

THE EVOLUTION OF A BEAT: A CASE STUDY OF CHANGES IN ENVIRONMENTAL
REPORTING FROM THE 1970'S TO TODAY AS EVIDENT IN COVERAGE OF THREE
DISASTROUS OIL SPILLS

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by
TAMSYN JONES

Dr. Lee Wilkins, Thesis Chair

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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

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CHANGES IN ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING FROM
THE 1970'S TO TODAY AS EVIDENT IN COVERAGE OF
THREE DISASTROUS OIL SPILLS

Presented by Tamsyn Jones

A candidate for the degree of Master of Arts

And hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

Professor Lee Wilkins

Professor Mark Ryan

Professor Byron Scott

Professor Bill Allen

Oran Mor

*“In the morning
Raven reminded me
of the dream
of green hills
and trees
water whispering
as it flows over stones
wind whispering
as it blows through leaves
the song enfolds us
life flows to its tune
stars dance to its rhythm
from the first breath
to the last gasp
its ancient melody
carries us on;
stand in silence
and listen.”*

– Unknown Poet



my love and thanks to:

(... my **father**, for your constant good-humored support; you have always entertained my fancies

. . . my **brother**, for all the tea and smoothies, and those late -night videos; you and kitties made life
bearable . . .

. . . **hannah**, who has been there since the beginning; I couldn't have done this without you; we shall
both get to the end . . .

. . . **uncle david**, for sharing your haven by the River, and those echoing words of wisdom . . .

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&

. . . . the little **grey cat**, my visitor from the shadows who always came at just the right time to make me
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES and ILLUSTRATIONS.....	v
ABSTRACT	vi
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	I
Purpose of Study: Environmental Coverage of Three Oil Spills	
Research Rationale: The Utility of the Oil Spill Example	
The Birth of Environmental Journalism	
Theoretical Basis: Framing of Environmental Events	
2. THE TEXTUAL TEMPERAMENTS OF OIL SPILL NEWS STORIES.....	41
Lexical Legerdemain	
Words and the Power to Unify	
Developing a Textual Analysis Approach	
Research Subjects: <i>The Seattle Times</i> and the <i>Guardian</i>	
3. AMOCO CADIZ – 1978’S “MONSTROUS DISASTER”	63
The Guardian	
The Seattle Times	
4. EXXON VALDEZ – WORST OIL SPILL IN U.S. HISTORY	104
The Seattle Times	
The Guardian	
5. PRESTIGE – SPAIN’S “ENVIRONMENTAL NIGHTMARE”	151
The Guardian	
The Seattle Times	
6. CONCLUSION	186
BIBLIOGRAPHY	206
APPENDIX – STORY SAMPLES	210

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. List of Oil Spills Being Researched and Relevant Information	13
2. Total Number of News Items Being Analyzed for Each Spill in Both Papers	60

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. Map Illustrating the Location of the British Channel Islands	67
2. Map Depicting British Heritage Coastline Known as the “Lizard”	87

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Tamsyn Jones

Dr. Lee Wilkins, Thesis Chair

ABSTRACT

To assess how environmental reporters have adapted to the changing rigors of environmental news, this thesis analyzes how environmental reporting has changed over three decades. Three disastrous oil spills throughout the beat's history are qualitatively analyzed via comprehensive textual analysis in two quality newspapers, the *Seattle Times* and the UK *Guardian*. The chosen spills include: the 1978 *Amoco Cadiz*; the 1989 *Exxon Valdez*; and the 2002 *Prestige*. Oil spills are inherently complex, and thus are ideal as models of how environmental reporters dealt with a complex problem.

Results indicate a substantial improvement in quality of coverage between 1978 and 1989 in both newspapers, including a shift to focusing on systemic causes, a diversity of narrative themes, and local perspectives over official sources. The *Seattle Times* progressed from scant wire service coverage in 1978 to receiving a Pulitzer Prize for its 1989 spill coverage. The *Guardian* progressed from inconsistent reporting in 1978 to a cohesive reporting effort unified by probing reporting that examined deeper causes. In both papers, easy journalistic disaster templates were abandoned in favor of probing, independent reporting that examined maritime safety and the role of business and governments. The relationship between cultivation of regional identities and quality spill reporting emerged as an interesting result of this study. Stories cultivating regional identity tended to focus on systemic causes and develop richer conceptual frameworks for the spills. Quality reporting persisted through 2002, including additional efforts to improve. Overall, the results suggest that papers can markedly improve environmental reporting quality if attentive to reporting practices.

1. INTRODUCTION

Journalism plays an indisputably critical role in a free, democratic society. From the emergence of regular periodical publications and proto-journalists formally styled as “printers” in the 17th century (Raymond, 1999) to contemporary society’s belief in the vital role of this well-established “fourth estate,” reporters and writers dedicated to revealing truth to the public have functioned as necessary watchdogs of society. Throughout the profession’s history, journalists have served the citizenry by keeping tabs on the unfolding process of democracy and “filtering the mass of news to leave what is interesting, entertaining or relevant” (229). Adapting over time to scrutinize everything from politics and the economy to social and cultural institutions to popular currents in mainstream society, journalists have historically fulfilled an important role as champion of both the public and the principles of democracy. Often, this role has resulted in journalists influencing the policymaking process and functioning as secondary checks in society when rumors of wrongdoing, corruption, or threats to public welfare have motivated journalistic endeavors.

Since the Industrial Revolution, however, and particularly in the post World War II era, society has experienced an intensely rapid period of technological progress, virtually unrivaled by any other era of human history. The ecological ramifications of this continued explosion in discovery, development, and progress are enormous. Coupled with a figuratively shrinking planet and a burgeoning human population taxing increasingly finite environmental resources, journalists have now emerged as essential investigators of the human-environment relationship.

Since 1969, when the environment “exploded onto the front pages and the airwaves” (Sachsman, 1996) following the Santa Barbara Channel Union Oil leak and the “environment” as a story finally “found its way onto the front-page agenda of the mass media” (244), journalists began and have continued to investigate and alert society to the myriad suite of environmental problems confronting it. Now after more than a quarter

century, environmental journalists as a breed of reporter have come to be recognized as a special sub-set of the profession of journalism.

Like their journalistic peers and forebears, environmental journalists today are capable of influencing governments and changing laws. Through their investigative work exposing threats to the environment, human health, and ecological systems, and informing an otherwise uninformed public, environmental journalists directly affect the policymaking process in this country (Smith, 1992; Sachsman, 1996). At the same time, as environmental issues have become more complex in society, environmental stories are more nuanced, less obvious, and inextricably linked with just about every facet of society. Today's environmental stories intertwine with domestic and international politics, business and economics, nature and conservation, and the technological and scientific spheres.

While the job of writing about today's environmental issues may be getting harder, it is more important than ever to foster an educated public capable of making informed decisions and questioning its elected representatives about policy decisions affecting its quality of life. Without environmental journalists, public understanding of important environmental risk and ecological issues would be underreported or left by the wayside altogether, and a dynamic level of public debate and inquiry would be eliminated from the pages of the mass media.

However, as Friedman (2004) and others have noted, while the specialty of environmental reporting has tremendously advanced since it came into being, environmental journalists continue to face challenges inside and outside the newsroom. Although the niche beat has become a well-established concept in the profession, environmental journalists still continue the struggle to justify their utility in society, as well as in newsrooms and the larger field of journalism.

In addition to the familiar challenges dogging environmental reporters since the beginning, environmental journalists may be particularly susceptible to a suite of external threats affecting the entire news media industry in this country. As early as the mid-1990's,

Frome (1998) observed that “daily newspapers around the country have been going out of business, or merging, or ‘downsizing,’” which meant reducing staff to “the barest minimum” and “cheating the reader with a second-rate or third-rate product” (2). The process seems only to have accelerated in recent years. Today’s overarching media climate is beclouded by several ominous trends: increasing media consolidation, shrinking circulation sizes, a diminishing circle of dedicated readers, and a growing concession to advertisers and the “business model” of reporting, increasingly at the expense of more hard-hitting, controversial, or unpopular news coverage.

While journalists of all creeds are threatened by the prospect of shrinking newsroom resources, the practical realities of these trends as manifest in newsroom policy and managerial response may bode particularly ominous for environmental journalists. Despite the pervasiveness of serious environmental problems and the existence of “able reporters and editors [who] have done great work for the environment” (Frome 1998, 3), the environment beat is usually the first to be eliminated in the face of internal or external pressures on newsrooms. “[T]he odds are against them,” he says, and against the environment “getting a fair shake in the mainstream, for-profit media, as we now know them” (3). Does this corporate tendency have anything to do with the perceived quality or importance of environmental news coverage?

Purpose of Study: Environmental Coverage of Three Oil Spills

This study thus intends to contribute to a better understanding of the current status and quality of the field of environmental journalism by comparing news coverage from the early years of the beat with more recent environmental coverage and analyzing how environmental reporting has evolved over time. Specifically, this research will undertake a comparison of how journalists covered three major oil spills – each of which occurred at a different stage in the evolution of the environmental reporting beat as well as the culture at large – in an attempt to discover how environmental reporting has changed.

The start point is the 1978 wreckage of the oil supertanker *Amoco Cadiz* – the largest spill of its time and one of the world’s worst ecological disasters.¹ Hundreds of miles of Breton coastline were polluted as 68 million gallons of oil oozing from the wrecked tanker formed an 18 mile-wide, 80 mile-long slick devastating to the region’s ecosystem and fisheries. Coinciding with the burgeoning environmental awareness movement and the emergence of environmental journalism as a recognized journalism specialty, this spill is an apt starting point from which to assess and track the evolving process of how journalists cover highly complex environmental stories.

Coverage of this spill will be compared to a mid-point: the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* spill in Alaska, the worst U.S. oil spill in history and the year’s biggest environmental story. According to Smith, the spill was also the biggest of any news story that year (Smith, 1992). At the same time, however, the *Exxon* spill also represents a classic example of crisis reporting – a serious complaint of many environmental news stories of the 1980’s and early 1990’s. Whether environmental reporters covered the *Exxon Valdez* differently than they covered the 1978 spill is one question this research hopes to answer.

The end point of the study is the 2002 *Prestige* oil spill off the Spanish Galician coast, one of the most recent catastrophic oil disasters and the worst ecological disaster in Spain’s history. Occurring nearly 25 years after the *Amoco Cadiz* wrecked itself off Brittany’s coast and assumed its place as the world’s second worst tanker disaster of all time (it is superseded only by the nearly 280,000 tons of oil spilt by the collision of the tankers *Atlantic Empress* and *Aegean Captain* off the coast of Tobago in 1979)², the *Prestige* spill moves the research lens into the contemporary era of environmental journalism. This work will attempt to discover whether there are noticeable differences between news accounts of the *Amoco Cadiz*, the *Exxon Valdez*, and the *Prestige* oil spills, and to articulate what those differences are.

¹ Source: Oil spill facts and background information were gathered from several sources, but especially from NOAA’s “Oil Spill Case Histories, 1967-1991: Summaries of Significant U.S. and International Spills.” Report No. HMRAD 92-11, September 1992.

² Source: Etkin, D.S. “Vessel Oil Spills 1960-1995: An Historical Perspective.” Cutter Information Corp., Arlington, Massachusetts, USA, 1996, 72 pp.

By examining how journalists covered these three major oil spill disasters, this research will attempt to ascertain – through analysis of rhetorical, thematic, and visual aspects of news coverage – how well environmental journalists have learned to cover complex environmental stories over the past quarter-century. Because oil spills are such intricate disasters, resulting from a host of political, economic, technological, and environmental factors – and encompassing more than just ecosystems in their aftermath – they epitomize the difficulties of reporting on the thorny, many-quilled environmental stories of our time. Analyzing coverage of three key oil spills that occurred over a 25-year swath of environmental reporting history will permit a greater understanding of the progress made by environmental journalists over the past 25 years in how well they report on the environment. Such analysis will also illuminate whether journalists have learned how to wrest from the gallimaufry of tangled complexity inherent to the socio-ecological issues of today insightful stories written with depth, context, and innovation. The results of this research may ultimately suggest something about the current status of the environment beat as well as its future.

A Historical Approach to Analyzing Environmental Reporting

In order to get at the heart of the question “how has environmental reporting changed?” a more comprehensive scope may be necessary. Despite some excellent academic work investigating agenda-setting, framing, and narrative elements of environmental stories, few indeed are the scholarly research efforts that have moved beyond a slice-in-time approach to directly compare present-day environmental news coverage to a historical context. Pompper (2002) attempted to do this in her study of framing and environmental risk in U.S. tabloids. Looking at supermarket tabloids between 1983 and 1997, she attempted to determine how environmental issues were framed for consumption in the popular culture, as represented by “non-elite” readers in the U.S., those who tend to be “marginalized” or “low on the socio-economic scale.” Howenstine (1987) made a similar attempt in his study examining trends in environmental coverage between 1970 and 1982. Using a content analysis to analyze the

Washington Post and *The New York Times* on the newspaper front and *Time* and *Newsweek* on the magazine front, he looked at articles written in 1970 and again in 1982 and discovered a slow but noticeable shift towards presenting environmental news in more meaningful ways (846).

This finding has been corroborated by several scholars and researchers (Bruggers, *Nieman Reports Special Issue*, 2004; Detjen et al, 2000; Friedman, 1990; Friedman, 2004; Sachsman, 1996; Sachsman et al, 2002; Ward, *Nieman Reports Special Issue*, 2004), though the same researchers have also acknowledged continuing challenges. Based on their work, it would seem there is an ironic oxymoron inherent in environmental journalism: the caliber and quality of journalists has increased while quality of coverage has (generally speaking) fluctuated or changed little – at least in the span of time covered by those studies.

Perhaps this conundrum is related to the mode of research. Examining coverage over the span of a year may indicate the quality of coverage or trends implicit at that point in time. Similarly, comparing a short span of years – such as Shanahan and McComas' (1997) comparison of television's portrayal of the environment between 1991 and 1995 – may reveal a smaller sub-trend that, when put in the context of a greater movement, may very well turn out to be an anomaly. There certainly are benefits to the time-slice mode, namely, that it renders a snapshot of the status of things as they are right then. This may be useful if the point is to suggest ways for immediate reform. When trying to extrapolate these articles to make generalizations about the broader lifespan and trends of environmental journalism, many individual snapshots coalesced from disparate origins must be pieced together into some sort of synthesis in an attempt to draw conclusions. The results may not be entirely forthcoming – and perhaps even a bit misleading.

Adopting a research scope that tracks changes in environmental reporting across a wider historical context may permit a more accurate assessment. Indeed, Hamilton and Atton (2001) have observed that “differences in scholarly interpretations of a situation or event reveal the ways in which interpretations are shaped by historical contexts.” Brennan

(1982), in his study of television coverage of the oil supply crises of 1973 – 74 and 1978 – 79, found that one thing that was “clearly lacking” from t.v. news reports was historical perspective. Instead of providing “a perspective on international crude oil production, our domestic oil industry, and existing U.S. government policies” (vii), coverage ended up “contributing to the public confusion about the causes and solutions.” Wilkins (1989) describes such reportage as “knowledge without meaning” (32).

Thus, examining how environmental coverage of similar complex environmental events has changed across a historical context – represented in this research by three similarly destructive and complex oil spill events – will provide important insight into how environmental journalism itself has grown and changed since the first few pioneers of the environmental news concept stoked the burgeoning field into existence. The answers may ultimately help today’s environmental journalists understand the legacy of reporting they have inherited, and how best to tackle the gamut of growing environmental problems in need of the gifted journalist’s elucidation.

Research Rationale: The Utility of the Oil Spill Example

Oil is arguably one of the world’s most important global commodities. It is the source of economic livelihood for many people and holds sway over millions around the world who are dependent upon it for the most basic elements of daily life. From workers making a living in the oil fields and rigs to industrialized consumers who rely on oil for everything from transportation to clothing and containers, oil is far more ubiquitous in society than most people realize. Especially considering the volatile status of oil and the degree to which the present declines in global supplies have laid bare society’s addiction to and utter dependence on the substance, oil disasters that lose millions of gallons to the murky depths of the sea are not only regional ecological crises but global economic ones as well.

In a journalistic sense, oil spills are inherently complex environmental stories. As natural and industrial disasters, they are outside the normal journalistic routine (Smith, x).

Wilkins (1989) describes such disasters as “aris[ing] from the synergy created by highly complex, technological systems in which scientific knowledge and technological expertise are tightly coupled with economic and political demands in national and international settings” (175). Despite the indisputable complexity of oil spill disasters, there is the temptation to write about them in terms of familiar frameworks (Smith, 1992; Sachsman, 1996; Lasswell in Wilkins, 1989).

Smith (1992) says that toxic discharge from oil tankers tends to be described in terms of “impact, victims, blame, and efforts to clean up the mess” (x) – a formula that blinds journalists to “relevant facts and issues” that delve deeper into context. Schlechtweg (1996) says that these frames may simplify the process of reporting complicated stories by supplying journalists with “ready-made conceptual schemes” for organizing the glut of information they are subjected to daily. However, he says that too often, relying on these ready-made frames results in obscuring, rather than elucidating, the important unique aspects of a news event, he says (257).

Oil spills are about effects on local wildlife and larger ecological systems; but they are also about effects on human communities and the failure of underlying political institutions or technological infrastructure. Spills tend to be protracted and messy, and they usually result in a head-on collision between nature and a historically environmentally destructive industry. Often, the political fallout of an oil spill devolves into a drawn-out battle over liability and blame. With widespread public visibility – the worst spills often attracting a global audience – oil spills typically have long-lasting political and legal ramifications, from maritime law to environmental law to regulations on industry and international commerce.

Oil spills are also compelling visual stories, which makes them ripe for symbolic framing. As will be discussed later, studying how images and graphics were incorporated into stories will be an important part of this research’s analysis of environmental coverage of the spills. Spill images can be used to enhance or complement the written story; or, particularly graphic photographs can be used in ways that end up trumping the text. Depending on how

judiciously spill images are used, the full story of an oil spill may be obscured, or conversely, told more holistically. Thus, stated simply, oil spills have all the elements of a complex modern environmental story and are ideal as models for studying how quality environmental reporting relates to complexity of story subject.

Further, because oil spills of great magnitude have occurred at regular intervals over the course of the environment beat's evolution, it is possible to compare coverage of such events over time – comparing apples to apples, so to speak – and to use them as microcosms of reportage at specific points of interest in time. By studying the evolution of the field since its initial explosive beginnings in the 1970's to the present, specifically through the vehicle of the highly complex oil spill disaster, this research will attempt to determine whether or to what extent environmental reporting has changed.

Choosing Three Oil Spills to Study

Based on the above context explaining the usefulness of the oil spill example for the purposes of this thesis, the author endeavored to find three oil spills of enough magnitude to be widely reported and enough complexity to serve as convincing models of the challenges of environmental reporting. In order for consistency of analysis, the chosen spills also needed to be spread out relatively uniformly across the environment beat's history. These criteria led to the selection of the three spills being studied for this thesis: the 1978 wreckage of the supertanker *Amoco Cadiz*; the 1989 grounding of the *Exxon Valdez*; and the 2002 *Prestige* disaster off the Spanish Galician coast. A more detailed explanation of these spills and their relevance to the research questions of this thesis is outlined below.

The *Amoco Cadiz* "was one of the most studied oil spills in history," according to a comprehensive NOAA oil spill case history document prepared for the U.S. Coast Guard and updated annually as part of its federal mandate to provide the guard with scientific support for planning and responding to marine spill emergencies. On March 16, 1978, it ran aground three miles off the coast of Brittany, spilling all 68 million gallons of its light crude oil cargo

into the sea and polluting more than 200 miles of Brittany coastline. The environmental damage was extensive, contributing to the classification of the spill as the world's largest tanker disaster at that time. Currently, it ranks fourth on a list of all-time worst spills (a list which includes not just tanker spills, but spills related to pipeline breaks, oil well spills, drilling blowouts, storage tank breaks, and natural oil seeps, among others), according to the NOAA case history report. At the time, it resulted in the largest loss of marine life ever recorded from an oil spill: millions of mollusks, sea urchins, and bottom-dwelling organisms; tens of thousands of birds, primarily diving birds; 9,000 tons of oysters. It was also the first time in history that ecologically important estuarine tidal rivers were oiled³ (NOAA 1992, 24). This disaster had such devastating consequences that it effectively jolted the world out of its complacency about the destructive effects of oil spills and carelessness within the industry. It also became the catalyst for a suite of regulatory changes in the marine shipping industry and inspired the formation of several organizations worldwide devoted to promoting tanker safety, tracking and cataloguing spill events, or overseeing regulatory affairs.

Twenty-four years and at least twelve major spills later, the *Prestige* – an aging vessel built in 1976 – split in two and sank 155 miles off the coast of Spain on November 19 2002, leaking 1 to 3 million gallons of heavy industrial oil (one of the worst types to clean) into a biodiversity-rich area on which more than 60 percent of the local population depended for fishing and livelihood. The spill caused the worst environmental catastrophe in Spain's history, and it forced Europe's largest fishing port – the Port of Vigo in Galicia – to close, crippling the region's fishing industry. Currently, the *Prestige* ranks 20th on the list of worst oil spill disasters. A World Wildlife Foundation report published in November 2003, a year after the spill, said that “[in] ecological and socio-economic terms, the *Prestige* oil slick must be considered one of the most damaging in the history of maritime transport, and one of the most complex.” The report's authors further note that “many authors rate it the worst since

³ Estuarine Tidal Rivers are areas where the mouth of a river meets an arm of the sea. It is rich in marine and bird life and can provide important breeding and nursery habitat.

the Exxon Valdez disaster that hit Alaska in 1989.” Because of its large geographical spread, the spill reached virtually all types of marine habitat. Hundreds of thousands of birds died over the course of several months following the disaster, and the World Wildlife Foundation’s authors state that the extent of damage to shorelines and near-shoreline plant-life was “comparable to that suffered following the Amoco Cadiz spill” (Garcia 2003, 6).

Part of the spill’s complexity – for journalists and investigators alike – stemmed from a complicated array of events and decisions that occurred before the tanker actually broke up and sank. The Prestige was a Greek-operated, single-hulled tanker flying a Bahamas flag with a Liberian owner which had been chartered by a Swiss-based Russian oil company. One can imagine the ensuing fiasco following this complicated lineage as everyone looked for someone at whom to point the finger of blame and responsibility. Though damaged nearly a week before it sank when one of its tanks burst during a storm, Spanish and Portuguese governments denied the vessel access to safer harbors within their boundaries. The Prestige ended up being towed around the Atlantic for days before the stresses of its injury caused it to break up and sink. The Spanish government, underestimating the potential environmental effects, chose to allow the leaking tanker to sink instead of salvaging it, making it a target for both media scrutiny and angry onlookers worldwide. Instead, the tanker shed more of its oil underwater – up to 125 tons per day – and continues to seep oil into the marine environment more than three years later.

