bodies' (Pitts, n.d.). While I have been unable to elicit a

response from the New Zealand Herald regarding their policies regarding

photographs of bodies, this could possibly explain the nature of images

from the tsunami coverage. In addition to possible policies relating to the

publication of photographs of dead bodies, media producers also utilise

what journalists refer to as "the cereal test" (Pitts, n.d.). This is a simple

assessment of whether the producers consider an image acceptable for a

family to view over breakfast. However, it also provides an insight into the

highly subjective role of the journalists and media producers.

One method that media producers rely heavily on to convey images

without graphic photographs is through symbolism. The New Zealand

Herald coverage of the 2004 tsunami is no exception, with highly symbolic

pictures comprising 26 percent of all images. These symbolic images are

highly effective as they draw upon other media, including disaster movies

and documentaries (Tierney *et al*, 2006, p.61) as well as the imagination

of media consumers. One photograph indicative of this is Figure 7,

showing the Garden of the Tsunami Dead, a new tree plantation designed

as a barrier to future tsunami with each tree bearing the name of a person

killed in the Indian Ocean tsunami. The caption for this image reads

'Seruthur villagers pass by saplings which carry the names of residents

killed by the tsunami' (NZH98).

Figure 7: The Garden of the Tsunami Dead (New Zealand Herald, 17 January 2005)

This image contains no graphic images of destruction or the dead, but from the main text of the articles, media consumers understand that the five placards represent five people killed by the tsunami. The brightly coloured fishing boats in front of the surf could indicate that these dead were from a fishing community and possibly poor; reinforced by the underweight dog in the photograph. From the writing on the placards and the skin tone and clothing of the people in the photograph, we may also be able to deduce that the image is set in Sri Lanka or India.

There are also several symbolic images of mourning, such as Figure 8 from 2 January 2005. The caption for this photograph reads 'An Indian tsunami survivor shows a picture of her missing granddaughter in Cuddalore, south of Chennai' (NZH36).

Figure 8: An unknown woman grieves (New Zealand Herald, 2 January 2005)

This photograph, like the symbolic images in other articles, contains no graphic images, yet is markedly poignant nonetheless. From the main article text and caption, media consumers learn that this is a woman in search of a missing grandchild. The camera focus on the missing woman shows that she is a young female, possibly raising protective instincts and a sense that this individual is too young to experience such a disaster. However, the pain on her grandmother's face is unmistakeable; it seems that this woman is already grieving. The background of the image shows destruction and debris, indicating that this woman may well have lost her home and possessions, but retains a simple passport photograph of a loved relative.

Similar photographs of mourning appear in the earliest reports following the disaster, shown below in Figure 9. The caption for the photograph below reads 'An Indian mourns the death of an elderly woman killed in the tsunami that hit Cuddalore, 180km south of Chennai' (NZH7).

Figure 9: An unknown man grieves (New Zealand Herald, 28 December 2004)

This is another symbolic but extremely powerful photograph used in the post-tsunami media coverage. From the caption, we understand that this man is grieving for an elderly woman and after consideration, consumers may draw tentative conclusions that this woman is possibly a close family member, such as his mother.

Although this close-up image does not include a body, consumers may assume that the body is close. However, the most striking feature of this image is that it is a man who is crying. Notable feminist geographers such as Linda McDowell and Gillian Rose have long explored the male-female

dichotomy, with man seen as rational in contrast to the emotional female.
These gendered identities have also been deconstructed within the field of
masculinity, exploring concepts of what Connell refers to as "hardness"
(2000, p.4). These prevailing attitudes are reflected throughout much of
Western society, which increases the impact of this image; the public
exhibition of grief could only be "excused" in truly tragic circumstances. A
further "excuse" for this public mourning is that this man is, as stated in the
caption, 'An Indian'. Through a post-colonial reading of this image, it is
impossible to ignore that this man is 'oriental' and therefore has many
"feminine attributes" such as being emotional and irrational (Rattansi,
1997, p.482). These deconstructions reveal that 'any representation is an
expression of both power and culture' (Gold & Revill, 2004, p.4) and
indicates the ways in which media can and do perpetuate discourses
(Skelton, 2006, p.25).

As Hardt (2003, p.610) notes, images in the media are 'never mere
illustrations but independent statements of visualizations of ideas' that
challenge the interpretative skills of the reader. Regardless of the care
taken by media producers such as the New Zealand Herald, people do not
'operate in cognitive and affective isolation from news images' (Domke *et al*, 2002, p.4). Recent work within journalistic and media studies has seen
an increase in the attention paid to symbolic images and how they are
processed by consumers (Huxford, 2001, p.46) as images '*interact* with
individuals' existing understandings of the world to shape information
processing and judgments' (Domke *et al*, 2002, p.7). The constant

negotiation between 'a newspaper's policy, its tradition, and at least a tacit belief in what its readership will accept as a valid use of photographs' (Huxford, 2001, p,49) creates practices that result in these specific images of disaster. As Fursich notes (2002, p.58), it is only through critical approaches by media producers and consumers that problematic media representations can be disentangled.

The Abject Dead

Abjection first came to academic knowledge in Julia Kristeva's groundbreaking essay *Powers of Horror* in 1982. Sourced from psychoanalytic theory, abjection deals with reactions or feelings, such as aggression or phobia, to various objects (Kristeva, 1982, p.5). More precisely, these reactions are created in response to 'the subject's corporeality and its tenuous bodily boundaries' (Grosz, 1989, p.70). These body boundaries are defined and signified by bodily processes and disrupted as matter transgresses through them. Abjection, concerning the 'delimitation of the 'clean and proper' body' (Grosz, 1989, p.71), may also be applied to the dead.

Individual defences, based upon social taboos, are erected against forms of abjection, be they in relation to food, waste or sexual difference (Grosz, 1989, p.73). The dead, or rather the bodies of the dead, can be seen as any of these three forms. Bodies as food or sexual difference have become socially unacceptable in many if not most cultures, but the abject reaction to bodies as waste is particularly prevalent within New Zealand

and 'the West'. It is this feeling of abjection that is repeated throughout the New Zealand Herald coverage of the Indian Ocean tsunami. The 154 mentions of dead bodies or corpses in the New Zealand Herald in the year following the tsunami may be designed to elicit abject responses amongst consumers. The fear of bodies as waste was particularly prevalent within the first month following the catastrophe, with the New Zealand Herald focussing on the presence of dead bodies.

The earliest reports of the tsunami on 27 December 2004 featured numerous reports of dead bodies, phrased for maximum impact. The articles refer to 'bodies in treetops' (NZH4), 'bodies dragged out to sea or smashed on golden beaches' (NZH4), 'bodies found in houses. Their heads were cracked, probably battered by rocks' (NZH4) and 'dead bodies all around' (NZH5), 'rows of dead bodies were lined up on the floor' (NZH5). Death was very much a feature of these early articles, although the form of these articles appears to be an attempt to provide a sense of the scale of the disaster. The bodies are somehow abstracted, faceless violent results of a natural process.

By 29 December 2004, the scale of the disaster had become more apparent to the international news agency Reuters, with a death toll of 60,000 being reported. The number of dead meant that the high impact descriptions changed to images of the tsunami 'yielding up tens of thousands of bodies' (NZH13) and 'countless corpses' (NZH13). More important than the number of bodies is the changed representation that

occurred at this point as bodies became reclassified as waste. The dead became an unwanted nuisance to the living, as 'paradise resorts were turned into graveyards' (NZH13), 'the stench of death hung over stricken coastal villages' (NZH13), 'debris and bodies started to pile up' (NZH13) and more bluntly, in Banda Aceh in Indonesia, 'bodies littered the streets' (NZH13). Elsewhere, '1,000 people lay on a sports field where they were killed' (NZH13), an implication that they are not only 'matter out of place' (Malkki, 1992, p.25) but a nuisance to be cleared away by the appropriate authorities.

The re-classification of the dead from abstract symbols of the event to a nuisance subsequently allows for an opening to abject reactions to the dead. Combined with the passage of time, climate and physical processes, the bodies became abject objects. The abstract dead became 'rotting corpses' (NZH16), survivors checked hospital photographs for 'swollen, unidentified bodies' (NZH16), 'bodies were already decomposing in the heat' (NZH16) and 'reeking corpses rotted in the tropical sun' (NZH18). This transition from 'body' to 'corpse' depersonalises the dead, transforming them into a threat to the living.

This threat from dead bodies is one of the most common reactions following mass fatality natural disasters, in particular through fear that they cause epidemics (de Ville de Goyet, 2000, pp.762-764). This fear is often encouraged by the media (Morgan & de Ville de Goyet, 2005, p.33), a factor clearly evident within the New Zealand Herald coverage of the

tsunami. Early reports such as 'bodies rotting in the water were already beginning to threaten the water supply' (NZH19) were given additional authority by reports that 'officials gave up counting the dead in their hurry to bury them in mass graves' (NZH18). In some instances, it is actually media-incited fears that 'justify rapid burial of human remains in mass graves with no identification' (Morgan *et al*, 2006, p.810). Whether this was the case in the tsunami aftermath is unclear, yet in some cases the media exerts this pressure through the mechanism of abjection, the 'paradoxically necessary but impossible desire to transcend corporeality' (Grosz, 1989, p.72).

It is not just the media depictions of the visible dead that provoke feelings of abjection. There is also the threat of the hidden dead, those 'innumerable deceased, most of whom may never be seen or touched' (Perera, 2005, p.496). These impure dead pose the danger of transgressing the bodily boundaries of the clean and proper living through their presence as the Indian Ocean waits, 'full of the dead and dying' (NZH28), ready to leap out, horror-movie style, on the living. Not only is there the threat of the presence of the dead, there is also the abjectional threat of ingestion of the dead. This threat to the purity of the bodily boundaries was perpetuated by the New Zealand Herald through the suggestion of human corpses entering the food chain. This theme was portrayed firstly as a foolhardy move, with seafood 'back on the menu in Malaysia despite rumours that fish have fed on corpses of tsunami victims' (NZH78). Later this concept was dismissed as unfounded local

superstition with 'Sri Lankans are wary of eating fresh fish, a staple part of their diet, for fear they have scavenged on the remains of tsunami victims' (NZH98). Regardless of the exact wording, the ultimate representation was an image so abject to media consumers that the dead of the tsunami became firmly established as a threat to the living.

The threat of the abject in disasters means that it is far more preferable, at least in the European Protestant world, that the messy, liquid dead be removed from the scene as quickly as possible (Pitte, 2004, p.347). Not only should these abject dead objects be disposed of and purified, without polluting nature (Pitte, 2004, p.348), they should be absent. Without bodies, death becomes more bearable (Pitte, 2004, p.347). However, this urge to quickly separate the dead from the living (Pitte, 2004, p.348) poses a dilemma for survivors and relatives who seek closure in the confirmation of death. Paradoxically, the need to see the material form, the corpse of a friend or relative, must be negotiated from within and against the abject threat to the self. Fortunately, embalming and preservation practices minimise the threat of leaking fluids, at least temporarily.

The Dead on Two Scales

One of the most striking features of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami is the number of people killed. To overcome the logistical impossibility of covering each individual killed in the disaster, the New Zealand Herald represents the dead on two distinctly different scales. In the first, the dead

are portrayed as a single homogenous group, while articles also feature individuals as representative of others not reported on. It is these portrayals and the mechanisms at play behind them that I discuss in this section.

The Numerous Dead

From the first report of the tsunami on 27 December 2005, the number of people killed by the tsunami became a central part of news reporting from the catastrophe. The reliability of the total number of dead from the tsunami is undoubtedly questionable, especially 'given the large numbers of people whose bodies were never found or identified after the tragedy' (Findlay, 2005, p.437). However, an aspect prevalent through all New Zealand Herald coverage of the catastrophe is the imagery of de-humanised mass death. In initial articles, this focus on mass death was far from quantitative, with fatalities reported without value. The numbers of dead were described as 'countless' (NZH13), or even more vaguely as 'many' (NZH13). By 30 December 2004, the coverage reported that in India 'thousands of bodies are being tumbled into mass graves for burial' (NZH16) and that casualties were so extensive that authorities 'gave up trying to count the dead' (NZH18). This lack of a quantitative figure is not necessarily sinister nor is it indicative of a hidden agenda within press coverage; within the chaos following the catastrophe and the wide extent of affected regions there was little or no chance of determining even an approximate figure.

The first quantitative figure of the number of deaths in New Zealand

Herald coverage of the Indian Ocean tsunami was in the 27 December

2005 articles, where the NZPA journalists reported '57 bodies identified'

(NZH1). This was followed by a period of uncertainty, until the New

Zealand Herald revealed a total death toll of 155,000 from the tsunami on

4 January 2005 (NZH46) amid increased international relief presence in

the region. Following the acquisition of this staggering figure, the media

coverage consistently made use of the death toll in almost all of their

subsequent reports. It was another three weeks before the death toll was

set at 'nearly 300,000 people' (NZH117) and a further three months before

the generally accepted figure of 230,000 deaths was reported (NZH169).

However, it is not the accuracy, or lack thereof, of the death toll that is

most notable within the coverage, but the easy authority with which the

disaster is quantified. How those people lived, died, who and what they

were are merely secondary concerns. Instead, the dead have been neatly

packaged into a 'death toll', a convenient number that allows the tsunami

to be understood by media consumers. In the same way even the most

powerful digital image is rendered largely impotent in its binary form, the

numerical rendering of the dead becomes meaningless and empty in a

form not immediately interpreted by the reader.

It is, of course, understandable that the number of dead prove to be an

integral part of news coverage with so many killed in a single event

(Moeller, 2006, p.177). Journalists have since confirmed that the

extensive media coverage was largely due to the disaster's 'terrible scale'

(Moeller, 2006, p.177). However, by transforming the dead to a massive

number 'any reasonable sense of proportion goes out of the window'

(Brewin, 1994, p.208). The numbers of dead effectively reached such

high figures that the disaster became incomprehensible to media

consumers after the initial spark of public sympathy (Sontag, 2003, p.103).