The span of time separating these spills was punctuated by the United States’ worst ecological disaster, the ecologically devastating wreckage of the tanker Exxon Valdez. At just past midnight on March 24, 1989, the tanker, traveling outside normal shipping lands to avoid ice, ran aground on Bligh Reef in Alaska’s ecologically sensitive Prince William Sound. Within six hours of its grounding, approximately 10.9 million gallons of the vessel’s 53 million gallon light crude cargo had spilt into the waters of the sound causing widespread ecological damage. The Exxon Valdez wrecked just at the start of the bird migratory season, resulting in a severe loss of avian life. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that as

many as 390,000 birds died, along with thousands of otters and at least 200 seals. Ripple effects of the oil spill may have reverberated much higher up the marine species hierarchy to cause deaths in killer whales. In its comprehensive report, NOAA states that killer whale numbers declined noticeably a short time after the spill (NOAA 1992, 84).

Eventually, the oil from this spill damaged more than 1,100 miles of non-continuous coastline in the U.S. Almost 17 years after the disaster, environmental monitoring continues to find trace effects of the spill. Though the spill only ranks 35th in terms of worst oil disasters, it required the most expensive clean-up effort in oil spill history, according to the International Tanker Owner's Pollution Federation (ITOPF), a London-based non-profit involved in prevention and clean-up of marine-based spills. The costs will perhaps be rivaled only by those of the Prestige, whose clean-up efforts are still ongoing. And, because of the remoteness of the locale, the Exxon spill presented some especially difficult logistical challenges for clean-up crew and equipment delivery, which further entangled both cleanup efforts and attempts by journalists to convey the highly complex situation to the public.

While the circumstances for each spill were different (the Amoco Cadiz and Exxon Valdez ran aground; the Prestige was damaged during a storm), these spills nonetheless pose some intriguing questions about media coverage for scholars interested in environmental journalism and how environmental journalists use framing in the process of reporting. In each case, the environmental damage was great – particularly to important marine and fisheries areas. In each case, the tanker involved was a single-hulled ship – despite the fact that numerous spills in the intervening years had led to calls for industry reform and improved regulations. And in each case, a host of circumstances before and after the spills relating to the causes, the clean-up, and the socio-ecological effects rendered the spills highly complex affairs that challenged reporters to express the many different angles.

Table 1. List of oil spills being researched and relevant key information, showing each tankers' name; the date of each spill and its location; and the type of oil spilt by the wrecked ships.

Tanker Name	Spill Date	Location	Amount of Oil Spilt (gallons)
Amoco Cadiz	March 16, 1978	France: Atlantic Ocean, off coast of Porsall, Brittany	68,668,000
Exxon Valdez	March 24, 1989	USA: Prince William Sound, Alaska	10,800,000
Prestige	November 19, 2002	Spain: Galicia	2,000,000+

Because of these characteristics, the three spills chosen for this research are ideal selections to serve as microcosms for the larger question of how environmental reporting has evolved and changed over time. In addition to this overarching research imperative, the spills present some intriguing sub-questions. The 1978 and 2002 spills both happened at points of time in relatively close proximity to a global oil supply crisis. The Amoco Cadiz disaster occurred just four years after the first oil supply crisis of 1973-74. Though collective memory of the oil shortage mini-crisis may have dimmed by the time of the spill, it is conceivable that its historical context will figure in coverage of the oil disaster. Similarly, the present hullabaloo surrounding speculation that global oil capacity has already peaked was in its beginnings in November 2002 when the Prestige wrecked. Gas prices were rising and have continued to rise – reaching new highs just recently in the wake of the Katrina hurricane disaster.

Thus, this research will examine whether these global contexts entered into coverage of the oil disasters. In the same vein, this research will examine whether the narratives moved beyond discussions of the regional consequences of the spills to explore the greater systemic causes and implications to those participating in the full chain of production and distribution: laborers, developing economies, First World consumers. Based on the research of scholars such as Wilkins (1989), Smith (1992), and Brennan (1982), it is believed that these contexts are less likely to have been broached by reporters of the earlier era of environmental journalism. Wilkins has noted that media across the board tend to report on technological

accidents as disasters, rather than as “the predictable malfunctioning of complicated systems” (Wilkins 1989, 172), and Smith (1992) has said that “news accounts of catastrophes focus on the kinds of drama, suffering and malfeasance that make good fiction” (156).

Other research questions will also fall under the umbrella of this research’s primary interest in how environmental reporting has changed. The Amoco Cadiz wrecked during the heyday of the nascent environmental movement, when environmental journalism was just taking off. How journalists of the time covered the catastrophe, and whether their relative inexperience with environmental issues affected quality or style of coverage is one question this research seeks to answer. By contrast, the Prestige spill occurred in the recent history of environmental journalism, giving the beat time to mature and improve. The literature suggests that noticeable differences will be observed between coverage of the Amoco Cadiz and coverage of the contemporary Prestige spill nearly a quarter century later.

In between, the Exxon Valdez wrecked during a boom cycle in environmental coverage, at a time when other noteworthy environmental issues, such as the Alar-on-apples scare and the conflict over logging in old-growth Pacific Northwestern forests, were being vigorously covered – perhaps “over” covered, as many researchers argue, to the detriment of quality depth reporting. Further, both the Exxon Valdez and the Prestige stories subsequently devolved into related coverage of legal actions against the tanker captains. In the case of the Prestige, another sub-current began to hold sway over the pages of the news media in the wake of the spill: namely, the political controversy over Spain’s disaster response and the role of Britain as safety inspector. This research will examine whether stories about the earlier Amoco Cadiz disaster are characterized by a similar attempt to report on other important angles of the spill, as well as whether the thirteen-year gap between the Exxon Valdez and Prestige spills resulted in further maturation of the environmental reporter’s approach to covering a damaging oil spill.

This research will also examine how news accounts treated the depiction of nature versus industry in each case, as several researchers have argued that the creation of easy

rhetorical frames and the reduction of complex situations into easy conceptual ideas of oppositional groups often undermines quality informative news coverage (Segal, 1991; Smith, 1992; Schlechtweg, 1996). Studying these three oil spills as models of highly complex environmental events will ultimately allow conclusions to be drawn about the progress made by environmental journalists over the past three decades.

The Birth of Environmental Journalism

Most media scholars would agree that environmental journalism only came into being in any significant way in the 1970's (Detjen, Fico, Li & Kim, 2000; Berger, 2002; Howenstine, 1987; Lacy & Coulson, 2000; Sachsman, 1996). Before the advent of the broader environmental movement during that time period, the relationship between humans and the environment was scarcely contemplated by society – let alone by journalists. With the exception of a handful of notable early outliers and thinkers who published their concerns – mostly from the scientific disciplines, such as Rachel Carson's landmark book *Silent Spring*, published in 1962, or Aldo Leopold's almost revolutionary collection of essays amalgamated under the title *A Sand County Almanac*, published in 1948 – society and the mass media had virtually no concept of the environment as a topic of social, and therefore journalistic, importance. Before the end of the 1960's, Sachsman (1996) says that newspapers and television stations “would cover a week-long smog alert or . . . a river that was on fire, but the story produced had no real ecological connotation” (241). Stories such as these were considered events, unlinked to any concept of environmental health.

However, as public concern over the environment escalated between the late 1960's and early 1970's (Dunlap and Scarce, 1991), the mass media began to treat the environment as a serious story. As the cultural environmental movement gained more widespread social appeal, the infantile field of environmental journalism began to gain credence and momentum. Inhabiting a symbiotic domain that overlapped with the broader social movement, reporters responded to and focused attention on environmental concerns in a way

like no other time before. As Berger (2002) notes, “Although environmental journalism has played a key part in driving environmentalism on the public agenda, it has also been driven by developments on that agenda” (8).

Tracking Changes in Environmental Reporting

Environmental journalism has come a long way since it first crept into the public radar in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s. In 1968, only a single journalist was identified as a ‘specialist’ environmental reporter; in the short span of five years, the figure rose to 100 in 1973 (Berger, 2002), and by 1990 many news organizations that had previously given little thought to the environment had “staff devoted specifically to that purpose” (Friedman, 1990). Between 1988 and 1990 alone, environmental coverage had increased by 72 percent in small newspapers and broadcast environmental stories had increased from 130 in 1987 to 453 in 1989 (Detjen, 1990). When Friedman recently (2004) updated her examination of the environment beat to look at the decade of the 1990’s, she found that additional positive advances had been made in reporting quality. Environmental journalists “provided more intricate and less event-driven stories,” used a wider variety of sources, and began “completing more major enterprise and investigative stories” (Friedman, 2004).

Environmental journalists also diversified their subject scopes, looking at issues from land management to sustainability to endocrine disruptors, and more frequently availed themselves of graphics to help explain complex issues (11). Although the concept had yet to fully mature, Sachsman (1996) says that by the mid-1980’s – the journalistic era in which the Exxon spill occurred – more journalists began to appreciate and understand the importance of environmental risk communication, and tried to explain the human health aspects related to environmental issues. According to Sachsman (1996), “it no longer made sense to discuss environmental communication or environmental reporting in a vacuum” (249).

The progress of environmental journalism has been most clearly epitomized by its rapid rise in respectability and public visibility. Environmental stories today regularly win

prestigious awards – most recently, a 2004 Pulitzer Prize awarded to the *Los Angeles Times* for coverage of wildfires. Environmental journalists also have their own professional society – the Society of Environmental Journalists, launched in 1990 as a special professional organization devoted to the practice of environmental journalism and the concerns of the beat’s writers. The organization now boasts more than 1,400 members around the globe, ranging from professionals to academics and students.

The caliber of journalists covering the environment has also improved from the early, inchoate days of the field. In 1990, Jim Detjen, founder of the Society of Environmental Journalists and current Knight Chair of Environmental Journalism at Michigan State University, noted that in 1975 “few environmental reporters had taken a single course in ecology. Today many have taken advanced courses in biology, chemistry, law and investigative reporting” (74). Compared to times past, veteran reporter James Bruggers wrote in the 2004 Special Edition Nieman Reports that “journalists assigned to the beat today do a much better job than we used to of exploring these gray, nuanced areas of science,” and that “reporters are also more skeptical of information environmental groups try to feed them than they were a decade or two ago” (55).

Over the Hill but not the Mountain

Nonetheless, while the beat has matured over the past thirty-some years, it has faced an uphill battle and some formidable obstacles – as reporter Bud Ward put it, “several mountains and more than a few valleys” (Ward, 2004). Although faced with more complex stories that “aren’t cast in predictable contrasts,” environmental journalists today wrestle with many of the same challenges as they did thirty years ago and many of the same reporting peccadilloes persist. Crisis-reporting has been a consistent criticism of environmental journalism (Friedman, 1990; Smith, 1998; Daley and O’Neil, 1991; Naj, 1990; Liebler and Bendix, 1996). Even at some of the best and most respected papers, coverage is often “timid,” “crisis-oriented,” and “inconsistent” (Detjen, 1990, 74). This was apparent in the early days

of the field, and researchers have found that it persists in environment coverage today.

“Want to know when the next boom cycle for environmental coverage will begin?” Ward asked. “Determine the next environmental disaster – the next Exxon Valdez, Love Canal, Chernobyl, Three Mile Island, Bhopal, India, or the next Alar-on-apples scare Then look at column inches to swell” (Ward 2004, 59).

One criticism of environmental reporting has been a failure to cover a wide enough spectrum of environmental stories – especially stories that go beyond mere gloom and doom to examine proactive environmental efforts or positive achievements in environmental health and conservation. The media have been accused of not fully understanding the complex issues involved in environmental stories, of sensationalizing environmental problems, of misleading the public through unbalanced stories and T.V. images, and of framing environmental issues in ways that fail to properly articulate context to an even less informed public (Liebler and Bendix, 1996; McComas and Shanahan, 1999; Schlechtweg, 1996).

Of course, environmental journalists have been battling the same practical obstacles since the very beginning: competition with traditional beats; a limited news hole; the ambivalence (and sometimes outright hostility) of editors to environmental news; accusations of being “too green;” a growing tendency in newsrooms to lump environmental news with other beats; and the very cyclical nature of environmental news that challenges environmental reporters to sell editors on the more nuanced nature of longer-term trends.

Indeed, when Detjen et al. (2000) conducted a study examining the current work environment of environmental reporters and factors that might affect quality of environmental news coverage, they found that a significant number of environmental reporters experience newsroom-related constraints that they consider major – especially in the areas of budgetary resources and time. Many environmental reporters, the authors said, have reduced their commitment to the beat and see their news organizations doing the same. One in five of the reporters surveyed said that lack of interest by editors was a “major problem in

their newsrooms” (11) – though it should be noted that the study was originally conducted in 1995 and may be slightly outdated.

One continuing challenge has been the difficulty of ensuring at least some degree of scientific and environmental training for both reporters and editors. As environmental problems have become more complex, newsmakers have come to realize that reporting those problems requires a level of experience and education far above most, if not all, other beats. However, the virtual ubiquity of environmental currents in other beats has made reporter education on environmental issues and principles an almost impossibly gargantuan task. Throughout the 1980’s, Sachsman (1996) says that “the need for specialized environmental reporters remained clear,” but the environment had, by that time, “become a story for virtually every local beat and general assignment reporter.” Nothing short of “training all of them to be environmental specialists would do the trick,” he says (252).

This is not to say that numerous outstanding environmental reporters haven’t risen to the task. Bruggers (2004) acknowledged that “the beat is a tougher one today” (54). He and other veteran environmental journalists long for the old days to return, when “fanciful ideas like whether the state of Montana should bring back buffalo to its open ranges” (54) made debate about the issues seem cut-and-dry. Sachsman et al. (2002) credited environmental reporting specialists, where they exist, with making a difference, helping readers and viewers differentiate between environmental claims and legitimate threats, and overall, providing “a model of environmental reporting worth emulating by the general assignment reporters, government reporters, and local beat reporters who cover most of the breaking stories” (412).

Regardless, when Friedman (1990) took stock of the state of the field in 1990, she observed that “the environmental beat of the 1990’s is not very different from what it was in the 1970’s” (15). While papers printed more environment-centric stories on “environmental topics different and more varied,” she concluded that the quality of environmental coverage presented many of the same problems it did twenty years earlier. In 1993, an *American Opinion Research Survey* found that fewer than 4 in 10 reporters rated environmental coverage good

(Detjen et al. 2000, 3); and in 2000, Lacy and Coulson (2000) found that source use on the environment beat was similar to traditional beats, relying heavily on government and business sources (21).

This reality should be of interest and concern to contemporary environmental journalists, who must simultaneously defend their beats against a constant barrage of criticism, consolidating newsrooms and ambivalent editors, while also plying the turbulent seas of the intricate and multifaceted environmental story.

At the same time, while environmental journalists continue to wrestle with questions of how to improve the quality of their reporting, they must also tackle a growing mountain of increasingly worrisome environmental trends: the rapid loss of critical habitats around the world accompanied by a suite of mass extinctions of potentially critical species; a global energy crunch that threatens to tip public opinion in favor of expanding industry at the expense of environment; a growing worldwide population that bodes ill for wildlife and environment when development, water access, and poverty intersect; and a U.S. government more radically opposed to progressive environmental policy and action than any other since the beginning of the 20th century.

With the specter of global climate change looming ever more menacing on the world's horizon, and the official policy of the U.S. still disputing the now largely unanimous and increasingly urgent worldwide consensus on the realities of human effects on global climate, the need for quality environmental reporting that tackles these thorny issues is ever more essential. This makes the job of environmental journalists that much more difficult. But, as Lewis and Jhally (1998) observed, “fail[ing] to address current concerns and dissatisfaction with the media creates the risk of losing the political impetus that gives it its current purchase” (117). The results of this research will contribute to a better understanding of how well environmental journalists have dealt with some of that dissatisfaction as evident in how their reporting of environmental issues has changed over the long-term.

Theoretical Basis: Framing of Environmental Events

Framing theory and the related theory of agenda-setting will be the central media theories guiding this research. While the two theories are closely related (Ghanem and Hendrickson, 2003; Scheufele, 2000), there are differences between them. Framing theory is interested in *how* particular issues are portrayed in the media, whereas agenda-setting is more concerned with *which* issues get covered by media, and to what extent (Ghanem and Hendrickson, 2003). Schleethweg (1996) used Gitlin's definition of media frames as "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretations, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol handlers routinely organize discourse, whether visual or verbal" (257). Drawing on Gamson's and Modigliani's (2003) definition of framing and its relation to cultural resonance, Cann (1999) explained that media discourse can be defined as a "set of interpretive packages that give meaning to an issue" and are "framed around a central organizing idea." Scheufele (2000) has stated that media frames serve as working routines for journalists, allowing them to quickly identify and classify information.

Traditionally, framing has been treated as an extension of agenda-setting – as a way to actually test agenda-setting effects – rather than as an independent approach to the study of media effects. Scheufele (2000), however, argues that the three approaches to media effects studies (agenda-setting, priming, and framing) should be treated as "related, yet different approaches to media effects that cannot be combined into a simple theory just for the sake of parsimony" (298). Recently, McCombs and Shaw (1998) suggested that framing should be seen as second-level agenda-setting.

Over the past several decades, the two theories – beginning with agenda-setting, followed by the development of the framing concept – have served as important theoretical guides in mass media research. Within the journalism community, the important role of the media as gatekeepers of information has been widely discussed. It is now a largely accepted fact that the media, through its selection of and emphasis on certain news items, is successful

at intimating what is important to the public (McCombs and Shaw, 1972, 1993; Wanta & Hu, 1993; Ader, 1995). Editors, working with a finite amount of space and a limited publication time, make choices about the types of stories that get published in their newspapers. Reporters, with a closer connection to the citizens and exposure to an array of issues, make choices about what they think should be covered (though, editors do not always take their suggestions). What ultimately gets through the filtering process has the potential to influence thousands or millions of people.

In the environmental arena, the potential import of this media power is tremendous. Successful environmental reporting has exposed serious environmental health threats, influenced the policymaking process, and alerted citizens to environmental issues of imminent concern – from proposals for nuclear waste disposal sites, to pollution-related health problems, to the status and wellbeing (or lack of it) of critical indicator species in the environment. However, this same reporting also has the power to deflect attention away from issues and problems, obscure aspects of stories, overemphasize others, and mislead the public – whether knowingly or not.

Several researchers have acknowledged this by discussing framing in terms of its potentially disingenuous methods and effects (Pompper, 2002; Tankard, cited in Ghanem and Hendrickson, 2003; Cann, 1999; Bagus, 2001; Schlechtweg, 1996). Tankard has said that media framing can sometimes be like “the sleight of hand of the magician,” with attention being focused in one place “so that people do not notice the manipulation that is going on at another point.” Much of the power of framing, he said, comes from its “ability to set the terms for a debate or define a debate without the audience realizing that this defining is taking place” (quoted in Ghanem and Hendrickson, 2003, 11). This is often done by the use of a “daft metaphor, catchphrase or other symbolic device” (Cann 1999, 25).

Bagus (2001) directly addressed the media’s use of symbolic devices in his rather cynical discussion of the media’s collusion in the process of creating a “themed environment” and “mediated infotainment.” Writing about Australia’s recent fervor and debate over the

possible cloning of the Tasmanian Thylacine – an animal more commonly referred to as the “Tasmanian Tiger” and believed to have been hunted to extinction by the 1930’s (the last living Thylacine died in a zoo in 1936) – he says that Thylacines have become “one of the most spectacular and desirable sign systems of wilderness.” Partly through the media’s depiction of the animals and their treatment of the cloning debate, he argues that Thylacines have become mere “thematic commodities” of the “media / infotainment complex.”

While framing was not the explicit focus of his article, his argument unmistakably orbits around the role of framing in the Thylacine’s transformation into a “thematic commodity.” He specifically compares what is happening to the image of the Thylacine in Australian society and media with the media’s framing of a similar believed-to-be-extinct endemic species: the Wollemi Pine, an ancient tree thought to have died out at least two million years ago. In 1994, a small cluster of the trees was found to be surviving in a singular, isolated grove just west of Sydney. Bagust (2001) argues that the media’s subsequent framing of the trees as “living dinosaurs” allowed for a “compelling story” that has brought the trees to the global marketplace, “guaranteeing continued funding,” and thus making the trees thematically valuable. He concludes by saying that “the contemporary interest in the environment is largely based on a highly mediated (and increasingly profitable and commodified) representation of its most spectacular and appealing aspects” (10).

Schlechtweg (1996) provides a good summary of the potential power of media frames, arguing that the “associative logic” informing a news frame can be “a powerful ideological factor in the reporting of public controversies” (258). Looking at the operation of ideology at the other end of the journalistic process – the external effects of the finished product, as opposed to the in-house pre-publication process – Parameswaran (2002) states that “the mass media have become key sites where the misty smog that envelops the process of globalization is repeatedly manufactured and distributed” (312). Analyzing how globalization is portrayed in *National Geographic’s* 1999 “millennium” issue, she concludes that a “subconscious ideology”

is evident in the magazine's text and photos, ultimately subverting its attempt to promote globalization and instead reinforcing a Euroamerican worldview.

This is not to suggest, however, that frames must therefore always be bad, deceptive, or used maliciously with the intent to mislead. Schlechtweg (1996) and other previously mentioned researchers note that frames help people cope with new, problematic or complex information, and further acknowledge that journalists may be unaware of the extent to which they are creating frames. In cognitive terms, research has suggested that the formation of conceptual frameworks may be necessary for most people to make sense of the complexity of the world.

Sheufele (2000) writes that "framing is based on subtle nuances in wording and syntax that have most likely unintentional effects or at least effects that are hard to predict or control by journalists" (309). Pompper (2002) also pointed out this probability, saying that many journalists disavow the notion of intentionally using news frames, but that many do agree that they "draw on collectively accepted images stored in the memories of audiences as storytelling devices" (113). Gamson and Modigliani (1989) commented that "frames should not be confused with positions for or against some policy measure" (4). Ghanem and Hendrickson (2003) concur, saying that media frames usually do not aim to present a "pro" or "con" view of an issue, but rather "define the terms of the debate" and "point to the central issues at hand," albeit sometimes "subtly and sometimes completely unnoticed" (7). In the environmental reporting arena, they explained that environmental issues are often presented through a scientific, economic, or political frame.

In the case of the oil spill disasters in this research purview, identifying the sort of "storytelling devices" and frames developed in the news stories will be an integral part of the analysis. As Smith (1992) said: "Mass media have social and political power to the degree they set the agenda for public discussion about issues such as maritime safety, how wildfires should be managed on federal lands, and the seismic standards to which highways and bridges in earthquake-prone areas should be built" (30). While this research will apply the concept of

framing by qualitatively examining rhetorical aspects of the texts, agenda-setting theory will also be an important guide, as rhetoric and framing are very much bound together in the process of agenda-setting (Segal, 1991).

In the case of ecological disaster coverage, catastrophes of the magnitude of major oil spills which are “outside the journalistic routine” (Smith 1992, 2) thrust reporters into unfamiliar territory. At such times, journalists tend to create familiar frameworks or employ familiar symbols – a fact that may result in an unanticipated agenda-setting effect. Schlechtweg (1996) has argued that media frames often result in the “silencing [of] other explanations, arguments, and perspectives that “do not fit within the media’s framework of interpretation” (257). Sachsman (1996) elaborated on this possibility. “When there is an environmental dilemma, and the mass media define it as a crisis,” he said, “then the act of treating it as a crisis and putting it on the air or the front page sets the agenda in those terms” (253). The next section explores some of the scholarly literature related to agenda-setting.

Agenda-Setting Research

Several media studies directly examine the phenomenon of agenda-setting by the media (Cohen, 1963; McCombs and Shaw, 1972; McCombs and Shaw, 1993; Ader, 1995; Gooch, 1996; Scheufele, 2000; Kwanash-Aidoo, 2001). Much of agenda-setting theory is based on two critical agenda-setting studies. In his study of the agenda-setting effects of the press on foreign policy, Cohen (1963) argued that “mass media may not be successful much of the time in telling its readers what to think, but is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about” (13). Using his study as the basis for their research, McCombs and Shaw (1972) performed a critical agenda-setting study of the 1968 presidential election that empirically compared the relationship between media’s portrayal of salient campaign issues with the public’s perception of which issues voters said were the most important. They concluded that “the media appear to have exerted a considerable impact on voter’s judgments of what they considered the major issue of the campaign” (180).

A constant focus of scholarly media attention, the theory has been evolving and expanding. McCombs and Shaw (1993) noted that in its evolution over the past few decades, the agenda-setting perspective has provided a common umbrella for a number of research traditions and concepts in communication, including sociology, social science, and journalism subfields (60). In addition, the central question of the theory has progressed from “Who sets the public agenda – and under what conditions?” to “Who sets the media agenda?” (60).

Sachsman (1996) has suggested that public relations officers in local, regional, and national businesses and organizations – from companies and government entities to environmental advocacy and nonprofit groups – have often been the ones supplying information to the media, and therefore, the real “behind-the-scenes” agenda-setters (247). Frome (1998) has similarly commented that “government and industry spin doctors flood the media with press releases, briefings, background papers, leaks, and staged events” (6). Brennan (1982) has said that the content of coverage is “significantly influenced by the sources of information used.”

Of particular interest is Smith’s (1992) finding that coverage of the Exxon Valdez spill relied heavily on “government power elites with vested interests in how the spill was reported” (96). Although the spill had been “billed as a major environmental story,” he found that established environmental groups were cited only about one-third as often as government officials (96). Coleman and Dysart (2005) have said that source use is “one significant framing device” (7), and further noted a tendency for journalists to rely on official sources. Therefore, part of this thesis’ textual analysis will involve observation of who journalists turned to for information and quotes in their news accounts of the oil spills.

Following in the tradition of agenda-setting research, Ader (1995) examined the role of agenda-setting for the issue of environmental pollution. Looking at the *New York Times*’ coverage of four categories of environmental pollution from 1970 to 1990, she examined the relationship between media agenda, public agenda, and real-world conditions and found that agenda-setting was strongly supported (309).

Gooch (1996) conducted a study of environmental concern in the Swedish press and made two critically important comments about patterns of interest in the environment: first, that many environmental problems have become more abstract, and thus require that media images be suggestive and easily understood; and second that obtrusive environmental problems that readers can see, smell, and taste have a more direct impact on the public (109). He concluded that, although the mass media may not be able to instigate changes into how people think about issues, they have the ability to influence what those issues are.

In an attempt to counter some criticisms of agenda-setting, such as McQuail's (1994) claim that the theory has difficulty in establishing a correspondence between the issues people consider to be important and the importance the media attach to those issues, Kwanash-Aidoo (2001) argues that a qualitative approach can bypass some of the limitations of the traditionally quantitatively-measured theory (522). Using qualitative methods to examine environmental coverage in the West African country of Ghana, he set out to find out which environmental issues were emphasized by the media and whether the issues were the same or different from those issues nominated by educated city dwellers (526). Comparing a document analysis of the 1997 PACIPE Media Report⁴, which listed types of environmental issues covered by the media, with his interview and focus group results, he found that to a large extent, the media in Ghana do set the educated public's agenda (533).

Speaking about the Exxon Valdez spill, former democratic senator of Colorado Timothy Wirth (Wirth, 1990), who was interviewed by the Gannett Center Journal for its special environmental coverage edition, specifically attributed various political outcomes of the disaster (such as the passage of oil-spill liability legislation), as well as later coverage of smaller oil spills, to the agenda-setting effects of the media's coverage of the Exxon spill.

"An event such as the Exxon spill focuses the media on the subject as well," he said. "The attention given that disaster resulted in national coverage of a series of smaller spills

⁴ Kwanda-Aidoo notes that the PACIPE is a regional technical assistance program for awareness and information on the protection of the environment aimed at environmental protection in six West African countries: Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau and Togo.

that, had they taken place a year before the Exxon disaster, might have only gotten local coverage, if any” (122), he said.

At the same time, however, a 2002 report published by the Oil Spill Intelligence Report (OSIR), one of the most respected sources of information worldwide on oil spills and statistics, noted that the news media may cover oil spills for the wrong reasons, thus possibly creating an unintended agenda-setting effect:

“The news media continue to focus on spills that impact local economies or affect popular tourist locations, since they generate publicity and interest on television and in newspapers, regardless of the true environmental impact of these spills,” the researchers wrote in their report (16).

The OSIR report further observed that in the early days of oil spill coverage “the news media were heavily biased toward incidents that occurred near large coastal cities,” and that 20 years later, “the situation has not changed much.” Although other spills occurring in less newsworthy places might be greater in volume of oil spilt or present a greater, long-term environmental threat, the reports says that these spills “are often overlooked, much as they were during the 1970’s” (16).

International news may be particularly vulnerable to an agenda-setting effect. Allan Mazur and Jinling Lee (Mazur and Lee, 1979), in their study of the infiltration of the global environment into the public’s agenda, observed that nearly all news of national or international scope is first brought to widespread attention by one or more of a small, central group of large news organizations including television networks, the major wire services, and the major newspapers. Every day, they claim, these organizations produce a pool of news from which thousands of local media outlets select their news of the day – thus creating a relatively uniform body of news on the national and international news fronts (682). This finding may be particularly important to the present study, given that two of the major oil spill events being studied were international news events, rather than immediately local to U.S. citizens.

Framing Research

Several researchers have also examined the media's coverage of environmental issues using framing and narrative methods (Cann, 1999; Schlechtweg, 1996; Ghanem and Hendrickson, 2003; Liebler and Bendix, 1996; Durham, 1998). Cann (1999) took a qualitative approach to his examination of the Australian media's response to French nuclear weapons testing in Polynesia between 1995-96 using a multi-pronged approach that included textual analysis as well as analysis of symbolism. Specifically interested in the intersection of cultural themes and symbols with media's use of those cultural artifacts, he draws upon Gamson's and Modigliani's (1989) notion of "cultural resonance" to determine how media framed symbolic imagery related to the tests. Cultural resonance, according to Gamson and Modigliani (1989) refers to the idea that not all symbols are equally potent, and that those which "resonate with larger cultural themes" increase the "appeal of a package" – of which a frame is a central part (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, 5). What Cann (1999) found in his study incorporating this idea was that the symbolic features framing the media reports included "representations that Moruroa was dangerously close to Australia" and that "paradise was destroyed," while images and language related to fear and the dramatic and dangerous included "fearful images of mushroom clouds with constant references to Hiroshima." He concludes that the media reports were essentially "one-sided," and prevented a fuller understanding of nuclear weapons.

Schlechtweg (1996) performed an in-depth analysis of how the radical environmental group Earth First! was framed in a one-hour broadcast of *The MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour* entitled "Focus: Logjam," which ran on July 20, 1990. To accomplish his analysis, Schlechtweg (1996) combines textual analysis with cluster-agon methodology to assess media's framing of the events of "Redwood Summer" – the name given to the summer of 1990 when Earth First! members tried to prevent logging of California's redwood forests by blockading logging roads, climbing trees, and peaceful demonstrations. Schlechtweg (1996) explains how the group's activities took place in communities "deeply polarized between

environmental activists and forest workers.” His reliance on textual analysis of both the transcript and videotape of the program is of particular interest because he provides a detailed illustration of the manner in which he applied methods of textual analysis. Those methods will be explored in more detail in the next section on methodology. For this section, his detailed exploration of framing is the main interest.

The video segment he analyzed included 98 editing cuts from the 9 min. 40 sec. “Focus: Logjam” news item. Using a qualitative approach that included paying special attention to how the program used camera angles, selected shots, and juxtaposed visual and verbal elements, his analysis weaves a composite picture of the symbiotic interaction of text and image in the frame-creation process. From the program’s initial introduction by MacNeil, which Schlechtweg (1996) said established a frame that Earth First! is different from “acceptable environmental activism,” to its “imaging” of key terms, Schlechtweg (1996) illustrates how a sense of “opposition” is fostered by the program’s presentation. This sense becomes an overarching framework of the newscast: “Once the initial oppositions are delineated and the adversaries named, ‘Focus: Logjam’ begins constructing the identities of the opposing forces,” Schlechtweg (1996) says. Ultimately, the newscast frames Earth First! as “a violent threat to the physical safety and livelihood of timber workers” and frames the controversy in a way that “excludes Earth First’s definition of the issues in dispute” (259).

Another television framing study by Liebler and Bendix (1996) took a quantitative approach to its examination of the degree to which television framed the controversy over old-growth forests and threats to the endangered Northern Spotted Owl. Analyzing four years of television news coverage from ABC, CBS, and NBC, the researchers found that the controversy was framed in terms of either “procut” or “prosave,” and that both procut and prosave proponents depended more on basic imagery than on citing research (55). They conclude that all three networks predominantly reflected a procut versus a prosave frame – a conclusion which mirrors Schlechtweg’s (1996) and other’s findings that the media tend towards the use of oppositional frames, especially where environmental issues are concerned.

Further, the researchers found that the exclusion of the scientific community's voice, and the use of images that failed to correspond with the meaningful debates happening outside and overlooked by the media, meant that network television stations inadvertently reflected a bias favoring the timber industry.

Ghanem and Hendrickson (2003) used a content analysis in their framing study of North American coverage of environmental issues. They wanted to determine how media in the two North American border regions – the U.S./Mexico border region and the U.S./Canada border region – framed environmental issues, and whether coverage reflected the overlapping nature of ecologies and environmental concerns, rather than being constrained by artificial political boundaries. “The natural environment does not recognize political boundaries,” they say. Sometimes political boundaries bisect an otherwise single ecological unit – such as the various Great Lakes boundaries between Canada and the U.S., or the Gulf of Mexico between Mexico and the United States.

To answer their questions, they looked at two week's worth of coverage in five newspapers, two each from the border regions (the *El Diario de Juarez* and *El Paso Times*; and the *Detroit Free Press* and the *Windsor Star*) and one from the U.S. interior (the *Kansas City Star*) in order to compare whether border region environmental coverage differs from that of the U.S. interior. What they found was an almost total absence of stories dealing with environmental issues across countries (27). Topically, naturally occurring phenomena got the most coverage, and especially stories related to weather and natural disasters. The authors note that “these topics are event-related rather than issue-related, and are thus much easier to cover” – a comment which echoes Wilkins' (1989) assertion that the mass media tend to report disasters and crises as “discrete events rather than as ‘normal’ occurrences within certain technological and political systems.” For environmental news, this is especially problematic, because many environmental issues are more about underlying conditions (Smith 1992, 28) that still remain once an event has come and gone. In Ghanem and Hendrickson's (2003) study, predominant story frames included “harm already inflicted” to

the environment, law, and policy. Only one story addressed environmental issues of cross-country concern, leading the researchers to conclude that “according to newspaper stories, environmental issues are contained within the borders of each country, a dangerous approach to environmental issues that transcend man-made demarcation lines” (27).

Durham (1998) conducted a study analyzing how the media created a news frame for the crash of TWA flight 800 in July 1996. Using a textual analysis to compare *New York Times*' coverage with official sources' depiction of the crash, he identified an ideological conflict that precluded efforts by reporters and investigators to unify the evidence into a meaningful frame (110). Part of this ideological conflict, he said, was related to reporters' attempts to draw upon historical frames of other plane crashes, such as the 1988 crash of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. He argues that, important to this attempt at historical framing, was the inherent ideological view of the journalists approaching the TWA story that comparisons *had to* exist between the explosion of TWA and other planes that blew up. Headlines such as “The Fate of Flight 800: The history; Investigators see ‘Eerie similarities’ with other airlines that blew up” attempted to compare the historical contexts of other airplane explosions with the circumstances of the TWA tragedy. Ultimately, Durham (1998) concludes that the elusive evidence in the case of the crash, coupled with journalistic differences in approaching and identifying the available evidence, resulted in a “collective inability” to frame the cause of the plane's crash.

His focus on the presence or absence of a historical context for the TWA stories is a precedent that is important to note for the purposes of this thesis, as it also intends to examine whether historical context pertaining to previous oil spills or supply crises figured in environmental coverage of the oil spills in question.

Telling Stories about Environmental Disasters

An interesting subset of some scholarly framing research has been to explore news as storytelling, and in some cases, where storytelling relates to the presence or expression of ideology. Scheufele (2000) argues that “ideological or political orientation of journalists” is one of at least five factors potentially influencing how journalists frame a given issue, along with “social norms and values” and “journalistic routines” (307). Gamson and Modigliani (1989) say that some frames resonate with “cultural narrations, that is, with the stories, myths, and folk tales that are part and parcel of one’s cultural heritage” (5). Pompper (2002) makes a direct connection between framing, ideology, and storytelling stating that “looking at the subconscious way frames are used in storytelling lends insight into how dominant ideology shapes news texts” (113). Daley and O’Neill (1991) argue that one way in which this subconscious ideology may creep into news texts is through selection of certain voices to tell the narrative of a story. Journalistic narratives can “valorize certain public voices and marginalize or silence others,” they say, allowing “some ‘competing’ narratives to become news” while precluding others (43).

In cases where stories are particularly complex or ongoing, research suggests that thinking in terms of storytelling may be more effective. To anthropologists, storytelling has been recognized as a means of perpetuating culture – a quite effective means, as evident by the success of various human societies with a purely oral tradition at transmitting cultural knowledge down countless generations. Citing media scholars, Pompper (2002) points out that news narratives, like other kinds of stories, “reveal much about how our culture makes meaning” (113). Smith (1992) argues that because there are so many different ways to tell a news story, journalists must strive to find a “cohesive and, if possible, compelling narrative” (23).

Because the oil spills being studied for this research were such highly complex disasters whose effects and clean-ups stretched across months and years, the literature suggests that compelling narratives exploring a diversity of themes would have been the best

way to write about the spills. Indeed, citing Iyengar, Smith (1992) said that viewers who watched “thematic” stories that focused on the contexts in which poverty, crime, and terrorism occur were more likely to have a better concept of how those situations are related to bigger social problems and institutions, in contrast to those viewers exposed to a more “episodic” treatment of news who sought merely to blame individuals directly involved with a situation (5). This next section explores some of the research related to news as storytelling.

McComas and Shanahan (1999) developed a theory about the role and impact of narrative cycles in the telling of environmental stories. Specifically examining the cycle of mass media attention to the issue of global warming, the authors argue that narrative factors play a role in how attention to environmental issues is constructed. They argue that, “for environmental issues, a narrative approach would hold that humans imbue environmental issues with meaning through the stories they tell,” and that “dramatic considerations guide media coverage of environmental issues.” Deconstructing the narrative cycle of environmental news stories, the authors reveal that, indeed, increased media coverage of an issue is accompanied by a greater emphasis on the dangers inherent in the problem, as in the case of global warming typified in their study.

Daly and O’Neill (1991) undertook a qualitative study of news narratives about the Exxon Valdez oil spill, specifically analyzing the competing narratives that characterized coverage of the spill in the mainstream press – represented by the *Anchorage Daily News* and the *Boston Globe* – and comparing it to spill narratives in the *Tundra Times*, a weekly paper published by and for Native Alaskans. Their study is of special interest because of the depth at which it analyzes both news narratives and coverage of the Exxon Valdez spill using textual analysis methods. Their study lends support to the idea of narrative environmental storytelling, but takes the notion a step further by suggesting that within the overall narrative framework of environmental news, multiple story lines and diverging narratives may be advanced. The study found that the concerns of Native Alaskans were marginalized in the

mainstream press in favor of reinforcing a capitalist ideology – a conclusion that echoes Parameswaran’s (1998) discussion of the skewed representations of a “Euroamerican” form of globalization she found was surreptitiously reinforced over a more inclusive representation in *National Geographic*.

Daley and O’Neill’s (1991) discovery that the disaster narrative was the first and most important story type also bolsters findings that reporters cling to familiar reporting frameworks and news values when faced with less familiar situations. Like Ader’s (1995) agenda-setting study of pollution, it supports the notion of environmental agenda-setting and reemphasizes the need for environmental reporters to strive for varied and in-depth news coverage. And put in context with McComas and Shanahan’s (1999) study, it suggests that environmental issues are ripe for certain types of storytelling. Their study further reveals that up through the time of the Exxon spill, reporters were still having trouble moving beyond the “disaster” frame in their approach to environmental storytelling.

As Smith (1992) found in his in-depth study of the Exxon spill, news stories about the oil spill focused primarily on the tanker’s captain, who had a history of alcohol problems; the Exxon corporation, which organized and paid for the cleanup and was accused of making slow progress; or symbolic images of oil-soaked birds and wildlife. Few stories “discussed the regulatory context in which the accident and cleanup occurred,” Smith (1992) said, which would have entailed a closer look at issues such as the Coast Guard’s lax enforcement of alcohol rules, reallocations in funding that had diminished the local Coast Guard’s ability to enforce safety standards, and actions by the State of Alaska that had cut and nipped at certain provisions or rules targeting tankers and spill cleanup in its creations of a sub-climate more favorable to the oil industry. Even fewer stories, he said, described the Exxon accident “as a by-product of a society hungry for energy under a federal government whose primary energy policy was to find, extract, and ship nonrenewable energy sources” (9). Daley and O’Neill (1991) similarly found that plenty of news stories portrayed “wildlife as pathetic victims” while failing to engender “any analysis of the system that unleashed the destruction” (46).

If disaster and crisis is the predominant depiction of the environment, then reporters may not be doing as well as they should at producing thorough, well-researched stories that go beyond this familiar and easily embraced environmental reporting theme. Among other things, this research will be examining thematic developments in the oil spill stories as part of its effort to determine how well reporters grasped the multitude of less-obvious angles related to the oil spill disasters.

Summing it Up – Main Research Questions

Having explored some of the significant scholarly literature relevant to the practice of environmental journalism, which will form an important backbone to this thesis, it is now possible to reiterate the primary research imperative of this thesis with greater clarity. As environmental issues have become more prominent and, arguably, more pressing in the world today, the need for quality environmental reporting capable of navigating the unique complexities of today's environmental stories has never been more important. The literature has revealed that environmental reporting has, in general, been characterized by certain traits that have detracted from the overall quality of the reporting. While environmental reporting has evolved and improved in various ways since it first emerged as a realm of social and journalistic importance, researchers have nonetheless revealed continuing challenges. This study is interested in whether the narrower research scopes adopted for the bulk of scholarly research about environmental reporting may be skewing scholarly perceptions of the degree to which environmental reporting has improved.

In order to develop a more direct picture of how well environmental journalists have learned to cover complex environmental issues over time, this thesis thus intends to document how environmental news coverage has changed over the wider scope of the past three decades by examining coverage of three similarly damaging oil spill disasters, each of which occurred at a different stage along the trajectory of the beat's growth and evolution, in two newspapers – the *Seattle Times* and the U.K. *Guardian*. A question such as this necessarily

includes within its penumbra several subsidiary research questions. Among these, this thesis will examine:

[1] whether reporters explored a more thorough range of news angles and narratives in the three spills. The literature suggests that oil spills tend to be portrayed as disaster events that fail to explore the deeper societal and systemic causes and implications of the spills. The literature further suggests that oil spills are particularly vulnerable to certain kinds of narrative framing, which prevents a fuller picture of the deeper socio-economic aspects of the spills from being explored.

[2] what sort of historical contexts, if any, figured in coverage of the spills, as well as differences in content of coverage between the two papers. A close cousin of this question is whether global contexts related to oil supply, global oil use, or oil incidents elsewhere in the world were incorporated into the oil spill stories, and if so, how these contexts figured in the storytelling or frame creation process.

[3] the tone of language used in accounts of the oil spill stories, and how tone may relate to possible frame creation.

[4] how nature and wildlife is portrayed versus industry and its representatives and whether coverage of the spills succeeds in avoiding the temptation to cast the spills as a conflict between two opposing forces. The literature suggests that to do this would require a more holistic approach to reportage that probes the less obvious but deeper-rooted political, social, and economic aspects of the spills, as well as the more easily seen environmental effects. However, the literature has also revealed that coverage of the *Exxon* spill focused considerable attention on the tanker captain and efforts to blame him for the spill – which deflected attention from the higher-up powers that were more directly responsible for creating the context in which the *Exxon* spill was able to happen in the first place. As part of this question, this thesis will examine thematic developments in coverage of the spills.

[5] whether coverage succeeded in probing some of the important global ramifications of the spills, such as, for example, the effects of potential legislation on other

maritime nations, the economic aspects of lost oil in an increasingly oil-dependent world, or global effects of damage to important fishing areas responsible for a certain percentage of seafood exports.