Klima (2001, p.552) suggests that repeated exposure to graphic images of

death and disaster are to blame:

> Two-dimensional reproductions swirl over the surface of the planet,
> carrying impressions of the body in violence and in death, graphic
> images that repeat themselves with such serial regularity that we
> are possibly becoming inured to them, and ever further distanced
> from the suffering they represent.

It is possible that this conversion of individuals to a larger number also

shields media consumers. Rather than be confronted with the painful

empathy evoked from a single death, media consumers are saturated with

the sheer number of the dead. Perhaps readers would be left feeling

hollow and unable to process the scale of the catastrophe. There is of

course a logistical issue; it would be impossible to personalise all the

tsunami dead. However, I for one felt that there could have been more

focus on individuals.

Media coverage of Indian Ocean tsunami also portrays the dead as

faceless, passive subjects. In much the same way as vulnerability

discourses 'can reduce people to being passive recipients, even 'victims''

(Castree & Braun, 2001, p.14), so too does the New Zealand Herald. One

example of the media creating passive casualties is in the descriptions of

the dead. The articles often used a passive voice when describing the dead; 'many of the dead were villagers' (NZH31), '150,000 people have been killed' (NZH57), 'the following day he was killed' (NZH68) or even more indirectly, '104,000 deaths from the tsunami occurred' (NZH70). The tsunami itself was also a passive actor, as it 'left about 300,000 people dead' (NZH144). Other reports are so determined to maintain the passivity of the entire event that they remove all actors, leaving only 'the death-toll' (NZH137) as a floating entity, independent of all else.

Another major representation of death in the media coverage of the tsunami is death as something to be alluded to. While there is no doubt that there is extensive use of the words 'dead', 'death' and 'killed', the dead and dying are also described by a multitude of euphemisms. One such allusion to death is in terms of cost, referring to the 'calamity which cost 226,000 lives across Asia' (NZH110). What makes this euphemism so interesting is that it follows a focus on the US$1.7 billion pledged by donors in the first month after the tsunami (NZH110). There may not be a monetary figure attached to a human life, but there is certainly such an implication among 'the essentialized working out of capitalist rationality' (Woods, 2003, p.64). While this fund-raising drive is, ultimately, for the benefit of the survivors of the disaster, the relationship with the number of dead is inescapable; would donations be this plentiful if so many people had not died? While the more gory media consumers are also catered for with representations of people who died as their 'heads were cracked, probably battered by rocks' (NZH114), consumers are also exposed to

images of the Indian Ocean as a tourist destination with 'paradise resorts' (NZH118). Quite simply, for both the producers and consumers of media, the juxtaposition of paradise and catastrophe is difficult to process; 'death and leisure do not mix' (Oliver, 2004, p.237).

The mass dead do not only lose individual identity, but also suffer a clear lack of status. One of the most important tools in limiting psychological distress is to ensure 'the rights of survivors to see their dead treated with dignity and respect' (Morgan *et al*, 2006, p.809). While it may seem a straightforward, practical task to handle the 'rows and rows of dead bodies' (NZH4), it is in fact rooted within authoritative, theoretical and theological entanglements. The dead did not become the dead until a fixed moment, determined by those with power over the post-mortem identity of the person, marking not so much the moment of dying but the end of an existence. For example: 'On Wednesday Craig Baxter's new life in Thailand formally ended, as the Auckland-born victim of the Boxing Day tsunami was cremated in a Buddhist ceremony' (NZH68), presumably after death and formal identification were established.

There is some confusion over the status of people who are yet to be 'declared dead' (NZH63), with death uncertain until a powerful, authoritative body 'confirmed the deaths of tens of thousands of people previously listed as missing' (NZH105). This need for declaration operates in much the same way as a doctor 'calling' the time of death, reaffirming the control placed by those with power, over the dead. This creates an

additional state of being between life and 'official' death, not dissimilar to the famous scientific yet quasi-philosophical hypothetical experiment posed by Schrödinger (1935), where at the whim of an atom, at any one time a cat could be both entirely alive and entirely dead. This represents, effectively a state of limbo, between knowledge, science and power and thoroughly entangled within all three. The complex spiritual questions regarding the body and soul have been replaced by equally powerful and dictatorial relationships regarding the body and science, revealing the power relations entangling death.

The Evocative Dead

Being concerned about death is very much an 'activity of peacetime, of countries rich enough to attribute moments and spaces to them' (Pitte, 2004, p.345)'. This is also true, to some extent, in the aftermath of a major catastrophe like the Indian Ocean tsunami. While in some tsunami affected areas bodies were left on the streets due to shortages of body bags (NZH13) as nations 'rushed to bury their dead' (NZH16), those outside the region contemplated the dead. This is just one of the ways in which representations of death reveal political, economic, social and cultural concerns (Kong, 1999, p.11; Findlay, 2005, p.433,). Specifically, current Western attitudes of fear of death that increase proportionally to advances made to postpone it (Pitte, 2004, p.350) also give rise to fascination.

While there is a morbid curiosity among Western media consumers for mass death, it is also true that 'even major crises, by themselves, are not considered newsworthy. There must be something beyond a death toll to compel coverage' (Moeller, 2006, p.174). In the case of the tsunami, coverage was so extensive because of the number of foreign tourists killed by an event whose sudden onset and massive impact left a chilling visual impact (Brewin, 1994, p.208). This enabled media consumers to empathise with those affected by the tsunami in an awareness of the 'shared fragility of human existence' (Findlay, 2005, p.436). This empathy response led to massive outpourings of support for those affected, rather than any evidence based assessment of their needs (Griekspoor *et al*, 2005, p.250). This proved to be an extremely useful method of acquiring public support and therefore donations. However, it is not the result of this empathy that needs deconstructing but the means by which it is triggered.

In some instances, the media promotes pain that 'is at once hard to imagine and difficult to empathize with' (Moeller, 2006, pp.186-187). The Indian Ocean tsunami was no exception; the sheer extent or the reality of hundreds of thousands of deaths in such a short space of time may have been inconceivable to New Zealand media consumers. In truth, only those with personal experience of war, genocide or epidemic could even begin to understand the true scale of the disaster. However, most people have experienced the loss of someone close, providing a means of creating empathy even when no similarity exists between the consumer and the person killed by the tsunami. This leads to further criticism of the

media as emphasising sensational, anecdotal stories (Vasterman *et al*, 2004, p.108). The media is such a powerful tool for generating interest, empathy and subsequently support that it is unlikely any critique will sway its use. The media coverage may also have been so extensive because there were people who could 'not only literally narrate the events (often in English) for the global media, but could also personalise the story' (Moeller, 2006, p.179).

The first method for generating empathy among consumers is to establish a shared identity with those killed, a technique quickly implemented by the Western media in the aftermath of the tsunami (Findlay, 2005, p.432). Those killed by the tsunami were not just 'others' but us; European or broadly Western people whose occupations and lives can be quickly surmised and empathised with by building on assumptions and broad stereotyping. The following casualty of the tsunami provides an excellent example:

> One of Sweden's most successful businessmen, Mats Savstam of the Manpower company, died in hospital in Thailand three days after the disaster from the effects of pneumonia and exhaustion after searching in vain for his two missing teenage children (NZH57)

This simple report appears at first glance to convey little information, but this is because it is unnecessary. From these few scant lines, we as consumers can already picture Mats Savstam, with slightly different images depending on the experiences we base our assumptions on. I see a white, fair-complexioned, healthy, middle-aged man in expensive clothing and from this starting point, I can imagine Mats Savstam both on

holiday and in the aftermath of the tsunami. In 39 words, I have made an enormous set of assumptions based on Swedish men that I have met and images from television or movies, combined with similarly sourced assumptions of businesspersons. That this image differs in varying degrees from other readers of this text is interesting, but more importantly, this image provides a connection to a person to whom it is easier to form an attachment. The sadness that may be felt almost unconsciously by readers who have paused to think of Mats Savstam as part of an individual tragedy, is incalculably greater than the emotions raised from reading the flat, stark line 'the tsunami killed more than 231,000 people around the Indian Ocean's shores' (NZH203).

As much as media like the New Zealand Herald reinforce identification with those killed (Alexander, 2005, p.3), less reinforcement is required when there is a strong sense of identification, such as with citizens of one's country. The perception of shared identity that creates a 'specific disaster-focused distress' (Wayment, 2004, p.515) is not only with those killed by the tsunami, but those bereaved. Empathy with the bereaved is one of the most powerful tools for fostering interest in and support for survivors and it is infinitely easier; we can identify with the living but it is not so easy to identify with the dead. We may mourn the death of people we perceive as similar to ourselves, such as Patrice Gicquel, whose wife, seven-year old daughter and twin babies were killed (NZH176). For a brief time, we feel Patrice's pain; we pause to imagine how we would react to the loss of our partners, of all our children.

The pattern of fostering empathy is repeated throughout the coverage of the tsunami, each story with a particular tragic image. The focus of the New Zealand Herald coverage of the bereaved follows two broad themes; the death of a person caring for another and the death of a person cared for by another. In the first instance, we are invited to empathise with a newlywed woman whose husband was killed while they were on their honeymoon (NZH51). There is a focus on a four months' pregnant woman whose husband was killed (NZH68) and a woman who travelled to Thailand to search the morgues for her brother's body (NZH82), to name but a few. The references to these survivors, such as the 'grief-stricken widow' (NZH51), evoke tragic images of women left alone, unprotected and vulnerable without their men. This reflects concepts of women as powerless, perhaps unintentionally but ultimately reflecting hegemonic viewpoints linking gender to power (Warf, 2004, p.45) from the societies producing the media.

There are also images of those survivors who have lost those they were meant to be protecting, such as Evanna Giardina, whose 16-year-old Down syndrome son Paul was killed while they were on holiday (NZH93) and the Canadian man waiting for the body of his elderly mother to be flown home for burial (NZH47). These narratives do not bluntly assign blame; the tsunami is a clear-cut "act of God" (Moeller, 2006, p.179) on a devastating scale. However, the text could be interpreted as inviting readers to pass judgement on those who survived. This raises the

question of what media attention means for survivors (Vasterman *et al*, 2004, p.108), people who are guilty only of miraculously surviving when so many others did not (Wayment, 2004, p.516).

There is also a focus on individuals in New Zealand Herald coverage of the tsunami with whom many New Zealand consumers share little sense of identity in terms of ethnicity, gender, social status, occupation, lifestyle and, most importantly, the tragedy they experienced in the Indian Ocean tsunami. For example, thankfully few people in New Zealand would be able to identify with the fisherman who lost nine people in his family, his home and his livelihood in a single event (NZH32). Neither are many likely to identify with the elderly man who diligently waters a coconut sapling that stands as the only memorial to his wife, daughter and five grandchildren who were hastily buried in mass graves (NZH98). It is irrelevant; assisted by metaphors and images (Vasterman *et al*, 2004, p.110), media consumers see the world 'enter a dark tunnel of fear and uncertainty' (Alexander, 2005, p.6) and are moved by it. This effect is seen by some as a sign of collective human consciousness or a 'spiritual vulnerability in the face of an awareness of death' (Drane, 2000, cited in Findlay, 2005, p.436).

Handling the Bodies and Memories of the Dead

How the dead are treated has an enormous impact on both survivors of a disaster and those viewing a disaster through the media. There are strict

procedures or rituals attached to the dead in many cultures. However, it is not only the bodies of the dead that people treat carefully, but also the characters of the dead. These practices are revealed throughout the New Zealand Herald coverage of the Indian Ocean tsunami and discussed within this section.

The Ritualised Dead

Death, dying and the dead are all highly ritualised. The people, places and actions involved in death are cloaked in religious and secular practices that are afforded a special significance. Anthropologists have long studied the rites of death as one of the most important stages of a human life cycle, one that varies widely from culture to culture and from individual to individual. There are, however, certain commonalities throughout all cultures that defy 'the multiple ways in which identity, subjectivity, the body, and place are sutured together' (Warf, 2004, p.45).

Despite issues of abjection in conjunction with the dead, shared rituals and practices among cultures include a reverence for the body of the dead and the need to make the body as attractive as possible, preferably to give the temporary appearance of life (Pitte, 2004, p.347). Likewise, the identification of the dead is 'one of the most basic of all human rights' (Perera, 2005, p.495), leading to an urge to record and memorialise the names of the dead. In addition, cultures share an importance of place in locating grief to focus mourning (Kong, 1999, p.9). For many sedentary societies this is the place of death, the resting place, a memorial or a holy

place. For more nomadic peoples, a shrine or trinket that can be carried may substitute locations, or sites accorded a special sacred status and are revisited.

Despite the commonalities among cultures, the variety of rites surrounding death is immense (Pitte, 2004, p.347). The rites observed by mourners reveal not only rituals embedded in culture but also the 'individualization of death practices' (Oliver, 2004, p.236). These rituals were apparent in much of the New Zealand Herald coverage of the Indian Ocean tsunami. As Moeller (2006, p.182) observes, 'there are no images of how people died, how people struggled in the rubble'. Instead, consumers are shown death through the post-mortem rituals practiced. The most common ritual related in the New Zealand Herald is the disposal of dead bodies. There are repeated anecdotes of how the disposal or remains was handled correctly, or not, as the case may be. The remains of some foreign tourists were 'returned' to their home countries and relatives (NZH47), reinforcing the concept of situating sites of grief (Kong, 1999, p.9).

The dead bodies of foreign tourists were also treated to complicated rituals once in their home countries, the best example of which was the funeral of Australian Troy Broadbridge (NZH107). Broadbridge's funeral was elaborately orchestrated, with the service taking place in the same church in which he was married less than a month before. Yellow roses used at his wedding draped the coffin and buried with him were personal mementos such as sporting memorabilia and photographs. Broadbridge's

widow Trisha gave an impassioned eulogy, addressing the deceased in the first person, while friends and family gave testament to his character. Not a single aspect of the burial as recounted by the New Zealand Herald was without ritual or ceremony. Similarly, the cremation ceremonies of tourists killed by the tsunami were highly ritualised and embedded with meaning, such as for Andrew and Belinda Welch, who were cremated together so as to blend their ashes together (NZH25). In this way, funerals and burial practices are not only expressions of group identities but also of personal values (Oliver, 2004, p.235).