[6] whether reporters cultivated a sense of national identity in accounts of the ecologically disastrous spills, and if so, through what intra-textual means. Some research examining this topic has found that a sense of national identity has been cultivated in the media through references to nationally recognized symbols, use of local colloquialisms or dialect, evocation of a national language, or discourses referring to a shared culture or older people. Given the magnitude of the oil spills in question, and the fact that each spill severely affected areas known for specific regional identities or historic traditions, this thesis intends to examine whether this possible sub-current surfaced in any of the oil spill stories.

[7] the use of sources in the stories and whether source selection had an effect on the frames created by journalistic news accounts. The literature suggests that source use is an important framing device, and it has been said that “sources often take a primary role in shaping coverage” (Coleman and Dysart 2005, 7). Gamson and Modigliani (1989) have said that “interpretive comments” which are “sprinkled” throughout news accounts in the form of quotations help to tell a story and frame the information presented (17), and Stocking, cited by Coleman and Dysart (2005), argues that there is a tendency among “a significant number of journalists . . . reporting science stories” to limit themselves to a single source, even in cases “where the controversy would seem to demand multiple sources” (7). Given these observations, and the contentious nature of the major oil disasters being studied for this thesis, an examination of source use will be an important part of this thesis’ study of how journalists reported on the environmental disasters.

[8] the visual aspect of the news stories and the sort of images or graphics chosen to accompany the oil spill news stories. With a kinetic power to encapsulate and dramatically highlight certain visual aspects of the spills, photographs play an important role in the frame creation process. The literature has revealed a tendency for journalists to focus on the

dramatic plight of oil-soaked birds and other more visually endearing marine animals as a means of illustrating the ecological effects of the oil spill disasters. However, the literature has also revealed that this tendency often results in a failure to adequately report on more difficult but arguably more important angles, such as the effect of oil pollution on primary producers in the food chain, like algae or marine plant life, or the underlying global or economic contexts which permitted the possibility of such devastating pollution events. As part of this question, this thesis will examine the interplay between text and visuals in the news stories.

[9] the use of language, vocabulary and storytelling devices or techniques employed by journalists to help tell the stories of the unfolding oil spill disasters. The literature has suggested that individual or cultural ideologies can infuse storytelling decisions, and that news frames may reflect a subconscious ideology. Because language is a fundamental by-product and integral part of culture, studying how it was used to depict and communicate information about the oil spill disasters will help tie together various sub-questions of this thesis, such as the relation of language to ideology and the possible creation of national identity. Examining language use will also offer critical insight into the frame-creation process in oil spill news accounts. Thus, examining the use of the language and storytelling techniques will be an essential part of this thesis' qualitative analysis of environmental news coverage and journalistic framing of the oil spill disasters.

Using a qualitative approach with framing as the theoretical backdrop, this thesis will probe rhetorical and textual aspects of the news stories and compare similarities and differences in coverage in the two newspapers in question in order to determine how environmental reporting has changed over time. Important textual criteria that shall receive particular attention will include: word choice and descriptions, source use, tone, headlines, collusion of text and images, rhetorical devices, and form (such as placement of information in the news stories). Focusing on changes in reporting style as evident through vocabulary choices, tone, and story focus may reveal a gradual familiarizing with the specific nature and

challenges of environmental news. The answers to all of these questions will lead to conclusions about how well environmental journalists covered the oil spill disasters, as well as how environmental reporting of such a complex event has changed over the larger scope of environmental reporting history.

2. THE TEXTUAL TEMPERAMENTS OF OIL SPILL NEWS STORIES

This study intends to use the qualitative methods of rhetorical and textual analysis to track the evolution of environmental reporting as evident in oil spill news coverage over the years. Although the subject matter of environmental reporting studies has traditionally been explored using quantitative methods, a study seeking to explore changes in the craft of writing as evident in textual elements necessarily depends on qualitative methodologies (McKee, 2003; Schlechtweg, 1996; Pompper, 2002). In contrast to the dry, mechanistic approach of content analysis, textual analysis allows the researcher to overcome some of the impersonal limitations of attempting to quantify an artifact – namely, speech and communication – that is very much rooted in the qualitative nature of language and human culture. As Pompper (2002) said, “language is value laden.” Analyzing the values and ideologies latent in the culturally constructed qualities of language requires an ability to probe texts more deeply.

Textual analysis provides researchers with a means to discern contextual information not readily revealed by a quantitative study’s focus on numerical quantification of textual information, as well as implicit patterns and emphases of text (Fürisch and Lester, 1996). Engaging researchers in what Hall (1975) described as “the long preliminary soak,” textual analysis draws upon the context of the surrounding elements of a text and permits a freedom to contemplate how various textual elements interact with each other, or with other textual elements such as images and graphics. This method also allows researchers to consider recurring patterns, placing, style, striking imagery, and tone, as well as “the structures of meanings and the configurations of feelings on which this public rhetoric is based” (Hall in Fürisch and Lester, 1996, 29).

For researchers looking to answer questions of *why* and *how*, as opposed to the quantitative researcher’s limited focus on *who* or *what*, textual analysis allows researchers to break the surface of a text and probe the rhetorical techniques through which meanings are

produced (Bishop, 2004). And specifically for the focus of this thesis research, which seeks to explore qualitative changes to environmental reporting style across a 25-year time gap and answer questions such as *how* the news texts differ and whether coverage of complex environmental news has improved over time, this methodological approach will permit a deeper scrutiny of the most telling aspect of this change: the text itself.

While comparatively few studies of environmental reporting from a qualitative vantage exist – and fewer still the ones that employ textual or rhetorical analysis – a handful of pioneers sensitive to the merits of applying this approach have made some important inroads (Coppola, 1997; Brookes, 1999; Segal 1991; Fürisch and Lester, 1996).

Coppola (1997) performed a rhetorical analysis of a pollution prevention document in the state of New Jersey. Concerned that people’s awareness of environmental issues has not translated into environmentally-conscious behavior – despite ecological disasters such as Love Canal or the “burning” Hudson – she sought to explain the relationship between communication theory and an understanding of environmental discourse.

Drawing on the ideas of five noted theorists – James Cantrill, rhetorical specialists M. Jimmie Killingsworth and Jacqueline Palmer, Niklas Luhmann, and Daniel O’Keefe – she pieced together a model for why environmental discourse seems to be unsuccessful at achieving its intended goals. Beginning with Cantrill, she draws a link between human psychology and language. According to Cantrill, the discourse of “well-meaning environmentalists is largely ineffective because it does not draw from an understanding of human psychology” (10). Most environmental advocates use rational appeals when developing their arguments, Cantrill says, giving their audience the facts and hoping people will understand and correctly interpret the evidence. This may be ineffective because, as Cantrill says, people interpret facts according to their preexisting ideas about the world and their representation of social and cultural settings (10). Thus, the lesson to be drawn is that environmental reporters must clearly explain the significance of the evidence to their audience.

And in fact, Coppola (1997) points to studies that suggest that the more informed people become about environmental problems, the more passive they become. If those writing and speaking about the environment took into account the cognitive disposition of the human psyche, they would realize that some language features often used in environmental discourse are ineffectual and work to retard intended goals of motivating the public. Using oppositional pairs such as “logger / tree-hugger” or “environmentalist / developer” are two such examples of ineffectual rhetorical categorization that can trigger a mindless response or predetermined bias, Coppola (1997, 11) says. Yet, as demonstrated earlier, creations of oppositional pairs is precisely what has happened in several instances – such as the spotted-owl debate and the newscast looking at Earth First! activities.

Similarly, Coppola (1997) points out that the environmental communicator’s reliance on a tone of “hopeless doom and gloom” has taken a toll on the public, and that strident environmental language and warnings have worn thin (11). Killingsworth (1999) agrees that “the alienated howl of environmentalist rhetoric may have lost some of its appeal in recent years” (14). These days, he says, rhetoric that “rages against the machine” may remind us more of the “terrorism and anti-technological manifest of the Unabomber” than the protest speeches of Earth First!-ers or the “whale-saving defiance of Greenpeace.” Their research suggests that tone is an important element of environmental communication. Part of the work of this thesis will be to watch out for how journalists use language to create a tone in their oil spill stories and news accounts.

Coppola (1997) then moves on to Luhman and draws a connection between “textual distractions” and Luhman’s idea that “the environment makes itself noticed only by means of communicative irritations, just as our bodies communicate to our consciousness through feelings of annoyance or pain” (14). In written or oral communication, the irritation, or noise, is anything that impedes the understanding of the message – and this could stem from inappropriate tone (semantic) or distracting grammar flows (mechanical).

Coppola's (1997) perusal of theorists will serve as a useful guide for this research in that it highlights some telling aspects of a text. Of great interest to the thrust of this study of oil spill coverage, she has drawn together in one document several different lines of research that lead to a similar endpoint: environmental writers may be unaware of the degree to which they are enhancing or detracting from interest in or understanding of an ecological problem. Unwittingly, they may be setting a very different agenda from that which was intended.

While the nature of Coppola's (1997) research focus (the pollution document) is of a different genre than a news article, her generalizations about cognitive processing and audience attitudes are transferable. The pollution prevention document, like a news story about a complex environmental topic, requires "cognitive complexity," an "anticipatory structure that gives metacognitive clues revealing its organization," and "an integrated whole-facility approach" (18). Similarly, news pieces about ecological effects of a major environmental disaster involve highly complex information, and require a structure that informs readers clearly but still entices them to navigate the entirety of the article. These news accounts must also have a holistic structure that is as all-encompassing as is necessary to foster understanding.

This research will attempt to discover whether the reporters of the oil spill stories succeed in using story frames that convey the complexity of the ecological situation. It will also investigate whether reporters adopted a "whole-disaster" approach, reporting with breadth and thoroughness, rather than succumbing to the tendency to cast the stories in familiar disaster frameworks.

Lexical Legerdemain

In a similar vein, Segal (1991) performed a rhetorical analysis of the language and conventions of environmental argumentation. Although she draws on some classical rhetorical theory, her incorporation of Aristotle's artistic appeals of "logos," "ethos," and "pathos" into her analysis mirrors some of Coppola's (1997) comments about the often

misguided emotional appeals of environmental advocates. Coming from the premise that environmental advocacy regularly sabotages itself by its own rhetorical features (1), she dissects the three artistic appeals and brings them into a contemporary context.

Emotional appeal is rife in environmental communication, she argues, and much of the argument takes place at the level of tropes and figures (2). In the realm of environmental advocacy, the prevailing trope is that “the earth is sick.” Segal (1991) points to phrases such as “healing the environment,” and “poisoning the environment” regularly employed by environmental advocates. The illness metaphor ultimately extends so that the planet can be imagined after a period of time to be not just ailing but dead (2). The same tropes appear often in journalistic accounts of environmental problems. In particular, for news accounts about ecologically devastating oil spills, where scenes of oil-soaked wildlife and clean-up crew slogging across oil-saturated beaches were the dominant visual representations of the spills’ effects, the literature suggests that the temptation for journalists to rely on such “sickness” tropes would be great.

The idea of catastrophe has certain sensationalist qualities that are appealing to journalists because of the presence of several news factors: shock value, pathos, numbers of people affected, timeliness, and possible future impact, to name a few. Smith (1992) argues that catastrophes are, in a larger sense, “part of a modern myth that focuses attention on natural powers beyond our control and on the blundering efforts of humans to deal with the fruits of the industrial revolution” (15). Segal (1991) argues that this idea of catastrophe may be successfully turned on end by politicians to suit their agendas, as she points out in her example of a statement made by George H.W. Bush during his presidency. In the 1988 presidential campaign, Bush announced that he was an environmentalist, then qualified the statement by saying “how much he enjoyed taking his grandchildren out camping” (2). Segal (1991) was particularly interested in the rhetorical nature of his statement because, as she described, “with it, Bush gently removed the environment from the centre of public life and pushed it to the weekends; he marginalized the environment issue and seemed to support it at

the same time.” Daley and O’Neill (1991) glommed onto a similar sort of phenomenon in their textual analysis of news accounts of the Exxon Valdez. Describing a photo that appeared in one of the papers they studied, they explain how the cutline to an image of a Coast Guard official cradling a dead, oil-soaked duck referred to the spill as an “environmental nightmare” – a description which, as Smith (1992) pointed out earlier, focused attention on the disaster and blame aspects of the spill, while rhetorically shifting the focus away from other potentially more important contexts of the spill.

Segal (1991) also demonstrates how textual analysis can be performed at a more macroscopic level by studying larger swathes of rhetorical structure, such as the lyrical structure of a sentence. In one place, she analyzes an entire sentence rife with harsh-sounding consonants and visually graphic images of violence against the earth where “human technomachines” that are “entirely out of control. . . guzzle and lurch and vomit and rip” across the “random crazy course” of the “once-blue planet.” In this case, Segal (1991) studies the interplay of all the lexical elements, from the use of alliteration to the sounds of the words themselves, and concludes that the sentence’s rhetorical features create a visually-stimulating sound that actually diminishes the rhetorical punch and point of the sentence. While there can be great creative literary freedom within journalistic writing – and journalists often make use of creative writing tactics to enhance the narrative appeal of their stories – journalistic values of objectivity and fairness would likely preclude a sentence such as the above from being written. Nonetheless, it is still useful to be aware of this more macroscopic approach to textual analysis in case such an approach may be needed for the present research.

Segal (1991) then goes into greater depth with her analysis, honing in on certain lexical and metaphorical features of environmental rhetoric. Environmental advocates rely on “values of mastery and growth,” and thus ultimately perpetuate some of the same values they seek to dispel – taking charge of the environment, only in a new way. Segal (1991) points to the rhetorical examples of declaring “war” on pollution, organizing a “plan of attack,” and preserving our future “investment” or “inheritance.” Each of these terms or phrases has been

deeply invested with idiomatic meaning and imagery. Segal (1991) uses these terms of examples of ineffective environmental rhetoric, because as she argues, “environmental advocates do not want to promote an image of human superiority presupposing a right to capricious or wanton use of resources.” Nor do they want to conflate environment with money – an image they want to reframe as sustainable progress, she says. Yet, therein may lie the paradox (and ineffectiveness) of their current rhetorical schema. While environmental journalists are not choosing sides when they write about an issue, and thus interested in trying to find the most successful rhetoric for argumentation, Pompper’s (2002) earlier statement that “language is value laden” resonates here as well, suggesting that even impartial journalists may unwittingly use value-laden terms in their narratives.

Giving substance to Segal’s (1991) observation, McKee (2003) argues that “there is a philosophical underpinning to textual analysis which suggests that even simple words and descriptions of the world are necessarily ‘texts’ There are always many ways in which the same ‘truth’ can be accurately described” (142) – a notion which essentially underscores the fact of journalistic framing of news events. Language is a prime example of how truth can be relative and subject to interpretation. Depending on its context, a single word can take on vastly different meanings or convey vastly different truths. For example, in his analysis of the “Focus: Logjam” newscast, Schlechtweg (1996) argues that the program frames the conflict in such a way that ordinary terms like “livelihood,” “industry,” and “loggers” become value-laden terms in direct opposition to Earth First! and its environmental arguments in defense of the redwood forests. While these terms could have been used to name elements of the conflict in a more neutral way, Schlechtweg (1996) argues that the reporter establishes a context in which the “antagonist” Earth First! acts uni-directionally on the “protagonist” timber and mill workers. Thus, “the binary logic informing the frame constructs a cleavage between radicals and regular people” that ultimately imbues the terms with unequal meaning and pits “livelihood” against “ecology” (274).

Words and the Power to Unify

Brookes' (1999) textual analysis of British press coverage of the BSE/CJD beef crisis in late March 1996 takes Segal's (1991) rhetorical process to the level of the newspaper, and also adds an important supplement to the scholastic backbone of this research: it takes the analysis to at least the same geographic region as the *Guardian*, one of the two research subjects of this thesis. Focusing on a week's worth of articles, between March 20 and March 28, 1996 in five British tabloids (the *Daily Mirror*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Star*, and the *Sun*), Brookes (1999) is interested in the manner in which the textual organization of the newspapers functioned to foster a sense of national identity. He argues, and through the textual analysis seeks to prove, that as coverage of the crisis progressed, it evolved from a predominantly health crisis to a political story about Britain and the European Union, and that public health concerns were eclipsed by explicit questions of national identity relating to the beef industry and the economy, culminating in the 'beef war' (250).

Contextual references to the unfolding health crisis are integral to his analysis. As McKee (2003) states in his guide to textual analysis, "it is only when a text is put into a context that we can start to make guesses about the likely interpretations of particular elements within it" (145). Context ties down the interpretation of a text, rooting it near a particular point, place, or event. If a text is put into a completely different context, where it is interpreted alongside different texts, it will likely be interpreted in a completely different way (145). This seems a straightforward notion – and it can be. But where cultural values are involved, context can be much more clandestine because of the subliminal omnipresence of the elements of the culture in daily life. Take, for example, the idea of a politician shrewdly trying to reframe an environmental issue in terms of some other aspect of the socio-economic sphere. When the rhetorical context is altered from a focus on scope of ecological disaster to a focus on economics, aesthetics, or industry, the context for the environmental issue has been shifted.

McKee (2003) identifies three levels of context: the rest of the text; the genre of the text; and the wider public context in which a text is circulated. The more that is known about the context of a text at all these levels, he says, the more likely a person is to produce a reasonable interpretation of a text (146). This principle of analysis will be an important guide for the thesis research at hand. Textual analysis of the spill articles will look at the news page itself – the words and images in relation to each other. But, this research will also be aware of the larger context of the spill – the spill-related events or news happening in society that *didn't* show up in the news reports (or did, as the case may be), as determined by outside research and by comparing the two papers in this thesis purview for the aspects and angles of the oil spills that appeared in one paper versus the other. In addition, the important distinction that the stories in question are *news* stories, not advocacy communication, will likewise serve as an important contextual guide for this thesis' textual analysis.

Returning to Brookes (1999), it is important to note that he introduces another facet of the news artifact into his analysis – the news headline. While also reading the implied meanings of within-story elements, he uses the headlines as a means of tracking the shift in national focus that he saw playing out in the British national tabloids. Using the language of the headlines as a textual guide, he tracks how the various tabloids created different themes and news “hype.”

Brookes (1999) also looked at the strategy of vocabulary use in his research, and how word choice helped intensify the sense of crisis – as well as fostering a sense of national identity. Certain vocabulary choices emphasized negative emotions, like fear and confusion. Other choices emphasized risk, danger, and the unfamiliar. This finding reiterates both Coppola's (1997) and Segal's (1991) discussions of a noticeable emotional quality to discussions of the environment and its rhetoric. Brookes (1999) also found that the press engaged in what he referred to as a “rhetoric of animation” for the health scare, making use of image-laden terms such as “bugs,” melodramatic language referring “intertextually to horror and science fiction films,” and a “rhetoric of quantification” – all of which served to artificially augment

the sense of alarm. This finding is relevant to the present oil spill research because the literature suggests that journalists covering the oil spill disasters may have tended towards a sensationalist approach to news reporting that more narrowly focused on the drama of wildlife death and pollution.

Interestingly, Brookes (1999) also looked at the tabloids' propensity to cite large numbers in a manner that increased the sense of alarm. One example he uses is the *Daily Mirror's* headline "We've Already Eaten 1,000,000 Mad Cows." Brookes (1999) argues that the rhetoric of that headline had the effect of casting BSE agent as "active, its human victims as passive or affected," and by extension powerless (252). His analysis of numerical data and information during his textual analysis is worthy of noting for this thesis' oil spill research, as the scholarly literature about oil spills and disaster reporting points to an overarching tendency of journalists to cite death statistics of wildlife and to emphasize volume of spilt oil. The manner in which the newspapers in question incorporated this data might have helped in the frame creation process.

Brookes (1999) also argues that communities and identities are "to some extent constructed through threats to the boundaries of those communities" (255). The rhetorical elements of the news stories – word choice, context, headlines, and vocabulary suites – function to unify a people around a disaster. Rhetorical strategies used within a text, such as a news article, are responsible for this effect. Brookes' (1999) argument here resonates with this thesis' focus because natural disasters can function in much the same way, as a rallying point for a people tied in some way to the epicenter of disaster. In Spain, for instance, entire villages dependent on fishing for their survival were in effect cut off from their historic livelihoods when the oceans became saturated with oil. Natural landscapes can become national icons, and a deleterious external threat can muster previously subsurface patriotism. Likewise, in addition to the 200 miles of Breton coastline that were polluted, more than 76 separate communities along the beach were affected by the Amoco Cadiz spill. This research will examine whether a theme of national tragedy was cultivated in press coverage of the

three oil spills in question. Brookes' (1999) article may be a useful reference for such rhetorical clues during the process of textual analysis.

In Dhoest's (2003) research on the Flemish media's role in forming a national identity, Brookes' (1999) analysis is extended to add a focus on the role images play in a media text to achieve this end. Although he uses popular Flemish television sitcoms as his media genre of inquiry, his rigorous adherence to the process of textual analysis is a good model of the method. Espousing a specific theoretical articulation of the relationship between media and national identities (254), he engages in what he terms a "holistic" analytic approach. Similarly acknowledging that "the limitation to textual information prevents a full understanding of the issues at stake," he draws upon the greater contextual history of Flemish culture and identity to complement his textual reading. In a similar vein, this thesis acknowledges that the larger context of environmental history will be important for analyzing changes in how environmentally damaging oil spills were covered.

Throughout his analysis, Dhoest (2003) is on the lookout for four clues that suggest construction of national identity: 1) discourses that discuss a shared history; 2) discourses referring to a shared culture; 3) evocation of national language; and 4) discourses about a homogenous "old people" with a particular essential "national character" (256). Though he argues that "national identities are clearly social constructions," he says that the media can function to obscure the fact that "Western nations are relatively recent polities" without truly ancient roots (in the sense of contemporary national boundaries and classifications). By acting this way, the media help to create a sense of allegiance to those boundaries and to foster a sense of national identity. In all three oil spills being analyzed for this research, the spills had dramatic effects on the historic livelihoods of fishing communities in the polluted regions of Brittany and Spain, and the territories of the native peoples of Alaska. National areas of great ecological significance were damaged in all three cases, and the spills all affected areas known within their national borders for the strength of their regional identities (Breton, Galician, or Indigenous). This thesis will examine whether environmental journalists

writing about the spills engaged in a similar evocation of “shared culture” and “national language” in their storytelling, and if so, whether such evocation led to the construction of some degree of national identity.