The imagery, ritual and meaning apparent in much of the New Zealand Herald coverage of the tsunami is specific to only Western tourists who were killed. The focus on residents of the affected countries is far more general, with coverage providing only brief overviews of how the bodies were disposed. Coverage of the tsunami aftermath included interviews with tsunami survivors who spoke of the difficulties in disposing of bodies, either through a lack of wood for cremation (NZH32) or lack of dry ground for burial (NZH32). By far the greatest focus was on the communal mass graves in which the vast majority of the dead were placed, with numerous emotive references such as 'thousands of victims lie buried in unmarked graves' (NZH82). The articles portray the mass graves as somehow indecent, with only a few, lucky dead able to 'get a proper burial in the family's cemetery' (NZH111). Building upon the media consumers' sense of morality, the coverage incites empathy and emotion whilst avoiding

mention of specific rituals that would detract by being "alien' and 'different"
(Oliver, 2004, p.235).

Memorials to the dead that include rituals from other cultures are not
always absent from New Zealand Herald coverage of the tsunami. The
customs of alternative cultures are also represented as 'referents for the
display of post-mortem identities' (Oliver, 2004, p.236), a feature of those
dead who themselves held hybridised identities that integrate elements
often considered incompatible (Kwan, 2004, p.758). European migrants to
Thailand were represented as distinctly hybridised, such as Auckland-born
Craig Baxter, who was cremated in a Buddhist ceremony (8 January
2005). These individuals are neatly categorised by media consumers as
occupying a third space between European and Asian culture. While
academic study and wider communities often marginalise non-European
philosophies and practices (Sheppard, 2004, p.745), the hybridised
individuals are at least a partially familiar, understandable and acceptable
stereotype that allows consumers to relate and therefore feel empathy.

Not only are hybridised identities in memorials represented by New
Zealand Herald coverage, but also hybridised rituals. The introduction of
alternative cultures as providing 'new modes by which mourners can
channel their emotions following death' (Oliver, 2004, p.236) is limited to
those rituals that can be easily understood by media consumers. The
report of Buddhist monks praying for peace for the spirits of the dead
(NZH98), although obviously containing distinctly different cultural

elements is one that can be understood by consumers; spiritual leaders administering to souls also occurs within New Zealand. There are also rituals that transgress cultural boundaries. Memorials such as children lighting candles to honour those who died (NZH98) or trees bearing the names of villagers killed by the tsunami (NZH98) could easily have been conducted in New Zealand rather than the coast of the Indian Ocean. These simple rituals also have the benefit of utilizing basic principles; light or fire is part of rituals ranging in numerous cultures, including Christianity with the eternal flame and the Biblical quote 'I am the light and the life'. Likewise, objects that carry the names of the dead are common throughout the world, from gravestones to memorial gardens to pyramids; people use objects to provide a lasting memorial to the dead.

The rituals surrounding death also include distinctly Western testaments in honour of the dead. Manifestations of pain are often reserved in Northern European societies compared to the Mediterranean and tropical regions (Pitte, 2004, p.347), yet still follow carefully orchestrated rituals. The best example of this reserved expression of bereavement is the laying of flowers. Flowers are laid in strict rituals, such as those laid by Sandra Sweeny in memory of her 37-year-old son Craig Baxter (NZH94). As the principle mourner, Sandra Sweeny was the first to lay flowers on the memorial, no doubt followed by his wife and other family members. This ritual creates a power structure among mourners; those with the closest ties to the deceased present flowers first, followed by the powerful in society such as community leaders (NZH97) and finally members of the

general public. To deviate from this unspoken pattern would be a sign of disrespect that can only be equalled by transgressions such as making noise during silences such as the minute silences held at formal events and privately (NZH94, NZH175).

Ritualised public expressions of sorrow were conducted and recorded throughout the world following the Indian Ocean tsunami (Findlay, 2005, p.436). These public displays are considered distinctly separate from individual expressions of sorrow. The New Zealand Herald reported this dichotomy of ritual repeatedly in the aftermath of the tsunami, such as the article featuring the return of the bodies of Swedish tourists killed where the coffins were greeted at the airport 'with desperate, private grief and solemn, public mourning' (NZH57). This difference between the principle mourners and the public is repeated with the account of Evanna Giardina, whose son was killed, when she attended a Melbourne memorial service with 4000 others (NZH93).

The power relationship between private and public mourners also creates a number of problematic reactions among media consumers in accepting their subordinate role as minor mourners. While 'television is the worst offender' (Brewin, 1994, p.208) other forms of media also prompt strong, very personal reactions to death and disaster among the public (Findlay, 2005, p.436). Media representations of disasters are so powerful that recent studies show those exposed to in-depth disaster reporting can result in 'distress, anxiety, depression, and somatic complaints' (Wayment,

2004, p.516). Rather than being simply observers, the public are rendered as mourners by the media. As a result, public expressions of sorrow are not merely mass hysteria or adherence to some unspoken convention; rather they are very necessary coping mechanisms in recovery.

One of the most frequently recurring themes in New Zealand Herald coverage of the tsunami dead is the sanctity of the body. In Western society in particular, the body is given an almost holy, if abject, status. Practices that may be widespread in other cultures, such as the Haitian breaking of arms and legs, are seen as violations of the sacred body. Other actions such as cannibalism or necrophilia are so abhorrent they are rarely discussed. Media consumers may well have very strict concepts of the ways in which dead bodies should be treated 'properly'. The New Zealand Herald reporters are clearly aware of this sense of propriety in the handling of the dead and often play on this when eliciting the attention and support of consumers. The numerous references to the bodies hastily buried in mass graves are a prime example of how bodies are mistreated in the eyes of consumers. Mistreatment also extends to the exhumation of bodies for forensic tests (NZH78) and bodies wrapped in sheets and carried away on surfboards (NZH27). By describing the violations against the bodies of the dead, the media can present an image that reveals the intensity of a situation so dire that even the most sacred of objects, the body, is not treated with the respect and propriety it deserves.

It is not only the bodies of the dead that society demand be treated with respect, but the entire situation. The Indian Ocean tsunami event itself, through the presence of so many dead, became almost sacred. One example of this is the disaster joke phenomenon; analysed by anthropologists as an important aspect of the public in coping and recovering from large-scale disasters, but generally viewed as distasteful and inappropriate. One such example of this is a radio station skit that 'made jokes about child slavery and people watching their mothers die (NZH116). Certain actions conducted under the umbrella of the tsunami such as fund-raising sports matches are considered acceptable, while others like the lawsuit filed in the United States on behalf of 100 foreign tourists who perished in the disaster (NZH146) are not. According to Kobayashi and Peake (2000, p.398), the media's targeting of the emotions of consumers make it difficult and disrespectful to impose certain agendas. Effectively, the media act as guardians of propriety, passing judgement on what actions are morally acceptable. Whilst extolling the virtues of some survivor stories, they are quick to critique those with the audacity to record a song about the future when so many people have lost their lives. The contempt is almost palpable at the suggestion of 'a tsunami memorial museum complete with a simulated tidal wave in Khao Lak, the region made infamous by post-tsunami photos of bodies and debris floating in the water' (8 March 2005). One begins to wonder whether the media are representing society's values, or whether it is in fact the media that is creating the values of society.

The Righteous Dead

One of the most striking representations of the dead in the New Zealand Herald coverage of the Indian Ocean tsunami is the near beatification of the dead. The focus on individuals is easily explained as 'the only way to make something as vast as this tragedy understandable' (Pitts, n.d.), but the disparity comes with the type of dead who are reported. The reports and images carried into suburban homes on an almost daily basis (Bankoff, 2001, p.19) of the dead in disasters are highly focused on what we might call "good people". Of the hundreds of thousands killed by the tsunami, the few dead focused on by the media are, without fail, portrayed in a variety of extremely positive ways. The cliché common in Western culture of "not speaking ill of the dead", is present in all articles memorialising the dead. Morgan *et al* (2006, p.809) note that in the aftermath of a disaster 'mismanagement of the dead has consequences for the psychological well-being of survivors'. These words, written in a medical journal, are applicable to not only the "management" of the dead bodies, but also the management of their post-mortem identities and therefore their reputations.

The most common way of representing the righteous dead is through extolling the virtues and achievements of their lives. Returning to our earlier example of Mats Savstam, the brief individual focus revealed that Savstam was 'one of Sweden's most successful businessmen' (NZH57). June Kander, New Zealand's first "official" death, was actually Doctor Kander, a PhD qualified 'linguistics education curriculum specialist still

lecturing at the time of her death' (NZH47), an 'intelligent, curious and inspirational woman who lived life to the full' (NZH68). Craig Baxter was an extremely loyal man, according to his friend he was 'the type of guy that if you were his mate, you were his blood' (NZH68). In his memorial service, Troy Broadbent was remembered for 'the way he lived, the way he played and, most of all, the way he loved' (NZH34).

The virtues extolled for the Europeans killed in the tsunami are easily recognisable to Western media consumers. Consumers can quickly identify these personal qualities and achievements and recognise them as belonging to that "good people" category that is so vital for eliciting empathy. This unconscious classification is more difficult when recounting the dead in Asia and Africa. A Thai transsexual killed in the tsunami may have been renowned for their sense of self worth, a mullah in Somalia may have had unparalleled skill in calligraphy of Koran passages, or an Indonesian fisherwoman may have been an outstanding shaman. Unfortunately, Western consumers do not so easily relate to these qualities and achievements. Instead, in the same way that identities of non-Europeans are simplified, so are their virtues. A fisherman is represented as 'a big, strong man and devoted to his family' (NZH68) or a 'very lovely boy, very fun, he protective for the family' (NZH68), while a schoolgirl was 'kind to her relatives and smart' (NZH68), qualities so simple that they transcend not only the need for names but also cultural boundaries.

Among the personal values portrayed by the New Zealand Herald, one of the most highly prized virtues is services to others. Careful mention is made of the loss to society with the death of individuals who fed stray and starving dogs in Phuket (NZH68) or who had gone to Thailand 'because they wanted to do voluntary work with children' (NZH205). However, the media coverage of these people is nothing in comparison to the focus given to individuals who died saving others. Auckland-born Craig Baxter died rescuing his wife who was pregnant at the time (NZH93), resulting in his name appearing in five separate articles, three of which contained the exact phrase "died saving his pregnant wife". Another New Zealanders body was found 'near the rubble of her beach house, where it is thought she had gone to help a pregnant woman who was staying in the house' (NZH68).

Not only are many of those who were killed innocent and virtuous, but death itself can make them so. Previous actions contrary to concepts of virtue become forgiven when the transgressor dies. Those who died may have had less desirable traits and numerous faults, but these are forgiven in death. An early New Zealand Herald article reports on an orphanage in Sri Lanka, where all 135 children and the staff were killed by the tsunami (NZH16). This tragic tale notes that the orphanage was run by 'women rebels', but the focus was clearly on people who died whilst involved in a virtuous and worthwhile pursuit. That the death of these children and women was tragic is in no doubt, but the words 'women rebels' do not cover the fact that these women were part of the Tamil Tigers; recognised

internationally as a terrorist organisation. Through this specific kind of death, their actions and philosophies have been "wiped clean.

Another aspect of the dead represented in the New Zealand Herald articles is innocence. This is not surprising given that 'of the huge number killed, most are children, their names unknown to us, from poor families' (NZH32). There are numerous, powerful references to the dead children, with residents 'giving the women and children mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, pumping sea water from their bellies' (NZH7). The twisted limbs of the frail-bodied girl were caught in a garden fence near the sea (NZH7), 'waves [were] tearing babies from their parents'; (NZH110) and health workers could not find children under the age of seven to vaccinate (NZH110). As Moeller states (2006, p.184), 'even the highest death tolls, tales of unthinkable violence, images that wrench at one's heart, are not necessarily enough to generate sufficient attention', but the death of children on a large scale provides the critical component required to elicit emotions in consumers and therefore sell newspapers. We, like other life forms, are primarily concerned with procreation. Therefore, any account of the young transcends all cultures and provokes an instinctive fear for the survival of the human species (Weiten, 2001, p.90).

Situating the Dead and Constructing Identities

Just as the identities of the living are constructed through a variety of characteristics, so too are the identities of the dead. Throughout the New

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Zealand Herald coverage of the Indian Ocean tsunami, there is a focus on the identity of the dead in terms of both nationality and whether they are "Eastern" or "Western". This influences how media consumers respond to the disaster based upon existing assumptions and social constructs. This categorisation and the mechanisms that lead to it are discussed in the following section.

The Nationalised Dead

One of the most striking features of the New Zealand Herald coverage of the Indian Ocean tsunami is the focus on nationality. Within geography, nationalism may be defined as the 'belief that the world's peoples are divided into nations and that each of these nations has the right to self-determination' (Ignatieff, 1994, p.3), with nation referring to 'governance over a spatially bound territory' (Valentine, 2001, p.300). This apparently simple definition of nationalism, however, does not allow for the broad scope of different discourses surrounding nationalism. For example, nationalism may be categorised as "civic" where people subscribe to common political practices and virtues or "ethnic" as a group of people with shared experiences, culture, language and so on (Ignatieff, 1994, p.p.3-5). Alternately, nationalism can be a relatively flexible social construct of 'one's feeling and belief of connection to a national group' (Stieve, 2005, p.3) or through identities defined in contrast to those beyond the group boundary or border (Stieve, 2005, pp.3-4).