Developing a Textual Analysis Approach

Before beginning the textual analysis, it will be necessary to develop an approach or criteria that can be applied uniformly to the oil spill articles as they are read and analyzed in order to ensure that the research focus is maintained, and to also ensure consistency in reading across newspapers. Referring to the work and methodology of researchers published in the scholarly literature for guidance during this process will be particularly helpful. In some cases, researchers developed a textual analysis guide or coding scheme. Schlechtweg (1996), for instance, was specifically interested in the use of images, language, and sound in the “Focus: Logjam” newscast. To aid his detailed textual analysis of the program’s transcript and videotape, he made an index of key terms and images, then made an “exhaustive list” of the verbal and visual contexts in which the terms were used. While he makes use of some more complicated methodologies that will not be used for this thesis – such as cluster-agon methodology and cluster analysis – he provides a detailed illustration and explanation of the various steps involved in his textual analysis method. Some of these steps are relevant to the present research, and will serve as extremely useful guides for how to go about analyzing the interplay of visual and textual elements in the oil spill news stories.

In a similar nature, Dhoest (2003) developed a topic list based on his study of the Flemish sitcoms noting the use of recurrent themes and iconography, such as landscapes, customs and objects. As he scrutinized the sitcoms looking for these criteria, he “generated a lot of field notes,” which he said allowed him to reconstruct discursive patterns. Because his study was interested in examining how Flemish sitcoms contributed to the formation of national identity, his topic list included criteria such as the historical setting of the sitcoms, references to high or folk culture in the programs, and whether standard language or dialect

was used. These criteria served as the intra-textual context for his analysis, which he then supplemented with external historical and cultural contextual information. For the research interests of this thesis, a different sort of topic list would be developed focusing on different elements of the news texts that are relevant to print articles, journalism, and the oil spill stories. For instance, a topic list pertaining to the oil spill articles would pay attention to criteria such as: (1) word choice and how language is used to describe the oil spill disasters; (2) information that was included or excluded from news stories in the two newspapers; (3) how photos and graphics are used in conjunction with the text; (4) what themes are developed over the course of each six-month story set; and (5) placement of articles on the news page and their location within the papers (i.e., which section the articles appeared in), among others. While there are differences based on the medium of inquiry, Dhoest's (2003) study will serve as a good example of how to analyze a text for cues pertaining to national identity formation in the oil spill stories.

Perhaps more importantly, Dhoest (2003) defines a qualitative textual analysis of this sort as "a systematic interpretive approach looking for patterns and structures in a large body of text" (259). Where some variations in mode and approach to textual analysis may not be entirely relevant in all aspects to this thesis research, this statement by Dhoest (2003) provides a concrete methodological bulwark that can serve as an overarching guide referenced throughout the process of analysis so the research maintains a steady course. As Dhoest (2003) notes, while textual analysis allows researchers to take into account "the importance of textual elements, their relationship and context," he notes that one of the weaknesses of this qualitative approach is "the lack of clear methods and techniques." To deal with this, Dhoest (2003), citing Webster (1995), offers two broad principles of textual analysis that should help guide researchers: the research "must be systematic rather than speculative," and it "must analyze the text as a whole" (259).

More along these lines, Daley and O'Neill's (1991) study of differences in news narratives about the *Exxon Valdez* spill uses a textual analysis that is based around a

consistent, holistic approach to analysis, rather than the development of lists, schemas, or coding schemes – though such studies are also systematic in their approach. Looking at everything from individual words to sentences to photos and the placement of stories in the newspaper layout, the authors seem to use their research question itself as the primary guide to approaching the methodological aspect of the study’s textual analysis. By taking this more generalized holistic approach, the authors were able to discover the news narratives that were developed in their subject newspapers and to make conclusions based on their findings. Cann (1999) similarly adopted a more generalized approach to his textual analysis of the Australian media’s reporting of French nuclear tests. By “examining the language and imagery used in media reports,” his textual analysis enabled him to discover that the media made use of fear, scientific discourse, dramatic and dangerous imagery, and constant references to the size of Hiroshima’s blast.

These studies are more representative of the methodological approach that will be adopted for the present research. While the larger gamut of research illustrating the various nuances and sub-species of textual analysis, as well as the high degree of complexity that can be obtained using the method, will certainly inform and hone the approach taken by this thesis research, the more generalized nature of the research question – which is interested in observing how environmental reporting has changed over time as evident in textual and rhetorical elements of the news stories themselves – is better suited to a more generalized, holistic approach of this nature.

Research Subjects: The Seattle Times and the Guardian

The two papers selected as subjects for this research are the *Seattle Times* and the *Guardian*, a U.K. paper. The reasons for this selection of subjects are twofold: relevance and principle. On the first score, both papers are considered reputable newspapers which are geographically located in proximity to at least one of the spills being studied – proximity being one of several news values determining what sort of stories are likely to be reported by

the media. Both the *Amoco Cadiz* and the *Prestige* spills happened in European waters, off coasts or ports of immediate significance and consequence to certain countries of that area – particularly Britain, France and Spain. For this reason, the *Guardian* was chosen for its proximity to those two spills.

The *Seattle Times* was chosen over other regional papers as the regional representative for the *Exxon Valdez* spill because of its previous reputation for quality coverage of oil spills as exemplified by the Pulitzer Prize it won for coverage of the 1989 Exxon spill. Smith has argued that receiving such an award suggests a paper has adhered to “[reporting] ideals to which all journalists aspire,” thus automatically elevating such a paper to a special category of excellence – a representative of the best reporting has to offer. For this reason, faults, lapses or problems in reporting may be more easily attributed to causes other than mediocre reportage.

While many scholars focus on papers such as the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* because of their reputations as national agenda-setters and representatives of the elite press, these papers have no particular relevance to the oil spill disasters other than their role as U.S. national dailies of prominence. Because of this prominent reputation – and perhaps the concomitant ease of access to old articles and online databases – these papers may be overanalyzed by media scholars. This gets to the principle of the matter. Rather than applying yet another research lens to such papers, a focus on newspapers with greater arguable relevance, via news factors such as quality combined with proximity, may yield more telling results.

All newspapers adhere to paper-specific styles of reporting, via journalistic style, newsroom standards, rules or practices. As a result, newspapers may ultimately develop unique and independent intra-newsroom cultures, with discernable differences in the style of written output. This is certainly the case with *The New York Times*. While there is definitely some benefit to studying a paper such as *The New York Times*, which has a tremendous corpus of research available for reference and comparison, studying newspapers which have not been

as aggressively studied or typified may offer a fresh perspective on the subject of reporting practice, and may ultimately shed even greater light on the research questions at hand.

In making this decision, the precedent set by Smith (1992) in his determination of research subjects is being followed for this thesis. His two main criteria for paper selection were: 1) overall prestige of the newspaper in the U.S.; and 2) prominence of the newspaper in the city closest to the three catastrophes he studied. Because of the size and scope of his research, he looked at both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* as representatives of prestigious East Coast national media; and he chose the *Los Angeles Times* as the West Coast national representative in that regard. However, he writes that “because the *Seattle Times* won a Pulitzer Prize for stories about the spill,” he felt it worthwhile to examine oil spill stories from that prestigious regional paper. The same principle has guided the selection of media being examined for the present research undertaking.

Founded in 1896 by Alden J. Blethen, The Seattle Times Company is a locally owned, private and independent news and information company that is still family-owned (now in its fourth and fifth generation). It is the largest locally-owned and operated metropolitan newspaper in the United States. The *Seattle Times*, its flagship newspaper, is the largest daily newspaper in Washington state and the largest Sunday newspaper in the Northwest. The company describes itself as “Well respected for its comprehensive local coverage . . . [and] recognized nationally and internationally for in-depth, quality reporting and award-winning photography and design.”⁵

For the same reason, the *Guardian* is a worthwhile publication to explore. The paper has won several awards, including a 2000 British Press Award – the U.K.’s equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize – for online journalism. Though older than the *Seattle Times*, the *Guardian* shares a similar history with the Washington paper. It was founded in 1821 by John Edward Taylor with the intention of “promoting the liberal interest in the aftermath of the Peterloo

⁵ From the *Seattle Times*’ history, published by its parent company The Seattle Times Company on its webpage. <http://www.seattletimescompany.com/communication/overview.htm>

Massacre and the growing campaign to repeal the Corn Laws that flourished in Manchester during this period.”⁶ Under the editorship of C.P. Scott, the paper gained national and international recognition. Scott held the post for 57 years from 1872 and wrote a line indicative of its pledge to uphold the principles of the founder for an article written to celebrate the centenary of the paper: “Comment is free, but facts are sacred The voice of opponents no less than that of friends has a right to be heard.”⁷ Though the paper went through a period of flux, including an uncertain future on the national market in the 1960’s, Alastair Hetherington, the editor at this time, remained a staunch advocate of the *Guardian’s* independence, and the modern paper says that it owes much to his leadership and vision during this period.⁸

It is important to note that the paper is considered liberal and left-wing within the U.K. While this reputation may influence the paper’s overall content and predispose it to more left-oriented editorials, the paper nevertheless maintains an excellent reputation of reporting within Britain. As such, it is believed that Smith’s (1992) principle of studying “papers of prominence” is being upheld by looking at the *Guardian’s* coverage of oil spills.

Although the papers belong to different countries, it is believed that this should present no disconnect for purposes of this research. As Western, industrialized, English-speaking countries with a long history of kinship, there is some degree of cultural similarity between the United States and Britain. Indeed, Hamilton and Atton (2001) have stated that “the common roots of the US and the UK in Anglo social, political, and economic traditions and practices help explain some important commonalities between the two alternative-media literatures.” Where there are differences in style or cultural attitudes – such as, perhaps, different cultural attitudes towards environmental issues harbored by the British – a side

⁶ From the *Guardian’s* published history of itself on its webpage.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/information/theguardian/story/0,12002,1038110,00.html>

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ *ibid*

effect of this research may be to reveal those differences during the process of analysis, or conversely, to discover that certain principles of environmental reportage are shared.

Studying these two newspapers will provide a unique vantage point from which to observe the unfolding process of how environmental reporting has changed over time. Differences in environmental coverage between in 1978 versus 2002 may be more easily attributable to factors such as the beat's relative newness or maturity, rather than the papers' overall quality of reportage.

Archive Access and Research Scope

Archive access for the 1978 and 1989 spills presented the greatest challenge for acquisition of necessary research material. Though initially a challenge, old microfilmed articles from the *Seattle Times* and the *Guardian* have been obtained through use of the University of Missouri-Columbia interlibrary loan system. A research scope of six months has been determined for each oil spill event in the two papers. Here again, this author is following the precedent set by Smith (1992), who acknowledged that he would be “unable to look at all of the stories written about each event,” and thus decided that he would “examine those [stories] published or broadcast during the initial coverage period” (16). For the *Exxon* spill, Smith (1992) observed that the six-month interval between March and September 1989 represented the first season's cleanup attempt; as such, he argued that it was a natural way to reasonably delimit the size of the research scope.

Thus, this present research will examine news articles between March 16, 1978 – end of September 1978 for the *Amoco Cadiz* spill; March 24, 1989 – end of September 1989 for the *Exxon Valdez* spill; and November 19, 2002 – end of May 2003 for the *Prestige* spill. To date, all of the articles have been gathered and printed from microfilms save for September 1989 in the *Seattle Times*, and hard copies from microfilms of the 2002 dates in both papers. Logistical difficulties gathering the articles from microfilm – such as restrictions on where the interlibrary loan system permits microfilm use, and unrealistically short check-out times –

have caused unavoidable delays in the gathering process. However, it should be noted that articles pertaining to the 2002 *Prestige* spill can be gathered on-line, via the newspapers' websites, or via the research tool Lexis-Nexis.

To ensure that all the text is at least available to read, the online material has been printed out. However, a search for relevant *Prestige* articles on the *Guardian's* website failed to turn up at least one article in which the *Prestige* ship was mentioned in the hard copy on microfilm. Given this error, and the fact that online content fails to provide important contextual clues – such as an article's placement in the paper, the page or section in which it appeared, headline size, use and placement of images, and other such visually contextual clues about the an article's intra-paper environment – it is hoped that hard copy versions of these articles can be obtained for the sake of consistency and more solid rhetorical analysis across all three spills and date ranges.

The news items analyzed for this study include all news articles specifically about the spills in question, as well as editorials or opinion pieces related to the spills written by editorial staff at the papers. Reader letters or articles not specifically about the spills were not directly analyzed. However, some of this adjunct material – such as stories about other oil spills that occurred during the same interval of time as the spills in question, or general threads about oil pollution or regulatory developments in the maritime industry – was printed for use as general reference or context. In particular, the smaller spill of the Greek tanker *Eleni V* occurred near Britain's Channel Islands just weeks after the Amoco Cadiz disaster. Several of the *Guardian's* stories about this spill make reference to the Amoco Cadiz, and for a period of time, *Guardian* coverage of the Amoco Cadiz spill was superseded by coverage of the more local spill. While this thesis will not perform a textual analysis on this material, having it on hand may still be helpful for explaining some of findings of this analysis, as well as the intra-paper subject contexts contemporaneous with the oil spill stories. Additional slightly incongruous material included stories originating from wire services that were printed in the papers. Particularly in the case of the *Seattle Times'* coverage of the 1978 Amoco Cadiz spill,

wire service reports were used most of the time – the exception being a few editorials written by the paper’s maritime section editor. The fact that the *Seattle Times* used wire service news accounts of the Amoco Cadiz spill instead of its own reporters is, by itself, important contextual information about the paper’s approach to coverage of the spill.

The decision about what type of articles to include for this thesis mirrors Ghanem and Hendrickson’s (2003) decision about what type of articles to include in their study of North American environmental news coverage. While there are some noticeable differences between their study and the present research – namely, that their study is primarily quantitative in nature and uses a content analysis to examine the effect that national boundaries have on coverage of environmental issues – their study has some similarities in that its overall goal was to examine how environmental issues relevant to the North American border regions were covered in the media. For their study, they looked at several textual criteria, including: date, section, page, length, whether the story was news or opinion and the source of the story (reporter, wire, unknown or citizen) and absence or presence of a photograph. Similarly, Brennan (1982), in his study of the oil supply crises of the 1970’s, chose to include all stories pertaining to the term “energy crises,” with the exception being that stories about other kinds of fuels were excluded. The following table displays information about the number of stories printed for examination by year for each paper and spill:

Table 2. Total number of news items analyzed in the Guardian and Seattle Times for each spill in the study scope.

	TOTAL NUMBER OF STORIES IN STUDY SCOPE		
	1978	1989	2002
U.K. Guardian	35	34	33
Seattle Times	12	112	20

Summary

In general, this overview of relevant literature suggests some key research directives: the depiction of environmental and ecological issues requires more earnest analysis, and studies specifically examining the tradition of environmental reporting should be a research imperative for those seeking to enhance the profession and surmise its status in society – indeed, for anyone seeking to better understand the evolving profession of journalism and the unique rigors of the environment beat. While there is much yet to be done to this end, research attempting to move beyond a slice-in-time approach to environmental media research to capture a sense of the broader evolution of this small but important reporting niche will add another layer to this growing body of environmental media research, as well as a much-needed historical perspective.

The complex penetration of environmental issues into other socio-economic and political spheres renders the environment a difficult, but important, question of media research. Uncovering in a meaningful way how significant environmental issues are created by or related to political and economic factors and agendas, such as the pressures created by oil and other environmentally taxing global commodities, is essential, both to the future of environmental discourse and to media research about how one nuance or another emerges more vigorously in the press.

Like all studies, however, which must be limited by time and space, this thesis has its share of research limitations. Most notably, this thesis is focusing only on the textual elements of the oil spill stories, and not on the audience effects or perceptions of environmental coverage – an important indicator of how good a job reporting does at informing the public. While agenda-setting theory is influencing the theoretical backing of this research, public attitudes about the oil spills in question are not being studied for evidence of how reporting might have set the public's agenda for the spills, either in relation to the spills themselves or to other environmental issues.

A similar limitation to this study is its exclusion of opinions from journalists about their perceptions of how these spills were covered and how they represent change in environmental reporting over time. Ideally, a study including interviews or surveys of journalists about coverage of the spills would be combined with analysis of the news stories to determine how the results of the textual analysis compared to journalists' own perceptions of the quality of their reporting. Results from such a study would illuminate more clearly where the disconnects are between practice and perception and would point to more specific areas where environmental reportage was in need of attention.

Finally, the sample size of newspapers examined for this study (one U.S. paper and one British paper), is a limitation in that the results cannot be said to be truly representative of the changes in environmental reporting as a whole across the nation. Although the papers may serve as case studies of the field's evolution in a general way, to truly develop a picture of how environmental journalism has evolved over time, a larger sample of newspapers from different parts of the country would need to be included in a study of a similarly comprehensive nature so as to more fully encapsulate and characterize the burgeoning field of environmental reporting in its entirety.

3. AMOCO CADIZ – 1978’S “MONSTROUS” DISASTER

The wreck of the *Amoco Cadiz* was one of the most studied oil spills in history. For a time, it earned the dubious distinction of ranking as the world’s worst oil spill on record, as well as the worst ecological disaster caused by an oil spill. Surprisingly, for all the scientific scrutiny the spill received, its indelible imprint on the memories of the maritime and oil industries, and its ramifications for legislation and the formation of new organizations dedicated to tanker safety and spill prevention, the media’s coverage of the world’s fourth-worst oil tanker disaster has never been studied until now. Like a great archaeological monument forgotten by time – or the ruins of a sunken tanker lying on the floor of the sea responsible for its demise – the *Amoco Cadiz* has for a quarter century escaped the notice of researchers interested in journalistic reporting of technological and environmental disasters.

The results of such study have proved illuminating – even surprising at times. The *Guardian*’s coverage in particular evades easy description. While the paper engaged in some of the same reporting patterns discerned by researchers such as Smith (1992), Wilkins (1989), and Daley and O’Neill (1991) – for instance, a tendency to rely on government and “official” sources and to personify the wrecked tanker as a dying beast as it was slowly consumed by the sea – other common (and commonly criticized) spill reporting habits, such as the tendency to focus on the tragedy of oiled seabirds and wildlife and to use frames enhancing that theme, were not readily observed in the *Guardian*’s coverage.

One particularly interesting aspect of the *Guardian*’s reportage was the manner in which a single story succeeded in weaving together local and international narratives. Through a combination of headline use and style, intra-story transitions and intra-column “teases” to spill stories in other sections, quoting of sources invested with authority on both fronts over time, and a particular narrative style not observed in the *Seattle Times*’ wire reports, many *Guardian* stories about the spill move almost seamlessly between narration of

growing British concern over the increasing likelihood of break-away oil pollution to the Channel Islands and continued narration of events unfolding along the Breton coast.

The Guardian

Over the course of the *Guardian's* reportage between March 18 and September 16, 1978, the paper published a total of 35 stories about the spill, though the majority of stories were written in the first two weeks following the spill. Of the total stories, the first 22 – or about 61 percent – were written between the paper's first spill story on March 18 and March 31. No stories were written about the *Amoco Cadiz* during the entire month of April. In May and June, the paper published 6 stories – or about 17 percent – each month; 1 story in July, none in August, and 1 story in September.

Story Frames

Throughout coverage three key frames emerged, along with an array of narrative themes. Frames included: a pollution disaster frame; a threat to Britain frame; and “man versus sea” frame. Frames typically operated as the background canvas of the unfolding story of the spill, while the diversity of thematic developments were the vivid details through which the frames established their presence.

Pollution Disaster Frame

Throughout most of the paper's coverage, one enduring frame reigned at a meta-level: that of a pollution disaster of monumental and almost superhuman proportions. While the paper constructed the spill as a “pollution disaster” rather than an explicitly “environmental” or “ecological” disaster, the pollution disaster frame included effects to more than just beaches and rocky shores or the ocean in general by “polluting” it. Communities dependent on fishing for their livelihoods, as well as to birds, shellfish, and tourism dependent economies, were portrayed as affected by the spill.

Headlines such as the paper's Day 1 heading "Oil Spill Threat to Coasts" and Day 6's "Tanker's Entire Load Spills into Sea" focused attention on the threat of oil, compounded by the magnitude of volume spilt. The lead sentence of the first spill story, which described how "France faced its worst oil pollution disaster last night" (March 18, 1978, pg. 1), immediately defined the spill in terms of its size and pollution potential. Regular updates about the growth of the slick as ocean currents spread it along the Breton coastline helped focus attention on the magnitude aspect of the spill, which seemed to amplify exponentially as the numbers increased or the area covered by the spill widened.

The other disaster components were interjected when reporter Paul Webster described in the paper's fifth story on the spill how "the disaster . . . has already clogged thousands of seabirds, killed oyster and shellfish beds, and damaged Brittany's prosperous tourist industry for the next few years" (Thursday March 23, 1978, pg. 1). Later stories explored the economic aspects of the disaster in more detail, or referred to a "second catastrophe" – that of the spill's devastating effects on regional economies. More specific numbers were also referenced for estimates of bird, shellfish, and lobster loss.

Subsequent stories elaborated on the initial pollution frame. Reporters documented the spread of oil in early reports, and by Thursday, March 23, as the headline "Tanker's Entire Load Spills into Sea" emphasized, the spill had officially come to "[mark] the world's worst oil pollution caused by a tanker" (pg. 1). That same day, in a story in the "Technology" section providing an insightful discussion and explanation about the different types of oil dispersants and the origins of the "use / don't use" dispersant debate, the spill finally attained its supernatural status when *Guardian* reporter Gillian Linscott, using all-caps, referred to the spill in her lead sentence as "MONSTROUS."

While the paper ducked back and forth between an interest in local concerns and unfolding events in Brittany, the "pollution disaster" frame always hovered in the background. Within this frame, reporters made frequent references to "worsening pollution," a "huge and growing oil slick," "beaches [being] bathed" in oil, and wrote often bleak

descriptions of the “inevitability” of widespread pollution from the spill succored by ferocious winds and wretched weather. Later stories after the first month of reporting probed other angles of the spill during the remediation and clear-up phases, but still maintained the “pollution disaster” frame via flashback references to the spill in context of new story angles. For instance, a story on May 8, 1978 with the headline “Tanker Captain Blamed for Oil Disaster,” suggests the continuity of the frame via the headline itself and in the lead paragraph of the story, which described how a “top-level report by the French Government” blamed the *Amoco Cadiz’s* captain, Pasquale Bardari, for “causing the worst ever oil pollution disaster” (pg. 30).