As with other social constructs such as racialisation, national identities are constantly contested and negotiated across a multitude of spatial scales (Peake & Schein, 2000, p.135). Radcliffe (1998, p.214) describes national identities as 'the deliberate and often programmed organization of discourses, histories, geographies and populations' through mechanisms of 'the ideological work done by repetition and naturalization'. This "banal nationalism" is 'reproduced in daily life through different lifestyles, habitus and narratives' (Haldrup *et al*, 2006, p.176) but also constituted by those same narratives. Radcliffe (1998, p.213) asks the question 'how does the nation – so large, with its distant (invisible) horizon – come to be mapped onto the raced, gendered body?' Post-colonial geographers suggest that colonial encounters provide the 'fundamental formative influences' (Rattansi, 1997, p.492) on national identity, while feminists argue that gender plays a central role in the formation of national identity (Peake & Schein, 2000, p. 135). Regardless of the origins of nationalism, what are of most concern to this research are the mechanisms by which national identity is perpetuated.

Media are integrally part of the mutually constitutive relationships surrounding national identity. Both intentionally and unintentionally, media producers constantly perpetuate and reinforce the common myths that form a fundamental part of national identity (Stieve, 2005, p.4). One of the suggestions regarding the nature of national identity is that it 'is based on traits that all members of the group share' (Stieve, 2005, p.3). In this manner, the producers and consumers of media are inseparably

intertwined. A New Zealand media producer will reflect those traits through the articles written by its journalists and those selected for publication by foreign journalists. The New Zealand Herald coverage of the Indian Ocean tsunami is a prime example of the ways in which national identity is perpetuated; informed by and informing how New Zealanders perceive both themselves and the rest of the world through their own identities.

The "unique New Zealand national identity", like that of other nations, is born from the sum of its geographic isolation, population, culture, history, landscape, politics, economy, climate and development. The media perpetuates this identity as they see it not only through constant reminders of what New Zealanders are, but also through comparison with those others from outside the nation's border (Stieve, 2005, p.4). The New Zealand Herald coverage of the tsunami carefully notes the nationality of those killed or affected by the tsunami in 47 of the articles featuring the catastrophe. That nationality features so strongly in the coverage is understandable, particularly in a disaster that affected not only dozens of nations around the Indian Ocean but also globally due to the number of tourists present in the region. However, the frequency of repetition means nationality is more important than may be explained by attention to descriptive detail.

The New Zealand Herald focuses on the nationality of those killed by the Indian Ocean tsunami in a number of different contexts. The first is in a broad, general description of the countries and regions hit by the tsunami:

> Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and south India faced death tolls of catastrophic proportions. Hundreds of people were also killed in the Maldives, Myanmar and Malaysia and more than 130 died in East Africa (NZH16)

Other references to nationality were even broader, such as the 'large number of unidentified foreign bodies' (NZH18) depending on the knowledge available at the time of publication and the context of the story; particularly those focusing on descriptive detail. However, one major particular factor may be responsible for these portrayals of the nationalised dead; these representations are all from the international news agency Reuters. As a major news agency, Reuters was more likely to have staff already stationed in the areas affected by the tsunami and if not, the resources to ensure access. However, these simple, fact-based representations of the nationality of the dead such as 'authorities have said 435 foreign holidaymakers are dead' (NZH23), provide an important point of contrast against which New Zealand sourced articles can be compared.

While it is true that the focus of 40 percent of the total number of articles was on nations around the Indian Ocean, considering that tourists comprised less than 10 percent of total fatalities (EM-DAT) this coverage is clearly disproportionate. Furthermore, with six New Zealand citizens (NZH82) and up to 39 Australian citizens (NZH93) killed, this equates to

more than one article in the New Zealand Herald for every person killed.

Compared to the one New Zealand Herald article for every 2,500 killed

around the Indian Ocean, it would appear that the New Zealand Herald

feels correctly that media consumers are far more interested on citizens of

their own country, or those of a country in close proximity than the

hundreds of thousands of victims around the Indian Ocean.

The use of nationality and national identity are also important tools in

situating the events described in the articles. Descriptions of individuals

are assisted by situating the people involved geographically, such as

'Rajali, a farmer in Lhokseumawe, in Indonesia's Aceh province' (1

January 2005) or 'Shanjeev Raj, a fishing boat owner on the

Karunagapally coast, India' (NZH32). I have already discussed the use of

stereotypical images earlier in this research, yet it is worth noting that the

use of national stereotypes may have positive connotations.

What may be utilised by journalists as a tool to reduce the need for space-

consuming descriptions can also be used to educate and inform media

consumers. In a report on the effects of the tsunami in East Africa, staff

journalists note that 'Somalia is the only country in the world without a

government' (NZH54). Likewise, the repeated references to the

catastrophic effects on the tsunami in Banda Aceh, Sumatra (NZH61,

NZH69, NZH72, NZH83, NZH89 and NZH112) during the first four weeks

following the disaster alone highlighted not only the location of a remote

region but also the political situation that many people may well have been unaware of prior to the tsunami.

The first publications covering the tsunami from a New Zealand agency were understandably limited; with the scale of the disaster unknown and a death toll estimated at 11,000 and only two articles from the New Zealand Press Agency (NZPA), there was little information available on those killed by the Indian Ocean tsunami. However, by 28 December 2004 the NZPA made its first reference to the nationality of a person killed and not incidentally, in regard to a New Zealand woman; 'former Kapiti Coast woman Leone Cosens yesterday became the first confirmed New Zealand casualty' (NZH9). This theme of referring specifically to New Zealanders killed continued as the extent of the disaster became apparent and the number of New Zealand citizens confirmed dead increased: 'Two New Zealanders are among those declared dead' (NZH52); 'A third person with dual New Zealand-Canadian citizenship, June Kander, 74, has also been confirmed dead in Sri Lanka' (NZH52). However, this needs no deconstruction, rather an understanding that New Zealanders are naturally concerned about friends or family in tsunami-affected areas. Varying degrees of similarity or difference places people on a continuum that ranges from "us" to the "other". This may explain the New Zealand Herald coverage of the tsunami, where the focus on tourists affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami within articles does not proportionally reflect the nationalities most affected by the disaster. This disparity between "us"

and "them" is a concept that has often been explored by post-colonial geographers and in particular, through the study of Orientalism.

The Orientalised Dead

The expression 'orientalism' has been in use for many years but it is a testament to the ground-breaking work of Edward Said that this term now conjures images of deconstructing the oriental-occidental binary. Originally applied to the study of Oriental languages, cultures and politics, following Said's book Orientalism in 1978 the term has come to acquire negative connotations in some quarters, implying old-fashioned and prejudiced interpretations of Eastern cultures and peoples. Amidst the growing fields of deconstructive geography, the unpacking of the East-West binary within Said's work is often seen as the definitive work on Orientalism as 'a lens through which the world, or parts of it, are seen' (Marcuse, 2004, p.812). Many post-colonial and post-modern geographers draw extensively on the book and Said's name has become completely synonymous with the topic of orientalism.

Despite Said's, and other authors', numerous works based upon the concept of orientalism, the fundamental principles of the field are relatively simple. The main tenet of orientalism is the construction of falsely unifying rubrics like 'East' or 'West' that invented 'collective identities for large numbers of individuals who are actually quite diverse' (Said, 1978, p.15). This imaginative geography divides the world into two unequal parts (Said, 1980), 'a familiar space which is "ours" and an unfamiliar space beyond

"ours" which is "theirs"' (Said, 1995, p.54; Bankoff, 2001, p.20; Hill, 2000, p.177). The occupants of that unfamiliar space are defined in opposition to the 'white, Christian, rational, civilized, modern, sexually disciplined and indeed masculine' (Rattansi, 1997, p.482) West as the Others; the Orientals or "natives" were constructed 'as black, pagan, irrational, uncivilized, pre-modern, libidinous, licentious, effeminate and child-like' (Rattansi, 1997, p.482). While not a dominant feature of the New Zealand Herald coverage of the Indian Ocean tsunami, there is an example from a Reuters article that shows those in affected areas are still represented as pagan and irrational:

> Thais, a deeply superstitious people, remain jittery. Hundreds of ghost sightings have been reported, in particular the restive spirits of tourists crying out to locals, or summoning taxis *(NZH114)*

Media consumers may initially dismiss these two sentences amid the wealth of tsunami coverage. However, the idea of tourists whose afterlife consists of summoning taxis highlights the ways in which orientalism keeps intact the backwardness and eccentricity of the East (Said, 1978, p.206) depicting a superstitious people frightened of "restive spirits". From two seemingly innocuous sentences in an article focusing on recovery, it is perhaps possible to gain insight into the ways Orientalism is perpetuated.

Attitudes and preconceptions of the East-West binary describe a situation that does not exist in reality but 'shape something that does exist in reality into a form that makes it manageable and manipulable' (Marcuse, 2004,

p.811). These characteristics of Orientalism are understood as 'both anticipating and justifying a colonial relation between dominant and subordinate' (Marcuse, 2004, p.809). According to Said (1978, p.48), this relationship is maintained by 'the dominance of crude power allied with simplistic contempt for dissenters and "others"'. This, however, implies a sinister formation that conjures images of nineteenth century colonization with Western knowledge fundamentally a means to perpetuate hegemony over the world (Bankoff, 2001, p.29). What is more relevant to this research is not intentionally malicious racism but rather 'an often unconscious and sometimes benevolently intended set of attitudes and preconceptions arising out of relations of power' (Marcuse, 2004, p.810).

In his publication Covering Islam, Said (1981, p.131) notes that in order for a culture to be interpreted, the circumstances making the culture available for interpretation must also be understood. Environmental determinism resulted in the naturalisation of racial differences, which 'placed those of "the dark races" at the bottom of geography's moral terrain' (Kobayashi & Peake, 2000, p.399). This naturalised racial determinism is often applied to Western imperialism in Africa; however the mechanisms are particularly relevant in any Western representations of "the Orient" with its 'diametrically opposed values' (Hill, 2000, p.177). A comparison between the representations of "Western" and "Eastern" reactions to the tsunami and its impacts in media coverage of the disaster reveals the differences in values. The New Zealand Herald notes the formal remembrances were held as a minute's silence and 'New Zealanders took that minute to

remember those whose lives were destroyed or affected' (NZH94). This stands as a mark of respect, something considered a "proper" testament to the disaster. Following this piece, readers may be drawn to the difference of the Eastern others by a subsequent article revealing that 'no memorial services were planned in southern Thailand, where more than 5000 died and another 3000 are missing' (NZH114). In this instance, the media allows foreign sites and practices to be subjected to a Western gaze (Kobayashi & Peake, 2000, p.394) and therefore judgement based on Western moral values.

This conceptual space of the Orientalism discourse (Bankoff, 2001, p.21) 'not only describes, teaches and rules but also produces the Orient' (Said, 1995, p.3, cited in Haldrup *et al*, 2006, p.175). Representation of this space is not innocent (Haldrup *et al*,, 2006, p.174), being 'manifest in culture, language, ideology, social science, media, and political discourse' (Marcuse, 2004, p.809). However, it is important to note that the attribution of cultural values is not always a Western project. Hill's fascinating work on "reverse Orientalism" explores the ways in which social constructs are utilised by Eastern leaders such as Lee Kuan Yew, 'one of the most prominent proponents of the claim that a discrete set of values is characteristic of East and Southeast Asian cultures' (Hill, 2000, p.178).

Based on Kahn's "Protestant Ethic", Hill refers to a "Confucian Ethic" of 'a hardworking, responsible, skilful and ambitious member of society who

would contribute to the group rather than pursuing individual, selfish interests' (Hill, 2000, p.179). This reverse Orientalism, like traditional Orientalism, is perpetuated by the New Zealand Herald coverage of the tsunami; those killed by the tsunami are described as 'kind to her relatives and smart at school' (NZH68) or 'although uneducated he was known as a hard worker. Every day he would wake up early to search for bait to catch fish for his family to eat and to sell' (NZH68), in line with the Confucian ethic. This is just one example of the ways in which orientalism as a 'systematically created paradigm' (Bankoff, 2001, p.20) requires tools such as the media to conceive, reproduce and experience identities (Wall, 1997, p.41).

Not only are the representations of the Indian Ocean tsunami embedded in discourses of orientalism, they are also rooted in what Bankoff (2001, p.20) after Arnold refers to as "tropicality" or the 'cultural constraints that continue to depict large parts of the world as dangerous places for us and ours'. Based upon representations of tropical regions as zones of 'danger in terms of disease and threat to life and health' (Bankoff, 2001, p.21), the aftermath of the tsunami 'echoes tropicality and the problems associated with the 'warm climates' (Skelton, 2006, p.22). One of the most recurrent themes of tropicality is the 'sense of otherness that Europeans attached to the tropical environment' (Bankoff, 2001, p.21). In particular, it is considered to be the dangerous other which must be challenged; a concept legitimised by the way people see, perceive, picture, imagine and speak of others (Haldrup *et al*, 2006, p.174).

The testaments to those who were killed differ depending on what "side" of the East-West binary they are located. In a memorial to an Australian killed by the tsunami, Craig Baxter is described as 'the type of guy that if you were his mate, you were his blood' (NZH68). This statement, in colloquial language, upholds "Western" values and is easy to relate to for media consumers. It also stands in stark contrast to the memorial to the Thai fisherman Cholathea Cheakham Meakhathalea; 'a very lovely boy, very fun, he protective for the family' (NZH68). Despite the memorial being related to journalists through a translator, the words of Meakathalea's brother are distinctly alien with incorrect syntax and simplistic language reiterating the child-like, inferiority of the people of the East (Rattansi, 1997, p.482).

The reactions of survivors are also distinctly orientalised, differing between the logical, modern West and the emotional, pre-modern East. The New Zealand Herald describes the emotional responses of Indonesian mother Mariama who 'wailed and fell into the arms of her son, Aziman, when she came out of the airport. "Where are the others? Where are my other children?" she cried before falling to her knees' (NZH118) and Indian fisherman Shanjeev Raj who sobbed as he discovered his mother and two children had been killed (NZH32). These reactions provide a point of contrast to Western survivors, such as the Welche family who were 'grateful that Andrew and Belinda died together' (NZH205) or the widow Trisha Broadbridge who 'cut a lonely figure as she followed his coffin from

a Melbourne church' (NZH107). The impression of Western mourners is one of composure, of reason and the impressions left on media consumers may well reinforce how "we" should react to death.

Relief efforts described by the New Zealand Herald coverage of the Indian Ocean tsunami may also be interpreted within a post-colonial understanding of tropicality. Bankoff suggests that Western-based relief efforts may be seen as a continuation of the "white man's burden" or duty to bring Western standards of attainment to those unable to do so themselves (Bankoff, 2001, p.23). This need to "improve" conditions for those in tropical environments having reached these standards ourselves 'serves as justification for Western interference and intervention in the affairs of those regions for our and their sakes' (Bankoff, 2001, p.27). Although this interpretation is no longer utilised as a rationalization for colonial enterprise, the concept remains prevalent, if disguised, in attitudes towards what might be termed the "developing world". Coverage of the Indian Ocean tsunami by the media implies that survivors of the tsunami are 'totally reliant on the largesse of the wealthier nations and populations' (Skelton, 2006, p.21), not only in recovery but also in dealing with the dead. From the AUD$1 billion (NZD$1.09 billion) assistance package provided by Australia (NZH162) to the sports matches held to raise money (NZH139), the West is shown as taking responsibility for the tropical regions who are apparently in need of Western protection and assistance.

The media represents the Western relief workers as 'expert, the holders of life-saving knowledge, providers and saviours' (Skelton, 2006, p.26). There are numerous New Zealand Herald articles focusing on individuals such as the Waikato forensic dentistry expert tasked with 'identifying bodies decayed beyond recognition' (NZH87) or the New Zealand infantryman assisting in the disposal of bodies in Indonesia (NZH134). In addition to providing individuals with specialist skills, the West also provides operational resources such as the French sniffer dogs scouring buildings and forests for bodies (NZH176) and the European and American laboratories conducting genetic fingerprinting on tissue samples (NZH164).

There is an implication that these Western operations are somehow superior to those conducted by organisations from within the Indian Ocean region as we read of the 'world's largest forensics operation' with 'experts from 16 countries who have identified nearly 1700 bodies so far, most of them foreigners' (NZH176). This implied superiority, such as the German search and rescue team's use of sophisticated detection gear to locate bodies (NZH176) contrasts with the manual labour of Thai prisoners retrieving bodies from resort beaches in return for two days off their sentence for each day worked (NZH42). These prisoners are a prime example of representations of Orientalism; people who may be considered more physically suited to labour through racialisation and environmental determinism, another example that suggests that the discourse of Orientalism is continuing through the work of media producer.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Daniel Robert Jean, died 26th December 2004, Indian Ocean Tsunami

Analysis of the New Zealand Herald online coverage of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami reveals much about the ways in which death in disasters may be represented. In this chapter I present some of the main findings in answer to my original research questions as well as additional aspects revealed by the study. I also explore issues related to changing the ways death is represented by the media and offer some alternative readings of the mechanisms behind the representations.

Death within Geography and Social Science

Geographies of death, while often seen as an exciting new development in critical cultural geography, are central to geographic discourses. Traditionally, death has been a prominent feature of population geographies as a standard of development through mortality rates, epidemiology and life expectancy. Places of death are also sited firmly within geography, with cemeteries, memorials, battle sites and locations where mass deaths have occurred marked as cartographic references. Similarly, these deathscapes have also encroached into studies of tourism. Within the study of disasters, death is a prominent factor,

although in common with population geography, as quantitative facts and figures indicating scale and informing needs-based relief and recovery programs. Within cultural geography, death as a focus of study is relatively recent. Further investigation reveals that geographies of death are entangled with other, comparatively older aspects, such as embodied, gendered and racialised geographies. In many ways, geographies of death are simply the application of existing discourses in geography to the dead rather than the living, with the same problematic constructions and contestations.

Representations of Death

The dead in the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami are so prominent because of the nature of the extreme event. Sudden impact events, such as the tsunami, often appear more shocking due to the rapid onset of the event and therefore the limited time for those in affected areas to respond. Although there is some disagreement as to the exact death toll of the Indian Ocean tsunami, there is a consensus among international organisations that the tsunami killed over two hundred thousand people. This disaster also had an extensive spatial range; killing people in over a dozen countries around the Indian Ocean from Indonesia to Sudan. The effects of international travel meant that the catastrophe also killed citizens from many other countries far from the Indian Ocean. This disaster was also unusual in that there were a wide range of people killed, varying in culture, ethnicity, age, gender, social background and economic status. The deaths can be interpreted relatively simply as a natural event without

complex social constructions, which may also explain an almost global interest in this disaster.   The online publications of the New Zealand Herald covered the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami extensively. Responding to a need for information by media consumers, there were numerous articles focusing on the disaster and, with time, references to the tsunami and its affects. With such a high death toll from the catastrophe, death was a recurring theme in articles covering the tsunami.

Death is not purely a critical separation between "what is alive' and 'what is dead" (Nuzzo, 2007, p.36). Instead, death is 'an immanent dimension of human life' (Connelly, 2003, p.47). Almost all people acknowledge that they will eventually die in the same way that they understand biological functions such as aging. As an integral part of life, many people hold an understanding of the ways in which they would like to die. Writer Jean Pitte (2204, p.345) describes the historically common practice of dying at home, surrounded by close relations. According to Cabbalistic teachings, in ancient times people would die suddenly and without sickness until Jacob begged for people to be allowed time to express their last wishes and repent of their errors (Zafrani, 2005, p.84). This reflects what may be a need to prepare for death, to maintain an element of control. Similarly, advances in technology and medicine have allowed highly developed nations in particular to increase life spans and safety through a reduction of risks or threats to what could be seen as "premature" death. Money and knowledge can produce design or engineering to reduce impacts of physical processes (Castree & Braun, 2001, p.12). However, as some

risks are mitigated, others take their place (Alexander, 2003, p.166) or remain "untamed". It would seem that the more control that is exerted, the greater the fear of death among many people. In a time when satellites transmit information almost instantaneously around the globe, death from extreme events seems particularly unacceptable, even in the "dangerous" tropics.

Representations of the Dead

The New Zealand Herald online articles portrayed death in highly specific ways. Many articles promoted the abject nature of dead bodies as something to be repulsed and feared as a threat to the living. Coverage also portrayed the dead as a faceless, characterless mass with references to the enormous scale of the tsunami. In contrast, articles often focused on individuals killed in the disaster, providing extended narratives on the lives and deaths of particular people. Coverage frequently centred on memorials to the dead, often gatherings or reactions, particularly from people not immediately affected by the catastrophe. Throughout the articles focusing on the tsunami, representations of the dead highlighted the concept of a wrongful loss of life with regard to the moral status of those killed. The publications portrayed nationality as an important factor in representing those killed, which also highlighted the importance of Orientalism in the articles. There was a limited use of photographs in the online articles, with death represented symbolically or through images of mourning but never with the dead themselves.

Interpreting the Tsunami through the Media

The power of the visual media to represent particular geographies (Garcia & Stark, 1991, p.55; Dicken-Garcia, 1998, p.148; Kobayashi & Peake, 2000, p.398) has caused widespread critique from many fields of study. The study of disasters is no exception and numerous geographers and social scientists have deconstructed the messages contained in media that promote disaster myths that have long been proven false (Tierney *et al*, 2006, p.60). One of the best examples of this is the idea of dead bodies spreading contagion among survivors as excellently explored by Tracy Skelton (2006, p.p.23-24) and discussed in Chapter 4. In coverage of the Indian Ocean tsunami by British newspaper *The Guardian*, there were repeated references to the links between dead bodies and contagion as well as the contradicting scientific research by Gregory Hartl of the World Health Organisation discounting the risk of diseases spreading from dead bodies and in particular, those killed in disasters (Skelton, 2006, p.24). In the Indian Ocean tsunami, there were no epidemics in hard hit Banda Aceh, despite the presence of tens of thousands of dead bodies for over two months (Morgan *et al*, 2006, p.812). This highlights the power of social policies and practices. Hygiene acts as a legitimisation for separating the spaces for the living from those for the dead (Pitte, 2004, p.349).

The complex nature of disasters as material events and interwoven social constructions (Oliver-Smith, 2004, p.10) makes them particularly subject to media attention. Through interest in current affairs and humanitarian concerns following disaster, media consumers can be seen as 'hungry for information' (Skelton, 2006, p.25). Such a focus on these events does 'ignore the millions who are not killed in such events, but who nevertheless face grave risks' (Wisner & Blaikie, 2004, p.3), yet not through callousness. A sudden impact event is more terrible, more tragic and, ultimately, more exciting than a long-term humanitarian crisis. Even the most dramatic catastrophe drops from media attention as it devolves into a slow tale of recovery (Moeller, 2006, p.185).

The Mechanisms Surrounding the Media

The ways in which media coverage represents a disaster are rooted in multiple mechanisms, both practically and through social constructions. Just as the events in a catastrophe are exceptional, so too are the methods employed in newsgathering (Berrington & Jemphrey, 2003, p.229). The careful negotiation between providing information while safeguarding institutional interests in a chaotic situation (Kodrich & Laituri, 2005) often results in critique of media actions. Studies have shown that consumers consider the media to abuse their power, particularly with regard to transgressing personal privacy (Kieran *et al*, 2000, p.157). This applies particularly to those affected by disasters as "victims" are accorded

a high moral status; 'the higher the moral status an individual has, the greater the claim he or she has to privacy' (Kieran *et al*, 2000, p.161). Many different disciplines have explored the power of the media to represent and inform society. Although the media represent societal concerns, they are also fundamental to shaping perceptions within society. Representations such as the New Zealand Herald coverage of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami serve to reinforce existing discourses of people, places and events. By emphasising death in the catastrophe, the coverage also fosters sympathy from media consumers for those directly affected and reinforces moral standards. Not only are the articles representative of the society from which the media stems, they are also the product of commercial pressures for greater circulation, which may lead to aspects such as the sensationalism of death. By marginalising some aspects of death in the tsunami, such as images of the dead, media coverage may also sanitise disasters. It is also important to remember that the articles are the product of individual journalists who are themselves directly impacted by the events around them and critics should perhaps be more sensitive to the strains faced by journalists. Whether these representations would benefit from further promotion or marginalisation of death in this disaster is uncertain. Both extremes could either distance readers further from reality or saturate consumers to the extent that death becomes normalised and unworthy of public attention. Perhaps the only suggestion would be to offer more choice to the consumers themselves.

Consideration for Media Producers

Nick Pollard's outstanding Diary of a Disaster (2005, p.10) explores the impact of the tsunami on the journalists covering the aftermath and how individuals were confronted with:

> The worst sights and conditions any of them have ever seen, even those who've worked in many war zones. The destruction and the death toll are greater than Hiroshima. Wherever they go they find themselves, literally, tripping over dead bodies. There, too, the heat is stifling, the smell choking and the hours of work very long.

The long-standing stereotype of the "hardcore journo" may be taken for granted by many media consumers, but what are the effects of witnessing the aftermath of a catastrophe on such a scale? Work on addressing work-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in disasters generally focuses on emergency response and relief workers (Paton & Long, 1996, pp.75-127). Disaster "helpers" are subject to a number of "stressors", including lack of warning; abrupt contrast of scene; uncertainty; presence of traumatic stimuli; lack of opportunity for effective action; contact with the victims or their families; increased or unexpected responsibility; greater than usual physical, mental and emotional demands; co-ordination and resource problems and ongoing threats to safety (Paton, 1996, p.p.114-117).

A journalist or photographer may be called to cover an event with very little notice (lack of warning) in a vastly different setting from the one they were working in (abrupt contrast of scene). Journalists are likely to be in close proximity to bodies, injured survivors, destroyed buildings or infrastructure

and or grieving survivors (presence of traumatic stimuli). The actions of covering an event through taking notes, interviews or photographs arguably do not help the immediate situation (lack of opportunity for effective action). Journalists may face challenges through climate, terrain, available facilities and the event itself (greater than usual physical, mental and emotional demands, ongoing threats to safety). Journalists are also required to interview or photograph survivors (contact with the victims or their families), while performing their jobs to standards enforced by editors with often limited tools and an unfamiliarity with language, culture and event (increased or unexpected responsibility, co-ordination and resource problems). While a blanket approach based upon assumptions and imagined scenarios, many, if not all, of these stress factors could be applied to journalists.

In 1988, journalism studies recognised that insufficient attention 'had been paid to how journalists exercise their judgement in negotiating their role' (Morrison, 1998: x). The compounded pressures of 'conflicting interests of career progression, commercial imperatives and personal ethics' (Morrison, 1998: x) were largely ignored as "part of the job". As a group, journalists receive little sympathy for their role in the disaster aftermath. In 1993, photographer Kevin Carter took a picture that ultimately earned him the Pulitzer Prize for Feature Journalism; A vulture watches a starving child in southern Sudan (http://www.pulitzer.org/year/1994). This heart-breaking image of a starving child collapsed on the ground, struggling to get to a food centre during a famine in the Sudan in 1993 while in the

background, a vulture stalks the emaciated child. The picture was run by the New York Times and immediately became an icon of Africa's anguish (MacLeod, 1994). Within months, Kevin Carter committed suicide (Sydney Morning Herald, 30 July 1994).

In 2006, Toronto psychiatrist Anthony Feinstein conducted multiple surveys and interviews of war journalists. Concerned that 'nowhere in the countless pages of journals devoted to psychological trauma is there a single piece of research on war journalists' (Feinstein, 2006, p.2), Feinstein attempted to address some of these shortcomings. Of 140 war journalists, Feinstein (2006) established that 29 percent of the group had met the diagnostic criteria for PTSD over the course of their careers, compared to five percent of a North American public. This work explores effects on relationships, dysfunctional family life, alcohol and substance abuse and the phenomenon of the 'so-called adrenaline junkies among foreign hands' (Feinstein, 2006, p.36). Perhaps the greatest achievement in this work is dispelling the myth of the foreign correspondent as a stylish, charismatic, invulnerable character who jets in and gets the story. Although focusing on war journalists, many of the aspects ring true for those covering catastrophes. Perhaps when journalists are viewed in a different light as thinking, feeling individuals, we can interpret media coverage of the Indian Ocean tsunami not as some sinister plot by media producers but as a negotiation conducted under terrific stress.