Both earlier and later stories seemed at times to have an almost phantasmagoric quality as reporters described a lurid but unstoppable play-by-play of events. As the calamity unfolded, the world could only sit and watch as the roiling ocean caused “new breaches” (Tuesday, March 21, pg. 24) in the tanker under the force of fierce winds and overnight storms. At times, reporters seemed like mere documenters of the disaster sitting by on the sidelines. For instance, in a story on Wednesday March 22, which made reference to a “new flood of oil” coming from the tanker, Paul Webster used the word “now” in three consecutive paragraphs as he described the next brick to fall in the seemingly unstoppable chain of disaster events.

Prospects for recovering oil still inside the undamaged storage tanks seemed bleaker by the day, adding a palpable ethos of urgency to the situation. Eventually, this culminated in the grim realization that, with the continued pelagic maelstrom and the oncoming spring high tide, there was little that could be done to mitigate the oncoming disaster. The high tide was a grave worry to authorities and Breton fishermen because the tides would ensure that any oil not collected would be washed ashore to devastating degree instead of breaking up at sea. *Guardian* reporters picked up on this ethos of urgency in their stories, and thus, the high tide symbolized the pinnacle of the pollution disaster frame, which accentuated the emphasis on the magnitude of the spill. While different themes emerged on any given day, the “pollution

disaster” frame was always a backdrop. However, within this overarching frame, a strong sister frame and several reporting themes achieved a hearty presence.

Threat to Britain Frame

An almost equally omnipresent frame was that of the threat to Britain – and after the fourth story on Wednesday March 22, the threat to the British Channel Islands primarily – as a result of possible break-away pollution from the main Breton spill. This frame was also established immediately when Paul Webster reported in the lead paragraph of the first story on Saturday March 18, 1978 that “Britain was alerted in case of wind and tide changes which



Map illustrating the location of British Channel Islands in relation to Britain and France. The red dot represents the location of the Amoco Cadiz spill, near the Breton village of Portsall.

could cause greater damage to the south coast of England than the wreck of the Torrey Canyon.” As part of this frame, the *Guardian* at times described, almost to a point of minutiae, the government’s planning and preparedness measures, such as “specialty teams . . . trained in anti-pollution tasks” (pg. 1)

However, by the *Guardian*’s second story on Monday March 20, the focus of the pollution threat had switched with increasing concern to Britain’s Channel Islands, which include the main island bailiwicks of Guernsey and Jersey – located over 70 miles from Great Britain, but just a few miles from the French coast (*see map*).

The history of British claims to the Channel Islands goes back to the time of William of Normandy’s conquest of England. Originally, the Channel Islands were part of Normandy when William invaded and captured England in 1066. When the king of France later invaded and captured Normandy in 1204, the Channel Islanders chose to stay subject to the Crown of England. In return for their loyalty, the Islands were allowed to retain their

own government. Even today, the Channel Islands are not legally part of the United Kingdom or the European Union, though there are links between the governments of Britain and the Islands, and Channel Islanders are full British citizens. Thus, the Channel Islands, while a part of Great Britain historically, have retained a unique regional identity encompassing aspects of their culture, their historical languages and accents, and their systems of governance – a fact which, as will be discussed below, came through at times in the *Guardian's* reportage. Nonetheless, as a possession of the British Crown – officially a “Crown dependency” – threats to the Islands were considered threats to Britain, and the *Guardian's* coverage via the “Threat to Britain” frame demonstrates this via its greater local interest and stake in the possible outcomes of oil migration and pollution of the Channel Islands stemming from the Breton disaster.

Throughout the unfolding course of the spill's dramatic genesis and eventual conclusion, the focus on the threat to Britain maintained, arguably, a more direct presence in *Guardian* stories than the omnipresent parent “pollution disaster” frame. Virtually every story over the 6-month interval carved a local angle out of developments at the larger French level – sometimes with a display of great narrative dexterity at integrating the international and local island angles. Local angles focused particularly on the potential harm to the unique fisheries and tourism of the Channel Islands, the damage to fishermen once oil reaches the Islands, and the mitigation efforts of the British government and Channel Islanders.

For instance, a story by Philip Jordan, reporting from Brest on Saturday March 25, used its lead paragraph to seamlessly introduce both the “pollution” and “threat to Britain” frames, as well as the local and international angles: “The huge oil slick from the wrecked tanker Amoco Cadiz reached within 25 miles of the Channel Islands yesterday as the international team fighting the oil threw new reserves into the battle” (pg. 1). This opening sentence ensured that the *Guardian's* readers were keyed into the local angles of immediate interest to them, while giving Jordan the ability to slip back and forth between Brittany and developments on the home front.

The use of front page or intra-column “teases” to other spill-related stories, as well as a clever use of multiple headline and sub-heads – which in the *Guardian* are actually underlined over top of the main heading and are frequently closer to complete sentences – functioned in a similar way by providing a semantic agility to navigate between the differing layers of the spill story. The *Guardian*’s second story on Monday March 20 is a perfect example. The primary headline for the day’s story – “Row Grows Over Delayed Tanker Alert” – indicates a primary focus on the Breton angle. The story appears on the paper’s back page, which in terms of the human mechanics of reading a newspaper, is a strategic place in a side-fold paper like the *Guardian* to put news items which were important but didn’t fit or quite belong in one of the interior sections. In the case of *Amoco Cadiz* stories, the back page was one of the main locations where spill stories appeared.

On the front page of the day’s paper, however, the paper inserted a prominent tease on the “News in Brief” sidebar with a large heading entitled “Oil Slick Drift Towards Britain.” The tease, which had the largest font size of all the other teases and occupied the first slot, simultaneously suggests the local angle while tempting readers to flip to the back, where the main thrust of that particular story was on Brittany. At the same time, the super-script text over the main headline merges both the local and the Breton aspects: “Heavy seas pound Amoco Cadiz as oil slick moves towards the British coast” (pg. 24). Thus, the *Guardian* integrates two of the main spill frameworks while creating for itself the reflexive ability to navigate easily between the two primary geographic locations affected by the spill (for example, see #1 in Appendix).

Of note, however, is the fact that despite the palpable presence of the “Threat to Britain” frame, whenever a truly somber or critical event happened on the Breton front, the *Guardian* immediately turned its undivided attention back to Brittany. Between the second and fifth day’s stories, the *Guardian* meandered through various angles, from the spread of oil and official response in Brittany, to concerns in Britain about pollution migration, to commencing discussions about possible charges against the *Amoco Cadiz*’s captain. However,

when the tanker finally sheds its entire remaining cargo by Day 6 and the full gravity of the situation was suddenly, shockingly apparent, the paper dropped all and returned with great solemnity to the shores of western France, its opening sentence stating with lyrically somber simplicity: “The broken wreck of the Amoco Cadiz, its decks awash with heavy seas, last night marked the world’s worst oil pollution caused by a tanker” (pg 1).

Battle Between Man and Sea Frame

A third frame which co-existed, often simultaneously, with the other two frames was that of an epic battle between man and a powerful pelagic foe. As the heading suggests, this frame highlighted the unusually extreme weather and ocean conditions at the time of the tanker’s grounding, which persisted through the critical period immediately following the spill. The frame also cast the inability of the French and British authorities to do anything to contain, ameliorate, or prevent further spillage, not as the fault of the authorities, but as the result of the powerful, potent – sometimes perverse – and furious forces of nature.

References to the bad weather began in the *Guardian’s* first story, when reporter Paul Webster reported that “high winds and strong currents set back attempts to contain the tanker’s 230,000 ton cargo of crude oil” (Saturday March 18, 1989, pg. 1). The subject soon became a continuing theme of news coverage. The duplicity of the perpetually “heavy seas,” “strong winds,” and “dark waters” in hampering the authorities’ desire to start tackling the slick, and a seeming transmogrification of the spilt oil into an ocean-dwelling organism of roguish intent, resulted in the introduction and subsequent amplification of strong battle imagery (see #'s 2, 4, and 5 in *Appendix*). The spill thus became an epic battle between a valiant armada of brave seamen engaged in a futilely Sisyphean struggle against a Herculean Sea God of superhuman strength. The 125-mile long slick was “massed” against the Brittany coast, and the authorities are repeatedly described as “attacking” or preparing to attack the slick.

The “man versus sea” frame functioned at times to justify the continual impotence of humans to curb the spill or even to enact their counter-spill plans and was the main precursor

to the development of the battle mentality and imagery. By Tuesday March 21, the first reference to a “battle” was introduced by reporter David Fairhall who mentioned how “Guernsey harbour authorities were preparing for an early siege by the oil” (pg. 24) and then paraphrased a source as “predict[ing] . . . that the main battle, if it is ever fought, will be waged in mid-Channel” (pg. 24). The statement conjures images of Britain’s naval past and prowess and planted the early seeds for a battle framework to take root (*see #3 in Appendix*).

Subsequent stories invoke the “battle” frame in various contexts, from descriptions of efforts or thwarted attempts to start mitigating the oil’s spread to explanation of why it was “urgent” that the “emergency team” “attack the slick” as soon as possible (Saturday March 25, 1978, pg. 22). Stories repeatedly described citizens, authorities, or the assembled fleet of oil-fighting vessels as “attacking” the slick or “renewing the attack” on the slick. Over time, the continued references to how an attack was “renewed” only served to underscore the failures of humans and the system – though the weather bore the brunt of criticism.

Later stories perpetuated a battle framework, but with a different nuance invoking more literal images of war and things military, in relation to a debate over whether to bomb the wreck of the *Amoco Cadiz* in order to accelerate the release of oil still on board. The headline for Thursday March 30, now almost two weeks after the initial spill, heralded the final answer to the bombing debate: “French Helicopters Bomb Amoco Wreck.” The story provided details and technical language pertaining to the logistics of bombing the wreck, opening with a mention of the “depth charges” dropped by helicopter on the wreck and then describing, in acute almost militaristic detail, the proceedings just before the bombing of the tanker: how the French helicopters were “put on standby . . . ready to home on the wreck” and how “[j]ust after 3 p.m. the three Super Frelon helicopters, flying in a squadron with three Alouette 3 spotter helicopters, soared over the wreck” (pg. 22).

Two more later stories continue the “battle” frame, but in the new contexts of the continuing clean-up efforts six weeks after the spill and the related economic repercussions as a result of the “oil’s terrible toll.” One of these later-phase stories stretched the frame into the

realm of the metaphorical, all-encompassing by discussing the European community's concern over rising incidences of tanker accident and examining the *Amoco Cadiz* in context with two other spill disasters.

The three primary frames developed over the course of the *Guardian's* coverage conform to classic spill disaster narratives. However, while their use suggests that the *Guardian* fell prey to the same reporting peccadilloes described by the scholarly literature, the story of the *Guardian's* spill coverage doesn't end with its predictable frames.

News Angles and Thematic Developments

Where the *Guardian* stands apart and breaks from the norm in its coverage may be in its sometimes surprising and perspicacious commentaries and its diversity of themes. Over the course of six months of coverage, several themes and news angles were observed in the *Guardian's* coverage of the *Amoco Cadiz* oil spill, spanning topics related to the spill on several fronts. Stories covered angles ranging from the immediate breaking developments of the spill to angles exploring important social, economic, and ecological topics. A few stories touched on longer-term issues pertaining to safety and liability. Not all themes were developed by reporters devoting entire stories to the subjects. However, the topics were usually referenced enough times throughout the full course of coverage, with some garnering headlines, that their existence was analyzed in aggregate.

Some themes were closely tied to the creation of story frames, such as the "Bad Weather / Fury of the Sea Gods" theme which was related to all three of the spill story's main frames. Other themes were large enough that they produced their own sub-themes. The "Threat to Britain" theme was both a theme and a frame. This duality was possible because the focus on the risk to Britain and the Channel Islands was such an important news angle that it featured as a continual thread, interwoven with the larger spill narrative. In aggregate, though, the fear of damaging pollution to the Channel Islands' unique shellfisheries and tourism hotspots meant that the overarching "pollution disaster" frame

became linked specifically with its potential to impact the Islands, thus allowing the *Amoco Cadiz* spill to be framed as both a pollution disaster and as a “Threat to Britain” (for examples, see #'s 1, 4, 5, and 6 in Appendix). A few of the *Guardian's* themes are highlighted below.

Bad Weather Theme

This theme was related to the “battle between man and sea” frame observed in early *Guardian* stories. The theme highlighted the persistent terrible weather, which thwarted the best efforts of humans to contain the growing slick and became a justification for the failures of human action. After the tanker’s full load had washed into the sea, Britain’s Minister of Trade was quoted saying: “Everything that can be done is being done” (Saturday March 25, 1978, pg. 1).

The repeated descriptions of the rough seas and wrackful weather over the course of coverage contributed to the sense of an epic battle between man and sea. Many of the authorities’ plans were continually delayed by defiantly bad weather. Reporters noted more than once that unless the weather changed, oil would travel to the Channel Islands or prevent the carrying out of an otherwise cohesive plan to circumvent the spillage of remaining oil. When a story on Saturday March 25 quoted Captain Stephen Pascoe, captain of the spraying tug *Calshot*, saying how “the spraying has been really hard work because of the weather” (pg. 22), the “battle” frame was given strength and credence by the authoritative statement of the experienced mariner. A story on March 27 finally referred to the weather as “abnormal,” essentially laying the ultimate blame and guilt for the *Amoco Cadiz* disaster on the weather coupled with the tremendous size of the tanker.

By the following week on Wednesday March 29, the superhuman power of the sea was finally affirmed when Philip Jordan wrote in his lead to the day’s story: “Rough seas yesterday smashed in half the already-severed hull of the grounded supertanker *Amoco Cadiz*. Thus the weather, which foiled an attempt by French navy frogmen to dynamite the tanker, has now achieved what the explosives were intended to do” (pg. 24). The statement’s

strongly suggestive prose and harsh imagery, contrasted with the seemingly effortless ability of natural forces to achieve a destructive feat more powerful even than human explosive technology, elevated the weather to superhuman stature and forced humankind to acknowledge the supremacy of this mighty pelagic power.

Threat to Britain Themes

This theme emerged as a staple of the *Guardian's* coverage. In earlier stories leading up to the breakaway slick which eventually made it to the Channel Islands, the focus was the potential of the pollution threat. Practically every story written during the initial suite of post-spill stories worked in a local Channel Islands angle. Similarly, many of the paper's headlines mentioned the Channel Islands in some way, whether uniquely or in context with the larger Breton spill. In the climate of concern over possible pollution of the Islands, two sub-themes branched out of the main "threat to Britain" theme.

Reassure Britain – Credible Government, Hearty Natural Lands

British concern over the threat of pollution to its Channel Islands was so strong that the *Guardian* developed a "reassurance" sub-theme. Even as the possibility of some degree of oil pollution seemed more inevitable, reporters and authorities looked for ways to reassure the British people by emphasizing British preparedness, enhanced by the credibility of British experts and the heartiness of British natural areas to rebuff an assault by oil. Reporters described – often going into great detail – the preparedness of the British government, the various lines of defenses, the hefty supplies of detergents and the Royal Navy's "fleet of specially equipped fishing boats," and overall making the government and first responders seem very busy preparing for even the smallest slick (see #'s 1, 2 and 5 in Appendix).

A story on March 27 described how "stockpiles of dispersant were being lashed to the decks of large tugtenders and smaller tugs" (pg. 1). The language suggested a gallant crew of sailors energetically preparing for a naval war. An earlier story from March 20 included a paraphrase of the British Department of Trade asserting that, in the event of a bigger threat

“the Department of Trade would commandeer vessels and equipment from wherever necessary” (pg. 24). Such rhetoric employed by *Guardian* reporters accentuated a sense of dogged preparation on the part of the government.

The *Guardian* also used sources who were either experts on oil, community leaders, or experts within their particular trades to help reassure the British people. Dr. Molly Spooner, a British marine biologist and an authority on spills, was used in several stories to reassure Channel Islanders about the remote chances of large-scale pollution and given considerable space in full quotes to express her expert conclusions. For instance, a March 28 story focused exclusively on French bombing preparations included an unusually prominent tease featuring a full sentence paraphrase of Spooner denouncing the chances of large-scale pollution of the Islands as “extremely remote” (*see #6 in Appendix*). The expert opinion of Guernsey’s tourist director was also sought to reassure people about the sanctity of their holiday plans. The source emphasized that he had “heard of no holiday cancellations” (Saturday March 25, 1978, pg. 20) and reassured people that there was no need to cancel their plans “because the oil is a sufficient distance away, and anyway, the normal contract arrangement with hotels would apply” (pg. 20).

The obvious intent here was to offset worry about the economic loss to local businesses, which thrive on island tourism. The use of the phrase “and anyway” in particular dismissed the potential oil threat and downplayed the disastrous situation unfolding on the shores of Brittany. The threat of oil was further downplayed when the tourist director was again paraphrased saying he would “be surprised if the oil, if it came, hit beaches on a triangular island.” The addition of the extra “if it came” phrase – and it is unclear from the paraphrase whether the extra “if” statement was part of the paraphrase or added by the reporter – emphasized the “if” part of all the conjectures and prognostications about oil hitting the Islands. The heartiness of the Island’s natural defenses was also invoked as a further reassurance: “Any oil would be sucked in by the 20 sewage carts and blotted up by seaweed and bracken” (pg. 20).

These reassurances were not altogether successful, though. Islanders still “fear[ed] a deluge” and made preparations to ensure complete readiness it, and there is a sense of inevitability about its arrival. Eventually, the reassurances all amounted to naught, however, because oil eventually did reach the Islands, though in smaller quantity. This did not stop the *Guardian* from trying to quell British concerns about threats to the unique farming, fishing, and tourist areas of the Channel Islands from the splattering the Islands did receive. The hearty natural defenses of the island were again referenced as reassurance: “But since the beach acts as a trap for much of the flotsam and jetsam around the island the amount of thicker oil splashing the rocks there to a width of about 30 yards is not considered a threat but a minor problem” (Thursday, March 30, 1978, pg. 22).

Responsibility for Spill Theme

A culpability theme does appear in the *Guardian*'s coverage of the spill. However, the *Guardian* does not pursue this theme to the exclusion of others, nor does it come across as unduly transfixed by the blame controversy. As the opening lines of a *Guardian* editorial published on Thursday March 30 indicated, the paper strongly disapproved of such a practice. The editor, unnamed, stated: “The temptation instantly to criticize (with added hindsight) the master of a shipwrecked vessel is always strong and should always be resisted” (pg. 14). This philosophy of resisting the temptation to latch onto this theme, to the exclusion of other newsworthy angles or institutional causes, bore out in analysis of *Guardian* coverage.

The first mention of any controversy about the role of Captain Pasquale Bardari, the captain of the *Amoco Cadiz*, appeared in the *Guardian*'s second story on March 20, titled “Row Grows Over Delayed Tanker Alert.” Despite the headline, the story's first half was devoted to updating readers on the status of the spill. The idea of controversy was mentioned only in passing in a single sentence: “Controversy over responsibility has caused several reactions” (pg. 24). The story then allotted just two additional paragraphs to the issue, one each for a different source to provide background details about the nature of the “row” – which centered

on allegations that the captain delayed notification of French authorities until it was too late. The rest of the story was about other unrelated nuances of the spill story. The theme largely disappeared until almost a week later, when a story with the headline “Radio Tapes Renew Argument Over Distress Call,” published on March 27, presented new information about a conversation between the two captains – Captain Bardari and Captain Harmut Weinert of the tug *Pacific* – that was picked up by a radio ham.

Of note, however, was the occasional register of sub-surface support for the *Amoco Cadiz* captain in the *Guardian*’s treatment of the theme. The sub-head to this March 27 story noted: “Italian captain’s diary of events is confirmed by the Germans’ account of how they fought to save the ship” (pg. 3), and the story itself ended by noting that, despite the disagreement over certain details, “the German [tug] firm agrees with the contention that the *Pacific* alone was not going to be able to handle the *Amoco Cadiz* . . .” (pg. 3). This sense of subsurface support for the tanker captain was observed in other stories as well – in particular, a *Guardian* editorial on March 30.

The editorial, titled “Don’t Haggle, Call a Tug,” seemed to sympathize with Bardari and express great respect for his profession’s customs, traditions, and hazards. The editor wrote that “those who were not on the bridge in the time of trouble have no business to intervene until the inquiry is over” (pg. 14). While the editorial still offered stern assessment about the ultimate effect of the two captains’ dispute over a salvage contract and subsequent delay in getting the necessary help, the editor made a point of commenting that “it is the custom and practice of seamen in distress who need salvage to bargain with their salvors, and this is what Captain Bardari seems to have done” (pg. 14). The editor further suggested that Captain Bardari was a competent navigator and did not allow the tanker to ground itself out of recklessness: “Unlike the master of the *Torrey Canyon*, Captain Bardari knew exactly where he was, which was in the right place” (pg. 14). Use of the word “they” in the statement “If they wanted to save the ship they should have called for every available tug in Brest to come to their aid” subtly shifted the onus of blame for the accident from Captain Bardari to

include a shared responsibility between the two captains involved. A later story referred to the criticism of Captain Bardari as “much of it of the armchair variety” and emphasized the “highly competent” and “extensively trained” (Monday June 12, 1978, pg. 4) crew. While this sense of subsurface support for Captain Bardari came across at times, it did not interfere with objective coverage of the inquiry proceedings.

Most of the stories about Captain Bardari appeared in later coverage, beginning in May 1978, after the worst of the spill had happened and a theme focused on attempts to bomb the tanker had finally concluded. During the month of March, when the majority of *Guardian* spill stories were written, only three stories appeared with headlines pertaining to the “responsibility” theme. By way of comparison, between June 12 when the story “Tanker Inquiry Faces Key Questions” (pg. 4) appeared and the end of *Guardian* coverage on September 16, six stories focusing on the inquiry proceedings appeared in the paper.

The *Guardian* explored various aspects of the technical questions related to the potential steering mechanism failure, probed the “key questions” (June 12, 1978, pg. 4) involved in the inquiry, and provided an opportunity for both captains to give their sides of the story – each in separate stories. The resolution to this theme was left dangling until July 1, 1978 when a story entitled “Amoco Cadiz Owners to get £60M Pollution Bill” explained that “the [French] senate committee was unable to confirm whether there had been a long bargaining session . . . or whether this had sabotaged the tow” (pg. 22).