The Role of Online Journalism

One of the most surprising aspects of this research was the difference in accessing newspapers online as opposed to printed newspapers. The most dramatic variation was the ease of accessibility, finding relevant articles through a simple search rather than picking through reams of paper by hand. There is also a disparity in interrogating the texts; as Kodrich and Laituri (2005, p.43) note, the 'reader interacts with the online story differently than with traditional print or broadcast texts'. Aspects such as size of headlines and newspaper layout are lost in online newspapers, making it more difficult to determine the importance attached to particular articles or the impact they might have on a reader when compared to other articles. While hyperlinks are useful tools in casual reading, they can also be quite distracting from the main text (Kodrich & Laituri, 2005, p.43).

The use of online journalism to explore death in disasters is also interesting when viewed in light of a nature-culture dichotomy. Death, both in terms of a biological end of living and a spiritual state of being beyond the body, may usually be interpreted as a distinctly natural event. There is some conflict in whether death from disaster is considered "natural causes" given that most violent deaths are attributed a separate status, with clearly defined "victims" and "perpetrators". There was much criticism from the media regarding the lack of an early warning system and

the inefficiency displayed by authorities in communicating the warnings raised to those in areas likely to be affected (Findlay, 2005; Moeller, 2006; Perera, 2005). The debatable effectiveness of warning systems in reducing deaths (Guha-Sapir, 2006; Rofi *et al*, 2006; Samarajiva, 2005) was ignored and authorities represented as culpable for the scale of the disaster. This concept of blame and innocence reveals the ways in which disasters can be both natural in the physical processes involved in an extreme event but also cultural through social causation (Wisner & Blaikie, 2004, p.5). To include the highly technical use of online journalism as a cultural product to examine disasters as multidimensional occurrences (Oliver-Smith, 2004, p.10) clearly undermines any concept of a nature-culture binary.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Alternative Representations

Allowing for the fact that people who may be traumatised to varying degrees create media coverage explains, but does not excuse, some representations of people, places and events by the media. In the same way that disasters can be read as social constructs but are still material events (Oliver-Smith, 2002, p.39), media productions are also material items inviting interpretation as social constructs. The media have the power to create "Truths", official versions of events that represent the legitimate social world (Skelton, 2006, p.12). In many ways, the use of representations of social constructs in media coverage is detrimental to media consumers. By reinforcing stereotypes, understandings created by

the media shape public perceptions, which in turn inform media decisions about what to publish; what is acceptable, what is wanted and understood by the consumers. Editorial decisions on disaster coverage are 'often rooted in judgments about the social value of disaster victims' (Tierney *et al*, 2006, p.62) based upon constructions of media producers' own societies. Without change within the societies, it is almost impossible to hope that media coverage will err from the long-established stereotypes that they so often represent.

What then is the impact of this mutually constitutive relationship between media as producer of social constructs and reproducer in reaction to social responses? Despite the high death toll of the disaster and numerous representations of the dead, death is marginalised in the media coverage of the Indian Ocean tsunami. As media consumers this may mean that we are never truly able to comprehend the scale of the tragedy. Greg Bankoff (2001, p.31) states that 'a person's reaction to hazard is not random, unordered and wholly immediate', but instead is shaped by a variety of factors, including the media. With a form of "sanitization" marginalising death, we cannot understand the true impacts of the tsunami and subsequently we may be limited in our compassion and drive to mitigate future events. Perhaps this distancing of the actuality of the event reinforces our own feelings of safety and security in a reminder of human frailty. Given the capacity for people to feel empathy, perhaps those with power feel endangered by mass outpourings of emotion and action. There are so many alternative readings of the motives behind specific

representations in media coverage of disasters that it is impossible to identify a single, over-riding explanation. To even attempt to do so would be to miss the multiple levels of constructions that do not distract from the tangible reality of the event but nevertheless shape it for those involved both directly and indirectly.

That is not to say that marginalising death in disasters is always detrimental. A tsunami killing over two hundred thousand people violently and in such a short space of time is horrendous. Susan Moeller (2006, p.178) asks how the terrible images can be processed. Perhaps they cannot. Would exposure to human suffering provide any tangible benefits to both consumers and those directly impacted on by the event? In all likelihood, the only reasonably foreseeable outcome would be an adjustment to images of suffering and gradual acceptance of catastrophe. In the meantime, people may become traumatised by images and narratives conveyed through the powerful media. At the start of this research, the idea of marginalising death from media coverage seemed a direct infringement of free speech and a patronising enforcement of moral values. After months of research on the tsunami dead, the lack of disturbing images no longer seems detrimental. There is also a question of whether exposure to death on this scale even aids in understanding and compassion or whether consumers become tragically immune to visions of suffering. It seems that the tightrope that media producers walk is easy to criticise, but more difficult to suggest alternatives that would help.

Absences from Representations

In addition to the themes evident in the New Zealand Herald coverage of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, there are also two notable absences. While the coverage features a wide range of human activities, nowhere is there mention of sex. While social scientists have explored the eroticism of death (Kay, 2002, p.155), research on death and normal sexual relationships have been explored in the field of psychology. Studies indicate that high death rates lead to significant increases in birth rates one to two years later (Chrisholm, 1993, p.24) Although many people grieve in different ways, Hagemeister and Rosenblatt (1997, p.248) found that the act of touching another provided comfort and support during the mourning process. As a result, intercourse may alleviate some of the pain of mourning, although some individuals will experience high levels of guilt afterwards (Brice, 1991, p.27). In addition to comfort and caring (Johnson, 1987, p.128), sexual intercourse may also be life affirming; a reaction to the threat posed to the genetic line.

In addition to a lack of references to sexual intercourse, there is also a complete absence of humour in the tsunami coverage. Mass death and destruction may seem an inappropriate forum for jokes or humorous anecdotes, especially given the deliberately offensive nature of "disaster jokes" (Kuipers, 2002, p.450). However, disaster jokes also serve as a coping or defence mechanism for dealing with an unpleasant situation (Kuipers, 2002, p.452). The "inappropriate" humour arises when we lose 'our ability to initiate sane reactions to insane actions' (Klima, 2001,

p.552). In cases where there is unlikely to be a close emotional connection with those affected by a disaster, humour can also be interpreted as a form of rebellion against media attempts to predict audience responses (Orling, 1987, p.276). As a form of rebellion against the media, it is unlikely that media producers would utilise humour in this form. However, disaster jokes challenge both disaster and social discourses through amorality not acceptable in much humour (Kuipers, 2002, p.253). In this manner, humour can offer a powerful critique that media text may not be able to provide. That such blatant jokes do not appear in tsunami coverage is no surprise. However, media producers often publish "quirky" or "offbeat" anecdotes, while cartoons in media have a long history. The recent lack of humour used in conjunction with death (Pitte, 2004, p.350) is something of a juxtaposition; if humour is a part of life, then why not a part of death?

Chapter 6: Research Conclusions

Cholathea Meakhathalea, died 26th December 2004, Indian Ocean

Tsunami

To conclude this research, I would like to address my primary research question of why can death be described as the (in)visible impact of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami? I will then examine some of the successes and shortcomings of this research before proposing aspects that would benefit from further study in the future.

Death has long been explored by geographers as a quantitative measurement and therefore a descriptive tool, including in the field of disaster studies. However, recently death has been explored through critical cultural geography in terms of its social construction. By (re)reading death in disasters through discourse analysis, death is highly politicised and constructed. In the case of the Indian Ocean tsunami, death was featured throughout the New Zealand Herald online article coverage. While many of the articles focused on death and the dead, there were specific representations and themes that media producers utilised. Death was a visible impact of the disaster through media portrayals of the large number of people killed, a focus on evocative narratives of individuals and descriptions of dead bodies prompting abject reactions. However, the New Zealand Herald simultaneously portrayed death in highly metaphorical images and anecdotes that marginalised the

dead. Through evocative texts, coverage focused on concepts surrounding death and positive representations of the dead, minimising the impact on the reader and influencing understanding of the event. Analysis of the social constructs resulting in this marginalisation reveal the media as producers and reproducers of these constructs. As such, alternative representations of death and disaster in the media both inform and are informed by changes in society.

This research has drawn attention to the interactions among discourses of death, disaster and the media. These interactions have not been explored in existing literature and may represent a new area of investigation. The in-depth examination of the media in general and the New Zealand Herald in particular highlight the ways in which the media shapes consumers' perceptions of and reactions to those killed in disasters. The use of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami as a case study reveals both the spatiality of the disaster and contemporary attitudes to people, places, death and disasters as understood by the New Zealand Herald.

Unfortunately, the scope of this research did not provide for focuses other than on death and would have benefited greatly from an examination of death within the wider context of all coverage of the tsunami. This research could also have benefited from interaction with online newspaper consumers to obtain other peoples' interpretations of the coverage of the disaster and their reactions to the tsunami dead rather than reliance on a single person's viewpoint.   This research is also limited to geographical

discourses, although drawing periodically on work from throughout the social sciences. It would be interesting to see the relationships among death, disaster and the media from other disciplines to add further dimensions to the study.

Future study could address these shortcomings, while this research also offers numerous opportunities for other areas of enquiry. A comparison between the New Zealand Herald online treatment of death in the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and another large-scale disaster could highlight additional social constructions. It would also be interesting to explore differences in the media treatment of those killed in disasters to other dead such as those killed by homicide or illness. Comparison with the New Zealand Herald hard copy publications focusing on the tsunami would highlight similarities with and differences to the online coverage, which could involve more investigation of the role of hyperspace in relation to the media. Having enjoyed the visual experience of analysing the photographs of death in the coverage, a more general analysis of all images relating to the event could assist in understanding the role of visual journalism in relation to disasters. A statistical enquiry into the relationship between online article readership and charitable donations would also be interesting and could shed light on some of the practical affects of media treatment and provide opportunity to deconstruct factors influencing donations. In many ways, this research is a starting point in an exciting line of further investigation into death, disaster and the media; perhaps death really is just the beginning.

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Appendix I

The human toll of the Indian Ocean Tsunami (From the United Nations Tsunami Special Envoy, 2007, http://www.tsunamispecialenvoy.org/)

Country	Deaths Confirmed	Estimated[1]	Injured	Missing	Displaced
Indonesia	130,736	167,736	—	37,063	500,000+
Sri Lanka[2]	35,322	35,322	21,411		516,150
India	12,405	18,045	—	5,640	647,599
Thailand	5,395[3]	8,212	8,457	2,817	7,000
Somalia	78	289	—	—	5,000
Myanmar (Burma)	61	400-600	45	200	3,200
Maldives	82	108	—	26	15,000+
Malaysia	68– 69	75	299	6	—
Tanzania	10	13	—	—	—
Seychelles	3	3	57	—	200
Bangladesh	2	2	—	—	—
South Africa	2[4]	2	—	—	—
Yemen	2	2	—	—	—
Kenya	1	1	2	—	—
Madagascar	—	—	—	—	1,000+
Total	~184,168	~283,000	~125,000	~45,752	~1.69 million

[1] Includes those reported under 'Confirmed'. If no separate estimates are available, the number in this column is the same as reported under 'Confirmed'.

[2] Does not include approximately 19,000 missing people initially declared by Tamil Tiger authorities from regions under their control.

[3] Data includes at least 2,464 foreigners.

[4] Does not include South African citizens who died outside of South Africa (eg, tourists in Thailand).

Appendix II

Characteristics

Code	Date	Agency	Theme	Picture	Death Toll	Word count
NZH 1	27-Dec-04	Reuters	Catastrophe	27tsunamiwoman.jpg	12,600	835
NZH 2	27-Dec-04	NZPA	Response	27phuket.jpg	3,500	307
NZH 3	27-Dec-04	Reuters	Response		11,300	290
NZH 4	27-Dec-04	Reuters	Catastrophe	ACFFGEyHbqum.gif	15,566	703
NZH 5	27-Dec-04	Reuters	Catastrophe	2phoso.jpg	12,600	1185
NZH 6	27-Dec-04	NZPA	Nzers	r28phuket.jpg	13,400	428
NZH 7	28-Dec-04	Agencies	Personal accounts	r28mourn.jpg		1428
NZH 8	28-Dec-04	NZPA	NZ personal account			368
NZH 9	28-Dec-04	NZPA	NZ response		22,700	574
NZH 10	28-Dec-04	Reuters	Warning system		23,300	608
NZH 11	29-Dec-04	Reuters	Warning system			900
NZH 12	29-Dec-04	Reuters	Science		60,000	242
NZH 13	29-Dec-04	Reuters	Catastrophe	029phiphi.jpg	60,000	986
NZH 14	30-Dec-04		Resilience			703
NZH 15	30-Dec-04	AAP	Self assessment			334
NZH 16	30-Dec-04	Reuters	Catastrophe	r30aceh.jpg	70,000	840
NZH 17	30-Dec-04		NZ response			626
NZH 18	30-Dec-04		Catastrophe	030mask.jpg	77,828	435
NZH 19	30-Dec-04	Reuters	Catastrophe	r30tkin.jpg	100,000	578
NZH 20	31-Dec-04		Finance			258
NZH 21	31-Dec-04	Reuters	Catastrophe			283
NZH 22	31-Dec-04	Reuters	Catastrophe		87,475	814
NZH 23	31-Dec-04	Reuters	Catastrophe	031eurn.jpg	125,000	657