Additional News Angles and Threads

Several other themes undulated throughout *Guardian* coverage of the spill, overall indicating an attempt to probe more than just the surface facets of the spill. The paper had reporters covering the spill on location in Brittany, the Channel Islands, and at home. In some cases, reporters wrote highly probing pieces, such as a *Guardian* story on March 28 titled “France Counts the Cost of Black Easter” that put in perspective the spill’s numerous effects on the “little communities” of the affected region (pg. 17). However, given the spread of

reporters, there was also a noticeable inconsistency in the depth of reporting, as well as times when the treatment of an angle didn't quite go far enough. In the referenced March 28 story, for instance, while the *Guardian* provided excellent context and detailed information about effects to a range of industries, such as oyster and sea weed farming and tourism, the story did not include interviews with individual, named villagers or fisherman (*see #7 in Appendix*).

No Fear of Scientific Concepts

Nonetheless, there was still a level of sophistication evident in the *Guardian's* reportage. The fact that there is evidence of an attempt to explore or touch on larger questions related to the spill, though at times scattered or incomplete, was still notable. One example is the paper's occasional broaching of scientific concepts – such as a discussion of the effects of oceanic action on “hydrocarbons,” the idea of water bodies renewing themselves, scientific discussion of a killer seaweed that appeared a few weeks after the spill, or full articles devoted to discussing different types of oil and their characteristics. The paper also went into a significant level of detail about biological concepts.

The “cost of Black Easter” story cited above is one example. The reporter, Philip Jordan, wrote about the effects of the *Amoco Cadiz's* particular type of oil on marine life and birds. The story drew on the historical context of the Torrey Canyon to help explain the present effects to bird sanctuaries and then provided an abridged discussion of the effects to the trophic cascade of organisms in the ocean as a result of particular characteristics of the Amoco's oil cargo mixed with water. Jordan wrote that “. . . the lightness of the oil makes it emulsify more easily with sea water under wave action and the effects of dispersants.” The interesting biological discussions followed: “This is said to make it more dangerous since it is easier for animal vegetable life, particularly plankton – one of the basic foodstuffs of the ocean – to assimilate it. The plankton is eaten by fish, which are in turn eaten by sea birds and thus the entire food chain on the coast is at risk” (pg. 17)

A story from June 17 titled “French Count Cost of Amoco Cadiz Spill” brought up the concept of natural aquatic replenishment in a paragraph informing readers about the convening of a meeting of “20 coastal states” to discuss pollution in the Mediterranean. Another example of the paper’s readiness to broach scientific concepts can be seen in a March 27 story. Reporter Michael Morris introduced a theory about why oil-affected birds were appearing near the Channel Islands when oil had not yet reached the Islands. Using a vivid simile to illustrate the concept, he wrote that “the theory is that birds have mistaken the band of oil for the plankton to be found off the French coast and hastened to it like moths to a flame” (pg. 20).

Ecological Angle

The *Guardian’s* approach to the ecological angle of the spill is also interesting. The paper did not hone in on the tragic symbolism of oiled birds and wildlife or publish more sensational headlines pertaining to oiled wildlife. Nor did the topic garner particularly explicit attention via full stories devoted to it, headlines indicative of the subject, or photographs – there being, in fact, just one photograph of a man carrying a dead bird dangling from his hand (*see #1 in Appendix*). However, the ecological aspect did not come across as forgotten either.

The first major mention of ecological effects appeared in the *Guardian’s* fifth story on Thursday March 23. Halfway through the story, the reporter devoted two full paragraphs to a mention of oyster and shellfish deaths and the bird sanctuaries that were polluted by the spill, providing more specific information about the bird refuges:

“Of the 25 bird sanctuaries on the Brittany coast more than half have been polluted. Trevor Island, sanctuary for more than 2,000 terns, is said to be covered in oil and few birds have been saved in any sanctuary despite the efforts of hundreds of volunteers” (pg. 1).

The attention ended there until the subject of birds was revisited four days later in a March 27 story about Channel Islands preparations for an expected slick. Reporter Michael Morris

introduced the subject by contrasting the “impatience” of the navy to get to work on the slick with the amount of work already facing the “team of more than 90 residents who have volunteered to treat oil-contaminated birds” (pg. 20).

None of the headlines during the study interval had an explicitly environmental thrust, though the aspect appeared once in this “superscript” story sub-head: “Favourable winds are sheltering the Channel Islands from the tanker spillage. But fishermen and bird lovers fear the worst.” The heading spanned two stories from March 27, as well as the entire width of the paper’s left page (*see #5 in Appendix*). Rather, the ecological dimension of the spill is maintained at a low simmer throughout stories, via references scattered in quotes, scene descriptions, sub-headings, and some more substantive sections of stories about it.

Systemic Roots of Major Oil Spills

Another noteworthy aspect of the *Guardian*’s spill coverage was its attention to greater systemic causes or perspectives on the *Amoco Cadiz* spill. No stories were explicitly devoted to exploring the greater socio-economic aspects of oil spills, such as the growing oil consumptiveness of humankind or the politics of oil involved in its importation or shipment. However, the *Guardian* did broach systemic issues in hints and snippets, sometimes through sources or selection of specific quotes, sometimes in referencing a global context, and other times in editorial statements.

In one story published on March 25, the *Guardian* suggested the existence of problems within the larger shipping industry by quoting a local Breton mayor (*see #3 in Appendix*). The reporter first commented:

“What has brought the people out onto the streets of Brest – as they never came out in the streets of Penzance in 1967 during the Torrey Canyon disaster – is that despite knowledge of the potential danger oil tankers bring nothing had been done to keep them away from the coast” (pg. 15).

The statement was followed with a quote from the local mayor which implicitly criticized the maritime regulatory system: “As one local mayor put it: ‘The 11 years since the Torrey Canyon have been marked by the same hapless system of improvisation’ ” (pg. 15).

An editorial published on Tuesday May 9 with the heading “Europe on a Sea of Sludge” offered probably the strongest suggestion of problems within the maritime shipping industry. Of all the instances where the *Guardian* verged on the threshold of deeper analysis of the systemic causes of oil disasters, this editorial came closest to expressing an understanding of the inevitability of tanker spills in the current socio-economic world. The unnamed editor of the piece began by pointing to the bureaucratic obstacles usually implicated in delaying proactive change within the industry:

“Think of a way to stop oil pouring on to the beaches of Europe and a dozen objections will immediately be raised. Ownership, registration, charterer’s interest, responsibility at law, territorial limits, salvors’ rights . . . the card indexes and legal precedents that have to be consulted every time an accident occurs are so large that the damage can be done before action is taken to prevent it” (pg. 10).

This statement also seemed to suggest the sort of stumbling blocks and themes which grew out of the *Amoco Cadiz* incident. The editor then illustrated, referencing recent examples from the *Torrey Canyon*, *Eleni V*, and *Amoco Cadiz*, how some of the bureaucratic bickering and obstacles translated into botched, delayed, or confused ways of dealing with the disasters when they happened. In a statement strongly denouncing the inherent potential for damage within the oil industry, the editor both recognized this destructive potential while also implicating governments in the persistence of oil pollution problems for failing to devise ways of dealing with an expected and inevitable by-product of the industry: “No other industry causes such widely felt environmental damage. But in spite of all the expertise built up, especially in Britain, since the *Torrey Canyon* nothing fully effective is done to stop the steady devastation of Europe’s shores” (pg. 10).

The editor’s next paragraph then suggested that the increasing quantity of oil being moved around the globe was also partly responsible for these inevitable pollution incidents:

“Undoubtedly better standards of navigation and tighter policing of sea lanes could reduce the risk of accidents. But the risk cannot be eliminated. As more and more bulk oil and its derivatives travel round the world the diminished risk to each vessel may well be more than compensated by the total of vessels and the size of their cargoes It is a safe assumption that the thousands of marine spillages (some slight, some disastrous) since Torrey Canyon will be matched by thousands in the future” (pg. 10).

Drawing on contemporary North Sea oil context – a regular news subject observed in the *Guardian* during gathering of *Amoco Cadiz* stories – the editor again hinted that the increasing quantity of oil being produced would only increase the likelihood of spill disasters like the *Amoco Cadiz*:

“. . . as the North Sea comes into full production the accident rate at the well-heads is liable statistically to approach that in the Mexican Gulf, where roughly three major accidents occur every year The 1½ million tons of oil which travels through the English Channel every day, plus the large volume on other sea routes, needs the equivalent of a council of war to decide instantly what to do in an accident . . .” (pg. 10)

The editor further suggested that tanker disasters are inevitable outcomes of such a complex technological and global system, rather than random disaster events which take everyone by surprise. While this editorial could have been a good place to start a more thorough investigation of the subjects raised in periphery in the editorial, the analysis of systemic causes of oil spills does not get much further than this.

Fostering of National Identity

In several places, *Guardian* stories suggested a unique regional identity possessed by the people of western Brittany and the Channel Islands by emphasizing the uniqueness of regional livelihoods, by referencing certain local manners of speech, or by suggesting the presence of an older folk knowledge which drew on wisdom of the sea (see #3 in *Appendix*).

Stories describing the threat of oil to the Channel Islands emphasized the feared impact on important local industries – primarily fishing and tourism – which were depicted as unique to the region. Reporters described how the oil threatened a €1 million a year fishing

industry primarily based on shellfish, crabs and lobsters, as well as a unique “new regional experiment to cultivate abalone in island waters” (Wednesday March 22, 1978, pg. 1) on Guernsey. Reporters also made a point of mentioning how farmers on the island of Lehou, a small Channel Island just off Guernsey, “were penning a famous breed of sheep which grazes on seaweed in case the weed becomes contaminated” (Monday March 27, 1978, pg. 20).

As the debate over use of dispersants heated up – Britain, strongly advocating use of dispersants, most of the Channel Islanders strongly opposing it – *Guardian* reporters depicted a sense of divisiveness between what the Channel Islanders knew and understood based on their traditional experience of the sea and what the British government believed was best to win the battle against the oil, thus pitting regional knowledge against that of the authorities.

In this struggle for traditional culture against a distant government with little understanding of regional ways of life, the Breton fishermen and the Channel Islanders were united by a strong bond of fraternal commonality. In Brittany, the people’s livelihood was also of the sea and *Guardian* stories portrayed both the Bretons and the Islanders as clinging to an older way of life based on the sea and traditions that seemed to have remained unchanged for countless generations. To construct this impression, *Guardian* reporters depicted the fishermen as possessing a kind of ancient folk knowledge. Describing local response to the dispersant debate, Morris wrote of the Guernsey fishermen:

“While 40 varieties of dispersant are being piled ready on the jetties of Guernsey’s capital, St. Peter Port, the fishermen are saying: Let the oil, a natural product, come ashore and mop it up. It may damage the tourist industry for six or seven months, but the holidaymakers would come back. Use detergent, as they prefer to call it, and marine life, as well as the livelihoods of the fishermen, will be ruined forever” (March 25, 1978 pg. 22).

Referencing the local speech – “detergents” as opposed to “dispersants” – and highlighting the Islanders’ view of the oil as “a natural product” framed the Channel Islanders as more primitive and folksy, akin to indigenous peoples elsewhere around the world. The Breton fishermen were similarly portrayed. In a story published the same day, reporter Philip Jordan referenced the collective ancient wisdom of the Breton fishermen in a similar way:

“Those who live off the sea are convinced that it is its own best cleanser. Their leaders insist they should rely on: ‘A principle as old as the sea: that what floats will come ashore. The oil will pass, it is not necessary to break it up.’” (Saturday March 25, pg. 15).

The passage’s phrasing suggests that the fishermen’s ancient folk wisdom is outside the realm of modern knowledge, wrought by the process of scientific inquiry. The story immediately followed the above passage with a long paragraph of scientific corroboration from the Institute of Marine Biology, which provided a scientific explanation of how spraying of dispersant would hurt the ocean ecology (*see #3 in Appendix*). Science thus validated what the fishermen gleaned from “age-old experience.” However, the juxtaposition of “sea wisdom” with scientific rationale specifically highlighted the different mindset of the fishermen, portrayed as adhering to an older folk sea lore possessed by a distinct group of people whose lives had been intricately bound with the sea for time immemorial.

Guardian reporters also developed a sense of regional identity by describing the anger of the Channel Islanders and the people of Brittany towards their governments. The British and French governments were at times depicted as paternalistic and more interested in succoring the tourist industries through the injuries sustained by the oil disaster – and thus the tourist dollars – than in helping to offset an impending crisis to the livelihoods of regional fishing communities. A story from March 27 captured some of this regional angst (*see #5 in Appendix*). Morris recounted how Islanders looked sarcastically upon the assurances of the British government – particularly the British transportation minister – and ended with this observation: “After the meeting Mr. Peter Bougourd, Secretary of the Guernsey Fishermen’s Association, said that the kind of assurances offered by Mr. Davis, who visited the island, made them think of him as ‘Mr. Whitewash’” (pg. 20).

The *Guardian*’s description of Breton anger also constructed the impression of a distinct Breton regional identity. A story from March 25 highlighted the sense of alienation felt by local fishermen, directly stating that “the shock of the tanker disaster has turned to anger” (pg. 15) directed at the French government. The story also captured a sense of

government favoritism for tourism over fishing felt by local Bretons by pointing out that use of dispersants was one reason fishermen were angry, because the chemicals would “help to clean the sea for the 1.1 million holidaymakers expected each summer” (pg. 15), but would destroy their own livelihoods in the process. This sense of collective embitterment expressed by Bretons towards the government further stressed their regional identity.

In addition, the story specifically quoted a popular regional newspaper – *West France* – criticizing the French Prime Minister, Mr. Raymond Barre, and scoffing at his sympathy for the Breton people. This was the only time in any of the *Guardian’s* stories that such a source was used. As a familiar voice of the local people, the paper’s sentiment that “If you live in Brittany, you are not in France” (pg. 15) expressed a powerfully direct statement of separate and independent regional identity. More local voices filled the story text, further emphasizing collective regional anger and identity. Several village mayors were directly quoted, including the mayor of the village of Ploqdalmezeau who was cited referring to “his people” and their anger. The same mayor was also portrayed as possessing some of the same folk knowledge as the fishermen. He is quoted as saying: “They [the authorities] have not learned from the Torrey Canyon or later catastrophes. It is as if they were ignorant of the wind, the sea in fury and the currents . . .” (pg. 15). Unlike the other French officials, this local mayor possessed some of the same older wisdom that all Bretons must possess.

Breton identity was also fostered by emphasizing the fellowship of the Breton people. Beyond collective anger, reporter Philip Jordan depicted them as united on other fronts, including the widespread belief among the Breton community that the American owners of the tanker should be cleaning up the mess, and their sense of certitude that it would probably be they, not the French government, who would end up taking care of their region. Jordan emphasized their numbers – “a good many thousands of . . . fellow Bretons” (pg. 15) – to convey Breton fellowship, and also wrote about Breton belief in their figurative abandonment by national government: “One thing is certain, the Bretons feel: Paris won’t help” (pg. 15).

The sentence strongly bespeaks a regional Breton identity by differentiating between the people of Paris and the people of Brittany.

Fostering a British Identity

In two places, the *Guardian* invoked a British national identity more generally by referencing a major national landmark or unique British firefighting vehicle, known as “Green Goddess.” In the first instance, reporter David Fairhall wrote in a March 21 story: “Unless the weather changes the oil is expected to reach the Channel Islands by



Map depicting the British heritage coastline known among Britons as “The Lizard.”

tomorrow and – just possibly – the Cornish beaches on Friday. Air patrols reported the slick 70 miles off the Lizard” (pg. 24). The “Lizard” refers to a peninsula and a special heritage coastline running along the very southwestern part of Cornwall known for its spectacular coastal views, its unique ecology and geology, and the treacherousness of its craggy coastline to passing ships. The Lizard is also steeped in ancient history and myth. Thus, to many Britons, the Lizard is a nationally recognized icon (*for example, see #2 in Appendix*).

In the other instance, a story on March 27 by Morris described the flurry of preparations underway in Britain in the event of oil approaching the island. As part of the “Threat to Britain” frame and theme, this section of the story sought to illustrate flurry of activity, including the mustering of vessels and ships and the competence with which the British were orchestrating preparatory measures on the Channel Islands and the British coast. Within this context, Morris reported how “Green Goddess fire engines are standing by on Guernsey and Jersey, ready along with sewerage carts, to suck up the oil when it comes” (pg. 20). The specific naming of the type of fire engine – now revered throughout Britain, much the same way that Model T’s are associated with the American spirit, and fondly recollected

as a British icon – instead of a more general term suggests a *Guardian* intent to appeal to a sense of British pride in this context, and to enhance the theme of British stoutness and preparedness (see #5 in Appendix).

British Identity through French Criticism

It can also be argued that a sense of British national identity was fostered in *Guardian* stories by an occasional current of criticism or condescension of the French, particularly in the first week of coverage after the spill. Stories never overtly criticized the French, but narrations sometimes set up a contrast between an official French view and a subsequent description of implied reality, as in this example from March 21: “The official French view was that no further spillage likely. However, a force seven south-westerly wind was driving a heavy swell on to the rocky coast where the Amoco Cadiz is lying . . .” (pg. 20). The sentence subtly contradicts the French by insinuating that despite the “official French view,” the rough conditions by the wrecked tanker could very well induce more spillage.

Some *Guardian* stories also used qualifiers when referring to the beliefs of French authorities. A March 23 story focusing on a dispute between the British and French over the handling of the spill and whether to use dispersants used the qualifier “claim” to describe French concern over the use of dispersants: “The French claim to be worried that the chosen dispersant might do more harm than good” (“Britain’s Battle for the Beaches,” pg. 15). Instead of simply stating that the French were worried, the use of “claim” bears the subtle tinge of condescension and suggests that French concern was less substantiated than British beliefs to the contrary. The qualifier “apparently” was used later in the same article to describe “simple confusion” over the differences between the older dispersant and a new one, believed to be less toxic, that the British wanted to use on the *Amoco Cadiz* spill. Suggesting that the French didn’t understand the differences between the two chemicals, the reporter wrote that “simple confusion . . . is believed to be the reason for French objections to the use of dispersants.” She then wrote almost dismissively, as if waving off a humorous

misunderstanding, “They apparently thought that Britain was planning to use the toxic product” (pg. 15).

The subtle current of criticism and condescension was also found in the *Guardian’s* use of certain quotes. A story on March 25 cited Stanley Clinton Davis, the multifaceted favored source of most early spill articles, as “declin[ing] to make a judgment about French efforts to fight the slick, but said that the most immediate lesson was the need for international action” (pg. 1). While the paraphrase does not directly criticize the French, it hints at the delay caused by disputes over the spill’s handling by suggesting the need for “international action,” thus implying that the French were not doing the best job.

Later in the article, Davis was paraphrased as having the sentiment that “French action about their beaches is their business” (pg. 1), again implying inferior action by the French. The statement suggested that it wasn’t the business of the British to interfere if the French didn’t mind dealing with unnecessary pollution of their beaches. Davis then “refused to be drawn on suggestions that only about five French vessels were seen from a helicopter in the area of the slick – and not actually tackling it” (pg. 1). The statement was written so as to present the outward indication of conciliatoriness, as though the British didn’t want to lower themselves to petty criticism. Between the lines however, there is a strong suggestion that the French were just sitting around doing nothing while the competent British were doing all the proactive thinking in stories up to that point.

Storytelling Devices and Language

Evidence of storytelling devices abounds in the *Guardian’s* coverage of the Breton spill disaster, making *Guardian* stories particularly colorful. In numerous places, the paper made use of anecdotes, poetic language, alliteration, metaphors and similes, narrative-style prose, vivid imagery, and scene-setting narrative descriptions to help convey the multifaceted array of angles and developments associated with the unfolding spill story (see #'s 3, 5, 7, and 8 in

Appendix). While a hard writing style was more common towards the end of coverage, many *Guardian* stories contained some type of narrative flair.

A few early stories helped to create a picture of what the experience of the spill must have been like for Breton villagers, while dually framing the spill as a major disaster, by referring to the oil spill in terms of its strong smell and including rich quotes from villagers describing their “nausea” and “eyes . . . red from the fumes” (March 18, 1978, pg. 1). Other stories (#5 in *Appendix*) included small descriptive details not often seen in news writing, causing some stories to be more reminiscent of the narrative style of books, such as Morris’ story from March 27 which described British Captain Larry Corner as “the phlegmatic officer in charge of Britain’s efforts” (pg. 20).

A motley assortment of adjectives and vocabulary evocative of certain themes or frames – particularly the “man versus sea” frame – appeared in stories and contributed to the formation of story frames. Lyrical, descriptive imagery was used often to describe the wrecked tanker, volunteers working, bird habitats or village landscapes, or the natural setting of the ocean or weather. A story from March 30 described how a helicopter flew “over the wreck as it heaved in heavy seas on the reef” (pg. 22), evoking the bad weather theme. Jordan’s story from March 28 (# 7 in *Appendix*) described the “pink granite rocks” near the Breton town of Tregastrel where sea birds used to nest before the Torrey Canyon disaster oiled them. The description of the scenery in contrast with the oil devastation accentuated the pollution frame and highlighted the ecological angle. Another story by Jordan on March 28 opened with an anecdotal narrative which strongly evoked regional identity while coalescing several themes:

“Every window in the French port of Brest which is the centre of the oil stricken region, carries the same message: ‘After the black tide tomorrow. And then we will start to recover from the detergents.’ For if the local people are angry that oil should have been spilled in the first place they are equally as furious that the French have given in to British pressure to use chemical dispersants” (pg. 15).

Oil imagery was particularly varied and vivid in *Guardian* stories. The descriptiveness of this imagery helped to frame the spill as a pollution disaster and played a role in the augmentation of certain frames and themes, in particular the battle frame and the bad weather theme. In many stories oil was referred to by a diverse suite of descriptors, including “black sludge,” “thick oil,” “black ooze,” a “thick gunge” or a “light film,” and as a “black tongue,” among others. In one story, a reporter described the “huge geysers of oil” that “immediately began to shoot from the wreck, forced out 30-ft. waves. . .” (Thursday March 30, 1978, pg. 22).

Some of the *Guardian*’s oil imagery anthropomorphized it, depicting it as a wily, roguish sea creature with mischievous, machinating intentions. A story from March 20 wrote how oil was “believed to have escaped from the ship” (pg. 24), as though the oil had specifically plotted to escape. Another story from March 29 described the oil’s swift movement toward the Islands and used language and imagery that was heavily implicated in conjuring the battle theme and frame. Instead of describing the slick as simply moving in the direction of the Channel Islands, the reporter chose to describe the oil as “point[ing] out a black finger towards the islands,” thus ascribing human-like qualities of free will and ill intent. The combined effect of this description with evocative narrative of the slick’s merger with a larger slick recently detached from the coast visually suggested the movements of a sinister pod of dolphins, and thus framed the slick specifically as a threat to the Channel Islands which needed to be counter-attacked.