Code	Date	Agency	Theme	Picture	Death Toll	Word count
NZH 24	31-Dec-04	Reuters	Sport		120,000	284
NZH 25	01-Jan-05		Relief			580
NZH 26	01-Jan-05	Independent	Capitalism			887
NZH 27	01-Jan-05	Independent	Propriety			886
NZH 28	01-Jan-05		Relief			666
NZH 29	01-Jan-05	Independent	Warning system		125,000	771
NZH 30	01-Jan-05		Relief			681
NZH 31	01-Jan-05		Catastrophe		125,000	2230
NZH 32	01-Jan-05	Reuters	Relief	3kauintha.jpg		587
NZH 33	01-Jan-05	Newstalk ZB	NZ victim			102
NZH 34	02-Jan-05		Relief			615
NZH 35	02-Jan-05	Reuters	Warning system	01india.jpg		553
NZH 36	02-Jan-05	AAP	Sport			101
NZH 37	03-Jan-05		Warning system			900
NZH 38	03-Jan-05		Warning system			570
NZH 39	03-Jan-05		Sport			641
NZH 40	03-Jan-05	Reuters	Western Relief		127,000	704
NZH 41	03-Jan-05	Reuters	Western Relief		129,000	989
NZH 42	04-Jan-05		Science			872
NZH 43	04-Jan-05	Independent	Western Relief			736
NZH 44	04-Jan-05		Catastrophe	01sri_lanka.jpg		633
NZH 45	04-Jan-05		Western Relief			426
NZH 46	04-Jan-05	NZPA	individual death	05junekander.jpg	155,000	264
NZH 47	04-Jan-05	Reuters	Animals			318
NZH 48	04-Jan-05	Independent	Western Relief	29quake1.gif		460
NZH 49	05-Jan-05		Western Tourism			690
NZH 50	05-Jan-05	Agencies	individual death			387
NZH 51	05-Jan-05		Self assessment	r05front.jpg		672
NZH 52	05-Jan-05	Reuters	Western Relief			403
NZH	06-Jan-		Western Relief			840

Code	Date	Agency	Theme	Picture	Death Toll	Word count
NZH 53	05					
NZH 54	06-Jan-05		Self assessment		150,000	848
NZH 55	06-Jan-05	Agencies	individual death			404
NZH 56	06-Jan-05	Independent	individual death			993
NZH 57	06-Jan-05	Reuters	Western Relief	r06buddha.jpg		843
NZH 58	06-Jan-05	Reuters	Animals			131
NZH 59	06-Jan-05	Reuters	Western Relief	29quake1.gif	150,000	622
NZH 60	07-Jan-05	Reuters	UN			926
NZH 61	07-Jan-05	Independent	Survivor story			178
NZH 62	07-Jan-05	Reuters	UN			355
NZH 63	07-Jan-05	NZPA	Self assessment	29quake1.gif		542
NZH 64	08-Jan-05	Independent	Highlight relief			495
NZH 65	08-Jan-05	Independent	Highlight health			664
NZH 66	08-Jan-05		Catastrophe			247
NZH 67	08-Jan-05		individual death			1945
NZH 68	09-Jan-05	Reuters	UN			601
NZH 69	10-Jan-05		Politics		100,000	724
NZH 70	10-Jan-05	Independent	Survivor story			1039
NZH 71	10-Jan-05	Reuters	Relief		156,000	431
NZH 72	11-Jan-05		Not clear			356
NZH 73	11-Jan-05	Agencies	NZ response			445
NZH 74	11-Jan-05	Independent	Relief			765
NZH 75	11-Jan-05	Reuters	Survivor story		156,000	417
NZH 76	11-Jan-05	Reuters	Morality		150,000	283
NZH 77	11-Jan-05	Reuters	Funeral			323
NZH 78	11-Jan-05	AAP	Morality			178
NZH 79	11-Jan-05	NZPA	Memorial	29quake1.gif	156,000	336
NZH 80	12-Jan-07	Reuters	Survivor story	12afrizal.jpg		477
NZH 81	12-Jan-07		Memorial		156,000	474
NZH 82	12-Jan-07	Reuters	Relief		157,000	849

Code	Date	Agency	Theme	Picture	Death Toll	Word count
NZH 83	13-Jan-05		Relief			648
NZH 84	13-Jan-05		Relief			507
NZH 85	13-Jan-05	Agencies	Response			497
NZH 86	13-Jan-05	Reuters	Relief		158,000	755
NZH 87	14-Jan-05	Reuters	Relief	14indones.jpg	158,600	321
NZH 88	14-Jan-05	Reuters	Highlight politics			
NZH 89	15-Jan-05	Reuters	Relief			654
NZH 90	15-Jan-05	Reuters	Recovery	15tsunami.jpg	150,000	411
NZH 91	16-Jan-05	AAP	Memorial		163,000	444
NZH 92	16-Jan-05	NZPA	Memorial	020tsunami.jpg		574
NZH 93	17-Jan-05	Reuters	Relief		163,000	475
NZH 94	17-Jan-05	Reuters	Relief		162,000	880
NZH 95	17-Jan-05		Memorial		160,000	688
NZH 96	17-Jan-05	Reuters	Memorial	r17tsunamigarden.jpg	163,000	507
NZH 97	17-Jan-05	Independent	Warning system	tsunamidebri.jpg		442
NZH 98	18-Jan-05		Self assessment			711
NZH 99	18-Jan-05	NZPA	Relief	18emergency.jpg		312
NZH 100	18-Jan-05	Reuters	Highlight relief			732
NZH 101	19-Jan-05	Reuters	Economics			227
NZH 102	20-Jan-05	AAP	Morality			374
NZH 103	20-Jan-05	Reuters	Catastrophe	26thailand.jpg	226,000	844
NZH 104	21-Jan-05		Self assessment			662
NZH 105	21-Jan-05	AAP	Memorial			537
NZH 106	21-Jan-05	Agencies	Relief			267
NZH 107	21-Jan-05	Reuters	Western Relief		226,000	918
NZH 108	23-Jan-05	Reuters	Survivor story	r24tsunami.jpg	225,000	842
NZH 109	24-Jan-05	Reuters	Disaster, referencing		234,000	84
NZH 110	25-Jan-05	Reuters	Disaster, referencing		234,000	340
NZH 111	26-Jan-05	Reuters	Warning system			93
NZH	27-Jan-	Reuters	Recovery		300,000	663

Code	Date	Agency	Theme	Picture	Death Toll	Word count
NZH 112	05					
NZH 113	27-Jan-05		Science			809
NZH 114	27-Jan-05	Reuters	Morality		300,000	305
NZH 115	28-Jan-05	Reuters	Recovery		300,000	760
NZH 116	29-Jan-05	Reuters	Grief			569
NZH 117	01-Feb-05	NZPA	NZ response			491
NZH 118	02-Feb-05		Highlight politics	ACFCBAmDa4XG.jpg		5350
NZH 119	02-Feb-05	NZPA	NZ response			352
NZH 120	03-Feb-05	Reuters	Western Relief		300,000	224
NZH 121	04-Feb-05	NZPA	NZ response	29quake1.gif	300,000	735
NZH 122	09-Feb-05		Self assessment			819
NZH 123	10-Feb-05		Reflection		200,000	580
NZH 124	10-Feb-05		Self assessment			490
NZH 125	10-Feb-05	Independent	Science	10tsunami1.jpg		498
NZH 126	11-Feb-05	NZPA	Animals			410
NZH 127	15-Feb-05	Reuters	Recovery		40,000	329
NZH 128	17-Feb-05	AAP	Sport			493
NZH 129	18-Feb-05	Reuters	Reference			434
NZH 130	19-Feb-05	Reuters	Disaster, referencing			213
NZH 131	20-Feb-05	Independent	Official visit	20bushclinton.jpg	300,000	819
NZH 132	20-Feb-05	NZPA	NZ response	ACFELC6_ayJD.jpg		719
NZH 133	21-Feb-05	NZPA	NZ response		300,000	741
NZH 134	21-Feb-05	Reuters	Reference			497
NZH 135	21-Feb-05	Reuters	Politics			467
NZH 136	25-Feb-05	Reuters	Reference			375
NZH 137	28-Feb-05	NZPA	Self assessment			470
NZH 138	01-Mar-05	NZPA	Self assessment			429
NZH 139	01-Mar-05	Reuters	Official visit			629
NZH 140	04-Mar-05	Reuters	Sport		300,000	594
NZH 141	06-Mar-05	Reuters	Sport		300,000	605

Code	Date	Agency	Theme	Picture	Death Toll	Word count
NZH 142	07-Mar-05		Legal action			105
NZH 143	08-Mar-05	AAP	Morality			455
NZH 144	08-Mar-05	Reuters	Self assessment		300,000	338
NZH 145	11-Mar-05	Independent	Legal action		300,000	377
NZH 146	15-Mar-05	Reuters	Recovery		300,000	195
NZH 147	18-Mar-05	Reuters	Self assessment		300,000	399
NZH 148	29-Mar-05	Reuters	Disaster, referencing	29quakegraph.jpg	300,000	868
NZH 149	29-Mar-05	Reuters	Disaster, referencing	29quake1.gif		732
NZH 150	29-Mar-05	Reuters	Disaster, referencing			467
NZH 151	29-Mar-05	AAP	Disaster, referencing			401
NZH 152	29-Mar-05	Reuters	Disaster, referencing	30nias.jpg		942
NZH 153	30-Mar-05	Reuters	Disaster, referencing	30gunungsitoli.jpg		759
NZH 154	30-Mar-05	NZPA	Disaster, referencing	ACFEAA_uaqZU.jpg		868
NZH 155	30-Mar-05	Independent	Disaster, referencing			894
NZH 156	31-Mar-05	Reuters	Recovery			567
NZH 157	31-Mar-05	Reuters	Science		300,000	380
NZH 158	31-Mar-05	Reuters	Disaster, referencing	31quake2.jpg		497
NZH 159	02-Apr-05	Reuters	Disaster, referencing			562
NZH 160	03-Apr-05	Reuters	Disaster, referencing			647
NZH 161	03-Apr-05	AAP	Disaster, referencing			593
NZH 162	05-Apr-05		Warning system			125
NZH 163	08-Apr-05	Reuters	Victim Identification			344
NZH 164	12-Apr-05	Reuters	Disaster, referencing		180,000	272
NZH 165	13-Apr-05	Reuters	Disaster, referencing	013talang.jpg		543
NZH 166	17-Apr-05	Independent	Hope			638
NZH 167	22-Apr-05	Reuters	Western Relief			287
NZH 168	27-Apr-05	Reuters	Western Relief		228,000	404
NZH 169	13-May-05	Reuters	Western Relief		228,000	367
NZH 170	19-May-05		Relief			78
NZH	22-May-	Reuters	Fear		227,000	351

Code	Date	Agency	Theme	Picture	Death Toll	Word count
NZH 171	05					
NZH 172	23-May-05		Science		300,000	83
NZH 173	31-May-05	Reuters	Warning system			286
NZH 174	01-Jun-05	Reuters	Morality	01canada.jpg	228,000	412
NZH 175	21-Jun-05	Reuters	Victim Identification			808
NZH 176	27-Jun-05	Independent	Recovery	27tsunamiindia.jpg		517
NZH 177	14-Jul-05	Reuters	Science		232,000	227
NZH 178	25-Jul-05	Reuters	Disaster, referencing		227,000	547
NZH 179	08-Aug-05	Northern Advocate	Self assessment		250,000	329
NZH 180	11-Aug-05	NZPA	Sport			476
NZH 181	16-Aug-05	Reuters	Politics			608
NZH 182	19-Aug-05	Reuters	Highlight relief			334
NZH 183	07-Sep-05		Western Relief			711
NZH 184	14-Sep-05	Reuters	Western Relief			236
NZH 185	19-Sep-05		Warning system			64
NZH 186	03-Oct-05	AAP	Terrorism			1182
NZH 187	04-Oct-05	Reuters	Relief			654
NZH 188	06-Oct-05		Death toll, global			101
NZH 189	08-Oct-05		Environmental concerns			2542
NZH 190	09-Oct-05	Reuters	Terrorism			705
NZH 191	15-Oct-05	Reuters	Recovery	15india.jpg	232,000	594
NZH 192	16-Oct-05	NZPA	Disaster, referencing			753
NZH 193	20-Oct-05	Reuters	Disaster, referencing			225
NZH 194	27-Oct-05	Reuters	Disaster, referencing	26pakistan1.jpg		637
NZH 195	28-Oct-05	Reuters	Disaster, referencing			395
NZH 196	28-Oct-05	Reuters	Disaster, referencing			637
NZH 197	18-Nov-05	Reuters	Disaster, referencing	18annan.jpg		781
NZH 198	19-Nov-05		Contemplation			1015
NZH 199	23-Nov-05	Reuters	Politics			358
NZH 200	02-Dec-05		Western Relief	ACFOEA6Vay1T.jpg		398

Code	Date	Agency	Theme	Picture	Death Toll	Word count
NZH 201	20-Dec-05	NZPA	Self assessment		231,000	421
NZH 202	20-Dec-05	Reuters	Politics	020aceh220.jpg		600
NZH 203	21-Dec-05		Self assessment			417
NZH 204	26-Dec-05	NZPA	Memorial	26welch.jpg	216,000	575
NZH 205	26-Dec-05	Reuters	Memorial	26thailand.jpg	231,000	483
NZH 206	26-Dec-05	NZPA	Relief			326

Frequencies

Code	Date	No 'victims'	No 'dead'	No 'kill'	Bodies	Corpses	Dead Title	References
NZH 1	27-Dec-04	0	31	3	4	0	Yes	4
NZH 2	27-Dec-04	0	0	4	0	0	No	0
NZH 3	27-Dec-04	0	1	2	0	0	No	0
NZH 4	27-Dec-04	0	3	5	0	0	Yes	1
NZH 5	27-Dec-04	0	7	3	11	0	No	12
NZH 6	27-Dec-04	0	3	2	1	0	Alluded	1
NZH 7	28-Dec-04	0	4	0	25	0	Alluded	5
NZH 8	28-Dec-04	0	0	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 9	28-Dec-04	0	1	3	0	0	No	1
NZH 10	28-Dec-04	1	1	1	0	0	No	0
NZH 11	29-Dec-04	0	0	1	0	0	No	0
NZH 12	29-Dec-04	0	0	1	0	0	No	0
NZH 13	29-Dec-04	1	3	7	11	2	Yes	11
NZH 14	30-Dec-04	0	0	0	1	0	No	0
NZH 15	30-Dec-04	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 16	30-Dec-04	2	5	7	7	1	yes	9
NZH 17	30-Dec-04	0	1	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 18	30-Dec-04	0	7	1	0	1	Yes	4
NZH 19	30-Dec-04	3	4	2	0	1	No	3
NZH 20	31-Dec-04	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 21	31-Dec-04	0	0	0	2	0	Yes	3
NZH 22	31-Dec-04	0	7	6	4	1	Yes	8
NZH 23	31-Dec-04	0	8	3	1	0	Yes	4
NZH 24	31-Dec-04	1	0	1	0	0	No	0
NZH 25	01-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 26	01-Jan-05	0	1	1	0	0	No	2
NZH 27	01-Jan-05	0	3	0	1	0	No	2
NZH 28	01-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH	01-Jan-05	0	1	1	0	0	No	1

Code	Date	No 'victims'	No 'dead'	No 'kill'	Bodies	Corpses	Dead Title	References
NZH 29								
NZH 30	01-Jan-05	0	1	2	6	0	No	4
NZH 31	01-Jan-05	2	9	0	6	0	No	11
NZH 32	01-Jan-05	0	3	0	0	1	No	1
NZH 33	01-Jan-05	0	3	0	0	0	Yes	1
NZH 34	02-Jan-05	0	2	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 35	02-Jan-05	0	1	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 36	02-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 37	03-Jan-05	0	1	1	0	0	No	1
NZH 38	03-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 39	03-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0	no	0
NZH 40	03-Jan-05	1	2	2	3	0	No	4
NZH 41	03-Jan-05	0	3	2	3	1	No	8
NZH 42	04-Jan-05	0	1	4	0	0	No	0
NZH 43	04-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 44	04-Jan-05	0	0	1	1	0	No	4
NZH 45	04-Jan-05	1	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 46	04-Jan-05	1	5	0	3	0	Yes	6
NZH 47	04-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 48	04-Jan-05	1	3	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 49	05-Jan-05	0	3	0	0	0	Alluded	3
NZH 50	05-Jan-05	3	0	0	2	0	No	2
NZH 51	05-Jan-05	0	2	0	0	0	No	2
NZH 52	05-Jan-05	0	3	1	0	0	No	4
NZH 53	06-Jan-05	1	2	2	0	0	No	3
NZH 54	06-Jan-05	0	0	2	0	0	No	1
NZH 55	06-Jan-05	3	1	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 56	06-Jan-05	2	10	1	1	0	Yes	9
NZH 57	06-Jan-05	1	4	2	0	0	No	4
NZH 58	06-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0

Code	Date	No 'victims'	No 'dead'	No 'kill'	Bodies	Corpses	Dead Title	References
NZH 59	06-Jan-05	1	1	1	0	0	No	1
NZH 60	07-Jan-05	0	4	1	0	0	No	4
NZH 61	07-Jan-05	0	0	0	2	0	No	1
NZH 62	07-Jan-05	0	3	1	1	0	Yes	3
NZH 63	07-Jan-05	0	6	2	0	0	Yes	7
NZH 64	08-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0		0
NZH 65	08-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0		0
NZH 66	08-Jan-05	0	4	2	0	0	Yes	5
NZH 67	08-Jan-05	2	6	2	4	0	Yes	11
NZH 68	09-Jan-05	0	2	1	1	0	No	2
NZH 69	10-Jan-05	0	2	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 70	10-Jan-05	0	1	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 71	10-Jan-05	0	1	3	0	0	No	4
NZH 72	11-Jan-05	1	0	0	0	1	No	1
NZH 73	11-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 74	11-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 75	11-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	2
NZH 76	11-Jan-05	0	2	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 77	11-Jan-05	0	6	2	2	1	Yes	9
NZH 78	11-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 79	11-Jan-05	1	0	2	0	0	Y	2
NZH 80	12-Jan-07	1	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 81	12-Jan-07	1	3	2	1	1	Alluded	4
NZH 82	12-Jan-07	3	0	3	2	1	No	7
NZH 83	13-Jan-05	0	1	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 84	13-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	2
NZH 85	13-Jan-05	0	1	0	1	0	No	2
NZH 86	13-Jan-05	0	0	1	0	0	No	1
NZH 87	14-Jan-05	0	1	1	0	0	No	2
NZH	14-Jan-	0	0	0	0	0		0

Code	Date	No 'victims'	No 'dead'	No 'kill'	Bodies	Corpses	Dead Title	References
88	05							
NZH 89	15-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 90	15-Jan-05	0	1	0	2	0	No	3
NZH 91	16-Jan-05	2	3	0	0	0	No	4
NZH 92	16-Jan-05	2	1	0	0	0	No	3
NZH 93	17-Jan-05	1	0	2	0	0	No	3
NZH 94	17-Jan-05	1	3	1	0	0	No	5
NZH 95	17-Jan-05	1	3	1	0	0	Yes	6
NZH 96	17-Jan-05	0	4	3	0	0	Yes	9
NZH 97	17-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0	Yes	1
NZH 98	18-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 99	18-Jan-05	1	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 100	18-Jan-05	0	2	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 101	19-Jan-05	0	0	1	0	0	No	0
NZH 102	20-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 103	20-Jan-05	3	8	3	0	0	Yes	8
NZH 104	21-Jan-05	2	0	2	0	0	No	0
NZH 105	21-Jan-05	0	2	0	1	0	Yes	7
NZH 106	21-Jan-05	1	1	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 107	21-Jan-05	0	6	4	1	0	No	12
NZH 108	23-Jan-05	2	1	7	2	1	No	7
NZH 109	24-Jan-05	0	0	1	0	0	No	0
NZH 110	25-Jan-05	0	1	2	0	0	Yes	1
NZH 111	26-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 112	27-Jan-05	2	7	2	3	0	No	11
NZH 113	27-Jan-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 114	27-Jan-05	0	2	1	0	0	No	1
NZH 115	28-Jan-05	1	1	2	3	1	Yes	6
NZH 116	29-Jan-05	1	2	1	2	0	Alluded	7
NZH 117	01-Feb-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0

Code	Date	No 'victims'	No 'dead'	No 'kill'	Bodies	Corpses	Dead Title	References
NZH 118	02-Feb-05	0	0	0	0	0		0
NZH 119	02-Feb-05	3	2	0	0	0	No	2
NZH 120	03-Feb-05	2	0	1	0	0	No	0
NZH 121	04-Feb-05	0	2	2	0	0	No	2
NZH 122	09-Feb-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 123	10-Feb-05	0	1	1	1	0	No	1
NZH 124	10-Feb-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 125	10-Feb-05	0	0	0	0	0		0
NZH 126	11-Feb-05	0	3	0	0	0	No	3
NZH 127	15-Feb-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 128	17-Feb-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 129	18-Feb-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 130	19-Feb-05	0	0	1	0	0	No	1
NZH 131	20-Feb-05	4	2	3	1	1	No	9
NZH 132	20-Feb-05	0	4	0	2	0	No	3
NZH 133	21-Feb-05	0	1	1	1	0	No	2
NZH 134	21-Feb-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 135	21-Feb-05	0	1	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 136	25-Feb-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 137	28-Feb-05	1	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 138	01-Mar-05	1	0	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 139	01-Mar-05	0	1	1	0	0	No	0
NZH 140	04-Mar-05	0	1	0	0	0	no	1
NZH 141	06-Mar-05	0	1	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 142	07-Mar-05	0	1	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 143	08-Mar-05	0	0	2	1	0	No	1
NZH 144	08-Mar-05	0	1	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 145	11-Mar-05	3	1	0	0	0	No	3
NZH 146	15-Mar-05	0	0	1	0	0	No	1
NZH	18-Mar-	0	0	0	0	0	No	1

Code	Date	No 'victims'	No 'dead'	No 'kill'	Bodies	Corpses	Dead Title	References
NZH 147	05							
NZH 148	29-Mar-05	0	1	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 149	29-Mar-05	0	0	0	0	0	Yes	1
NZH 150	29-Mar-05	0	0	1	0	0	No	1
NZH 151	29-Mar-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 152	29-Mar-05	0	1	1	0	0	Yes	2
NZH 153	30-Mar-05	0	0	1	0	0	Yes	1
NZH 154	30-Mar-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 155	30-Mar-05	0	0	1	0	0	No	1
NZH 156	31-Mar-05	0	2	1	0	0	No	6
NZH 157	31-Mar-05	0	1	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 158	31-Mar-05	0	1	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 159	02-Apr-05	0	1	0	0	0	Yes	1
NZH 160	03-Apr-05	0	0	1	0	0	No	1
NZH 161	03-Apr-05	0	1	0	0	0	Yes	1
NZH 162	05-Apr-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 163	08-Apr-05	7	1	0	4	1	Yes	8
NZH 164	12-Apr-05	0	0	1	0	0	No	1
NZH 165	13-Apr-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 166	17-Apr-05	0	2	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 167	22-Apr-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 168	27-Apr-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	2
NZH 169	13-May-05	0	0	1	0	0	No	1
NZH 170	19-May-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 171	22-May-05	0	0	1	0	0	No	1
NZH 172	23-May-05	0	0	1	0	0	No	1
NZH 173	31-May-05	0	1	1	0	0	No	2
NZH 174	01-Jun-05	1	1	1	0	0	No	2
NZH 175	21-Jun-05	3	3	1	11	0	Yes	16
NZH 176	27-Jun-05	0	0	2	0	0	No	2

Code	Date	No 'victims'	No 'dead'	No 'kill'	Bodies	Corpses	Dead Title	References
NZH 177	14-Jul-05	0	1	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 178	25-Jul-05	0	3	0	0	0	No	2
NZH 179	08-Aug-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 180	11-Aug-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 181	16-Aug-05	0	1	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 182	19-Aug-05	0	0	1	0	0	No	1
NZH 183	07-Sep-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 184	14-Sep-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 185	19-Sep-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 186	03-Oct-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 187	04-Oct-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 188	06-Oct-05	0	1	0	0	0	Yes	1
NZH 189	08-Oct-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 190	09-Oct-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 191	15-Oct-05	0	2	1	0	0	No	4
NZH 192	16-Oct-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 193	20-Oct-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 194	27-Oct-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 195	28-Oct-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 196	28-Oct-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 197	18-Nov-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 198	19-Nov-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	3
NZH 199	23-Nov-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 200	02-Dec-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 201	20-Dec-05	0	0	4	0	0	No	1
NZH 202	20-Dec-05	0	1	0	0	0	No	1
NZH 203	21-Dec-05	0	0	0	0	0	No	0
NZH 204	26-Dec-05	0	7	1	2	0	No	12
NZH 205	26-Dec-05	3	5	2	1	0	No	7
NZH	26-Dec-	0	1	0	0	0	No	0

Code 206	Date 05	No 'victims'	No 'dead'	No 'kill'	Bodies	Corpses	Dead Title	References

Appendix III: Full Bibliography of New Zealand Herald Articles

NZH1   New Zealand Herald, *(27 December 2004): Asian tsunami kills 12,600 - many more homeless,* viewed multiple times from 11 October 2006, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/search/story.cfm?storyid=0C8A692A-39E3-11DA-8E1B-A5B353C55561

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NZH3   New Zealand Herald, *(27 December 2004): Five Australians missing in tsunami*, viewed multiple times from 11 October 2006 http://www.nzherald.co.nz/search/story.cfm?storyid=0CA5260C-39E3-11DA-8E1B-A5B353C55561

NZH4   New Zealand Herald, *(27 December 2004): Tsunami: Death toll and snapshot*, viewed multiple times from 11 October 2006, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/search/story.cfm?storyid=0C9877D6-39E3-11DA-8E1B-A5B353C55561

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NZH6   New Zealand Herald, *(27 December 2004): Paraparaumu woman first confirmed New Zealand quake victim*, viewed multiple times from 11 October 2006 http://www.nzherald.co.nz/search/story.cfm?storyid=0CDA0282-39E3-11DA-8E1B-A5B353C55561

NZH7   New Zealand Herald, *(28 December 2004): Survivors tell of tsunami: 'The waves are coming, the waves are coming'*, viewed multiple times from 11 October 2006 http://www.nzherald.co.nz/search/story.cfm?storyid=0B6AE592-39E3-11DA-8E1B-A5B353C55561

NZH8   New Zealand Herald, *(28 December 2004): New Zealander tells of 'wall of foam, sand and white water'*, viewed multiple times from 11 October 2006 http://www.nzherald.co.nz/search/story.cfm?storyid=0BB26DF4-39E3-11DA-8E1B-A5B353C55561

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http://www.nzherald.co.nz/search/story.cfm?storyid=0B9D30EC-39E3-11DA-8E1B-A5B353C55561

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NZH11   New Zealand Herald, (29 December 2004*): Asia deaf to danger alarms*, viewed multiple times from 11 October 2006 http://www.nzherald.co.nz/search/story.cfm?storyid=0D066E76-39E3-11DA-8E1B-A5B353C55561

NZH12   New Zealand Herald, (29 December 2004): *Scientists say quake movement shifted islands*, viewed multiple times from 11 October 2006 http://www.nzherald.co.nz/search/story.cfm?storyid=0D790D5A-39E3-11DA-8E1B-A5B353C55561

NZH13   New Zealand Herald, (29 December 2004): *Tsunami death toll approaches 60,000*, viewed multiple times from 11 October 2006 http://www.nzherald.co.nz/search/story.cfm?storyid=0D395098-39E3-11DA-8E1B-A5B353C55561

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October 2006 http://www.nzherald.co.nz/search/story.cfm?storyid=0F38B47E-39E3-11DA-8E1B-A5B353C55561

NZH20   New Zealand Herald, *(*31 December 2004): *NZ insurers study impact of tsunami*, viewed multiple times from 11 October 2006 http://www.nzherald.co.nz/search/story.cfm?storyid=0DE35FAC-39E3-11DA-8E1B-A5B353C55561

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NZH25   New Zealand Herald, *(*1 January 2005): *Editorial:* A New Year marked by catastrophe, viewed multiple times from 11 October 2006 http://www.nzherald.co.nz/search/story.cfm?storyid=10645BA0-39E3-11DA-8E1B-A5B353C55561

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