The tone of *Guardian* stories also varied, sometimes noticeably mirroring the mood of a story’s subject. Stories ranged from the occasionally somber or bleak, to condescending (as in stories subtly criticizing the French), to introspective, to occasionally humorous or piquant, as in a March 29 story by Jordan wherein he described how the “newly strengthened control system for shipping round the Breton coast saved its first customer when the 7,500-ton Cuban ship Twentieth Anniversary broke down three miles off Portsall” (pg. 24). The phrase “saved its first customer” was somewhat playful in its treatment of the regulatory context and added

a bit of levity into narration of the predominantly gloom-ridden spill disaster story. Because the tone of *Guardian* stories was so perceptible when it deviated from hard news style, story frames and themes were often promulgated without sensationalism by the sense of seriousness, mild sarcasm, or reflectiveness perceived in the writing.

Sources

The *Guardian's* use of sources in its spill stories in largely mirrors observations about how media typically use sources in disaster reporting. A few sources emerged as frequent characters in the stories, most notably, Mr. Stanley Clinton Davis, Britain's transportation minister. Davis was used most often in earlier stories as the fall-back source for everything from assessments of the spread of the spill and its potential impact, to commentaries about Britain's response and preparations, to ecological aspects, to statements about the threat to Britain, to quotes offering generic perspective or information.

Guardian coverage displayed a definite tendency to use official sources. However, some stories also displayed a tendency to include a variety of sources, even if only paraphrased or unnamed. Depending on the thrust of the story, sources often derived from a subset of people more directly related to that thrust. For instance, when stories focused on fishermen in the Channel Islands or Brittany, the majority of sources were culled from local people, such as fishing cooperatives, unions, or the local tourism industry (see #'s 3, 7, and 8 in *Appendix*). Several stories used unnamed sources, identified by their company or the office to which they belonged. However, the paper still made an obvious attempt to include a variety of voices in a majority of its stories.

Stories typically contained at least one official bureaucratic source. Several stories paraphrased or quoted collective groups, such as "Breton fishermen," "villagers," or "maritime authorities." Environmental sources also appeared in coverage and included science experts, marine biologists and ecologists, and representatives from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. However, in the overall scope of the paper's 35 stories, their

numbers were fewer than those of official sources. The overall diversity of sources suggested an attempt to achieve some balance, but it was observed that at times, British sources were favored over French sources. At the same time, however, the focus of the story sometimes was the determinant of where most sources came from. The *Guardian* stories examining clean-up efforts at a more local level drew heavily from Breton sources, citing local mayors, collective villagers, fishermen, a local Breton paper, or French authorities. Likewise, in describing some of the difficult containment efforts experienced by British vessels battling the slick, the *Guardian* quoted tug captains and officials of the Royal Navy.

One striking omission was commentary of local people. No individual voices of fishermen, residents, volunteers, local by-standers, or tanker crew appeared in *Guardian* stories, though as noted, these groups were often cited collectively, for instance as “the villagers of Portsall” or the “fishermen of Jersey.” While the inclusion of individual local voices would have provided rich contextual nuances and information, this preference for citing local sources collectively instead of individually at times helped to enhance the *Guardian*’s articulation of regional identity. Because official sources – which symbolized national authority, interests, or perspective – were more prevalent in stories, citing regional voices in collective groups helped to crystallize the divide between government and regional perspective by bolstering the backbone of a regional point of view with the perceived weight of a distinct group with a different stake in the disaster. However, in order to provide richer context gleaned from individual experience, the *Guardian* would also have needed to include some individual voices instead as well.

Images and Graphics

A total of 11 photographs and 2 graphics appeared in *Guardian* coverage during the study interval. Overall, images did not emphasize the pollution aspect of the spill. Further, because images were often printed out of context with a story focus, they usually exerted

little or no effect on story framing, instead standing alone and functioning as independent visual context.

The only photograph of a dead animal appeared in the paper's second story on March 20. The caption to the photograph, printed next to a second photo depicting helicopters flying over the still intact tanker, stated without embellishment: "AMOCO AFTERMATH: A dead sea bird killed by oil on the beach at Portsall; helicopters fly over the crippled tanker" (pg. 24). Nor did the Day 1 front page story show an image of the wrecked tanker, but instead printed a respectable head-shot of Pasquale Bardari, head a-tilt as if answering a question. The image did not show the captain in his officer's uniform and perhaps was an early cue indicating the sub-surface sense of support for the tanker captain cultivated in later stories.

Contrary to this thesis' expectation, the first tanker image didn't appear until the paper's second story, three days after the spill. It showed the tanker in a larger context with a helicopter flying over the wreck surveying it (*see #1 in Appendix*). The second tanker image appeared three days later, on Thursday March 23. Again, this image showed the tanker from a unique vantage – from above as its decks swam in ocean foam and waves. A prominent view of the "Amoco" emblem flag was visible in the photo's left corner, drenched and sinking in the water. The photo did not sensationalize the message by highlighting spilt oil, pollution, or wildlife, and the angle of the shot is unique. While the image is evocative and mildly epic in its depiction of a great vessel sinking in the sea, it was a fitting accompaniment to the somber story, and thus did not come across as attempting to aggrandize the impression of the tanker's size.

Several of the images seemed out of place in the context of the stories they appeared with. For example, the paper's the *Guardian's* seventh image, depicting several volunteers in protective gear at work cleaning up a beach in Brittany, bore little relevance to the story text. The caption read simply: "The big clear-up continues in Brittany yesterday" (Monday March 27, 1978, "Radio Tapes Renew Argument over Distress Call," pg. 3). Yet the story in which it appeared was almost entirely focused on the evidence contained in radio tapes of the two

captains' conversation. As a stand-alone image, however, it provided the first visual perspective on what an oiled beach looked like and was thus informative on its own, functioning as its own individual element in the story. This displacement from more relevant textual context helped to ensure the image did not over-accentuate the pollution frame.

The first graphic published by the *Guardian* – a map showing the spread of oil along the Breton coastline and the location of the wreck – didn't appear until May 10, almost two months after the tanker went aground, suggesting a less refined coordination of the visual and textual components of reporting the disaster (see #8 in *Appendix*). However, the graphic is still informative and relevant to the story's context, which went into depth exploring the difficult clean-up effort. In this case, the graphic subtly enhanced the story focus – which described in poignant, at times eloquent, narrative detail the painstaking process, frustration and incessant tedium of the clean-up work – by visually magnifying the narrative detail and conveying a sense of the enormity of the task ahead. The labors of volunteers painstakingly throwing each rock back into the ocean seems a Sisyphean task when the map graphic is consulted and one sees the bolded long, black line representing all the oiled beaches that must be thusly cleaned.

The only other graphic in the *Guardian's* suite of stories appeared on June 21 in a story headlined "Tanker Captains' Row Lost Vital Hours" and was also directly related to a subtle promulgation of one of the *Guardian's* themes. The story was among those which suggested a subliminal sentiment of open-mindedness to the tanker captain's situation and the graphic bolstered this by serving as evidence backing up the captain's statements. The story revisited the controversy over responsibility by presenting some of the facts and assessments – primarily Captain Bardari's side of the story – surrounding the argument between the two captains. Within this context, the graphic – showing a close-up of a portion of a log kept by the tanker's safety inspector – highlighted snippets of the log that supported the claims made by Captain Bardari in his rendition of events (see #9 in *Appendix*). Thus, the graphic in this case also colluded with the text to enhance one of the *Guardian's* themes.

In one instance, the *Guardian* appeared to include a photograph solely for the purpose of enhancing a news angle that otherwise had little direct relevance to local British affairs. The image in question – the last of the *Guardian*'s photographs, appearing in its 26th story on May 17 – displayed a head shot of the British chairman of the Liberian-sponsored inquiry. The chairman played a very minor role in the *Guardian*'s story about the inquiry, and it is thus surmised that the image was included specifically to add emphasis to the local British angle of the inquiry – the fact that it was held in London and being chaired by a Briton.

Summary

Guardian stories during this early period demonstrated a mix of conventional reporting of spill disasters and some greater sophistication in narrative style and depth of coverage. The predominance of traditional frames for the disaster indicates an adherence to some routine aspects of disaster reporting. However, the fact the paper maintained steady coverage of a diversity of spill-related themes across several months also indicates that the *Guardian* recognized and attempted to probe the deeper complexity of the spill. The paper's source use promulgated a primarily official view of the disaster for stories about threats to Britain's Channel Islands. However, the paper also displayed greater critical reportage of the Breton angles, often quoting several local Breton sources over more distant French national officials. The paper also engaged a variety of engaging narrative tactics, as well as highlighting the regional identity of affected fishermen. Overall, the mix of some excellent instances of reportage with more "routine" examples suggests that some individual reporters were ahead of their time in understanding the deeper reporting required to avoid simplistic or sensationalized spill coverage, but that widespread editorial encouragement of such writing practices was not yet a fully established news value at the larger organizational level. Editorial attention to deeper systemic issues, however, along with the paper's longer-term attention to the spill, also indicates that as a whole, the *Guardian* placed more news value on

the significance of environmental events, and was perhaps ahead of its time in recognizing the deeper complexity of environmental problems.

The Seattle Times

In contrast to *Guardian* spill stories, the stories published by the *Seattle Times* are more brusque and hard news-oriented throughout most of coverage and display less complexity. The *Seattle Times* printed just 12 stories about the *Amoco Cadiz* spill during the study interval, all but one during the month of March. The last spill-related article – an editorial by Glenn Carter, the *Seattle Times*' maritime editor and the only article written by a *Seattle Times* writer – appeared on April 2. As most of the spill-related developments had happened by the end of March, the paper didn't miss any major developments in the spill story, save for the proceedings of the Liberian-sponsored inquiry and its outcome.

The story of the *Amoco Cadiz* spill was not a front page story for the *Seattle Times*. The paper's first story on the wreck was the only time that the *Amoco Cadiz* story made it to the front page. The other 11 stories all appeared in the paper's Maritime section. Between Friday March 17 and Friday March 24, the paper ran one story per day on the spill. After a two-day gap over the weekend, three consecutive stories appeared between Monday March 27 and Thursday March 29. Two days later, on Sunday April 2, the paper ran its last article related to the *Amoco Cadiz*. The stories are all wire stories, save for the last day's editorial, and come primarily from the Associated Press and United Press International, though one story came from the *London Daily Telegraph* and the lead story on Friday March 17 is listed as "compiled from news services." One story was dually written by the A.P. and UPI.

Differences between the Seattle Times and the Guardian

Most *Seattle Times* stories were short – especially in comparison to the varied lengths of *Guardian* stories – and displayed a tighter, more abridged structure. Information was more tightly packed into the wire stories, especially the first few stories, which were characterized

by a detached, matter-of-fact tone and a hard news style with little narrative “extras.” While the middle portion of *Seattle Times* stories became more dramatic in overall style, brevity still reigned and the last two stories resumed their strictly hard, matter-of-fact tone.

In contrast to the *Guardian*’s first story of its spill series, which began with the declaration that “France faced its worst oil pollution disaster last night . . .”, the *Seattle Times* made no judgments about the magnitude of the spill, merely stating matter-of-factly that “The American supertanker Amoco Cadiz, carrying 63 million gallons of oil, broke in two on rocks off the French coast today and was polluting beaches and fishing grounds with oil” (pg. 1). At the same time, however, *Seattle Times* stories tended to be more evocative of the biological damage and to use imagery in ways that aggrandized the magnitude of the disaster (see #11 in *Appendix*).

It may be noteworthy to observe that the wire stories relayed the information about the volume of oil on board in imperial units, perhaps for the American audience, instead of metric – although a few inconsistencies in this pattern were observed, with a couple stories “forgetting” to translate the numerical information and one story providing both.

Also in contrast to the *Guardian*’s immediate declaration of the spill as “France’s worst,” the *Seattle Times*’ first story on March 17 noted merely that “The wreck has the potential to be the worst tanker spill on record” (pg. 1). However, although *Seattle Times*’ wire stories were more initially cautious about making a value judgment about the spill’s rank or magnitude than the *Guardian*, its Day 1 headline was more evocative of disaster than the *Guardian*’s. Where the *Guardian*’s Day 1 headline billed the tanker spill more modestly as a “threat to coasts,” the *Seattle Times*’ lead story, titled “Giant Tanker Splits off France,” invoked a quantifying adjective, and thus still framed the spill in terms of magnitude.

Further, unlike the *Guardian*’s Day 1 image – a small, unobtrusive head shot of the captain – the *Seattle Times* published a looming, unmistakable image of the tanker sticking like a surfaced submarine or beached whale out of the water. The photo spanned about 75 percent of the width of the newspaper and was disproportionately large on the page compared

with the story – which garnered a modest 10 paragraphs in a right-side column (see #10 in *Appendix*).

A Generic Pollution Disaster Frame

Unlike the *Guardian*, which developed multiple frames for the spill story in its coverage, the wire reports published by the *Seattle Times* express essentially one generic “pollution disaster” frame. This generic frame emerged in the first story, with the initial mention of pollution of beaches and a mention of the speed at which oil spread towards the coastline. The frame is cultivated in subsequent stories by a more dramatic emphasis on ecological damage and use of language and imagery more evocative of the spill’s magnitude, as illustrated in this opening line to the paper’s second story on March 18: “A huge and growing oil slick seeping from the wrecked supertanker Amoco Cadiz washed up on miles of Brittany shoreline yesterday in what was potentially the worst ecological disaster ever on this spill-plagued coast” (pg. B10).

The wire stories published by the *Times* were also less concerned with differentiating between regional effects. The spill was a generic disaster which affected a basically homogenous area. The lead story mentioned potential threats to the “lobster-rich coastline,” intimating that lobster was an especially important marine commodity which might be negatively affected, but obscuring the wider berth of marine species cultivated, and thus the greater scope of economic damage to fisher-folk. The story also did not identify Brittany as the affected region of France near the epicenter of the disaster, but instead referred more generally to the “French coast” (pg. A1).

In addition, no mention was made of the threat to the Channel Islands until the fourth story on March 20, and then, only in a brief reference to how the British sent help after “the weather bureau reported that southwesterly winds were driving the vast oil slick up into the English Channel, possibly threatening the Channel Islands” (pg. A20).

Emphasis on Biological Damage

Seattle Times' wire stories tended to hone in on the environmental aspect with a more graphic tint. The paper's second story reported in more lurid fashion that "fish were spotted floating belly-up in the besmirched waters off the tiny fishing port and summer resort of Portsall" (pg. B10). Stories also used dramatic language that highlighted the ecological consequences of the spill with a touch of sensationalism not seen in the *Guardian*. The paper's fifth story, for instance (see #11 in *Appendix*), noted the effect on "uncounted birds, oysters, fish and other wildlife" as a result of a "mass of sludge" (pg. B8).

Stories often coupled mention of the magnitude or spread of the slick with a mention of the ecological damage – often emphasizing wildlife deaths. For instance, the paper's short fourth story on March 20 ended by focusing on the great harm wrought to wildlife and investing the slick with the glimmerings of anthropomorphic qualities: "The vast slick, 12 miles wide, has killed thousands of sea birds and is menacing the region's vital tourist, oyster culture and fishing industries in what could be France's worst ecological disaster" (pg. A20). As evident in this example, stories that mentioned wildlife effects did not provide a more in-depth explanation of the larger context of ecological effects. In fact, it was not until the ninth story that specific numerical information about numbers of birds killed was offered. However, the data provided had the effect of emphasizing the tragedy of the deaths.

Evocative Imagery

By the *Seattle Times'* fourth wire story on Monday March 20, the detached tone began to fade and imagery began to partake of more visually-oriented language to describe the oil, such as describing how "50 miles of Breton beaches" were "already awash with black tar" (pg. A20). The spill officially became the "biggest oil spill history" in the *Seattle Times'* fifth story, with the declaration came more liberal use of visually suggestive adjectives to describe the oil and other imagery, a trend which persisted until the tenth story on March 28, when the wire stories toned down the more evocative rhetoric and again became more detached. Thus, oil

“spewed” and “jets” of oil “spurted” or “gushed” from the tanker, and imagery became anthropomorphic in some places – the tanker “broke its back,” for instance (Friday March 24, 1978, pg. C5) – with occasional emphasis on the supernatural, wrathful power of nature.

Source Use

The first half of *Seattle Times* stories were sparse on quotes, and as of the paper’s fifth story, no sources were even partially quoted. It is not until the paper’s sixth story on March 22 that the first full quote of any source appeared in coverage, in this instance an unnamed source quoted describing the rollicking conditions inside the tanker’s holds. The seventh and ninth stories contained the most sources seen in any published by the *Times*. These stories each contained four sources. The seventh story was unique in that came from the British paper the *London Daily Telegraph*, and thus included unique sources seen nowhere else. The ninth story paraphrased a source and directly quoted more sources than any previous story – three sources – though only two were named directly.

Most sources were of the government or official ilk, and were of the typical sort, ranging from “maritime authorities” to “oil-pollution experts” to “Amoco spokesmen” to spokesmen for the tanker owners. In the few instances where a source was mentioned individually by name, the source represented an official or government source. A couple unique sources did appear, though, such as the Center for Short-lived Phenomena, a Boston-based organization cited in the fifth story to verify that the spill was the largest in history.

Story #7 – A British Flair

The *Seattle Times*’ inclusion of a *London Daily Telegraph* story on Thursday March 23 is worth mentioning because in virtually all aspects of reportage this story differed from the other wire stories published by the *Seattle Times* (see #12 in *Appendix*). In many ways, certain characteristics of this story more closely emulated aspects of the *Guardian*’s reporting style – suggesting similarities in the British journalism writing style. In particular, this story was

more vividly imaginative in its framing of the spill as being of an almost otherworldly nature. Both the bad weather and the strength of the sea were emphasized, as in the *Guardian*.

This story was also the only instance where any sense of regional folk identity came through in *Seattle Times* wire stories. It briefly invoked the knowledge of local fishermen to validate what the authorities had blamed on the weather: “Even if the weather had allowed the work to be carried out, local fishermen say a channel would have been impossible to find” (pg. D2).

The story further evinced some of the liveliness seen in *Guardian* stories in its use of wry or mildly piquant language. The story advanced a new minor angle – namely, that all the oil sucked up by spill workers might still be useful if taken somewhere and refined. Though the question was a newsworthy angle to pursue – where did all the recovered oil go? – neither paper attempted to answer it. However, like the *Guardian*, this wire story broached the subject in a colorful fashion with a hint of wryness, noting that “the liquid is being taken to a Brest refinery to see whether it will produce anything of use” (pg. D2). The description read almost as an expression of disgust towards the oil. The descriptive flair was seen again in the midst of image-laden narration when the story described the pumping operation as “almost ludicrous . . . against the backdrop of the seas pounding into the harbour” (pg. D2).

Seattle Times Editorial – an American Focus

The last article published by the *Seattle Times*, the paper’s maritime section editor entitled “Wires Crossed on Amoco Cadiz,” was the first time that a true *Seattle Times* voice is heard on the Amoco Cadiz spill. However, the editor, Glen Carter, used his editorial to focus on the media’s misleading tendency to refer to the tanker as “American,” rather than on the effects of the spill in Brittany or larger systemic questions (see #13 in *Appendix*). The editorial implicated the wire services in perpetuating the error and seemed more concerned that the misconception about ownership could cause a sense abroad that the United States was lax about environmental standards. The editorial included a long excerpt from a Transportation

Institute letter clipped by the editor: “Notwithstanding press reports that refer to this ship as the American vessel Amoco Cadiz, this vessel is not American. It does not fly the American flag, is not manned by American workers, does not pay American taxes and is not required to incorporate American environmental and safety standards.”

No other news, information or updates of continuing clean-up efforts or spill proceedings in Brittany were mentioned. As this was the last story published about the spill, the lingering message was one with an American focus subtly suggesting a strong environmental record in the United States. On Friday March 31, the *Seattle Times* did publish an article using the context of the *Amoco Cadiz* spill to examine the potential for oil tanker pollution in Puget Sound. The article, also written by Glen Carter, was longer and more probing than any of the wire stories about the *Amoco Cadiz*.

Summary

The *Seattle Times*' scant coverage of the *Amoco Cadiz* spill and its less scrupulous selection of wire stories to represent its journalistic voice suggests that at this time the paper did not consider oil spills – or at least, oil spills outside its home territory – as important environmental events worthy of more probing coverage. While the paper used wire reports that were initially more circumspect about the magnitude of the spill, the same wire reports also conformed to other routine tendencies of news media covering disasters, such as emphasis of drama and simplistic reporting that fails to examine significant underlying causes. The fact that none of the *Seattle Times*' wire stories explored systemic problems related to oil, and the fact that the paper's only in-house writing on the spill emphasized an American point of view, suggests that in 1978 the paper had an ill-formed view of the newsworthiness of international environmental problems. It also suggests that the paper had not yet come to value the specific challenges of producing quality environmental reporting about an oil spill disaster, or the depth of reporting needed to effectively explore a spill's distinct complexities.

4. EXXON VALDEZ – WORST OIL SPILL IN U.S. HISTORY

When the tanker *Exxon Valdez* grounded itself on Bligh Reef in the minutes after midnight on March 24, 1989, it gripped the nation, sent shockwaves rippling around the globe, and drove a fatal stake into the hitherto burnished image the oil industry had successfully created for itself after years of extracting and shipping oil from Alaska without major incident. Journalists from around the country flocked to the small town of Valdez, Alaska and neighboring towns to cover the spill – which was an unequivocal disaster. Oil from the spill eventually fanned out to encompass an area larger than the size of Delaware and oiled more than 2,200 miles of non-contiguous Alaskan coastlines – many of them inviolate, inaccessible, and ruggedly rocky. Many thousands of animals up and down the Alaskan ecological food chain perished, from plankton and kelps, to fish and birds, to bear and whales – not to mention sea lions and endangered sea otters, which became favored symbols of the tragedy for many in the media. In addition, communities largely or wholly dependent on fishing or wilderness tourism were devastated by the spill.

Nonetheless, while the spill's intrinsic scope was indisputable, the circumstances surrounding the tanker's grounding and its aftermath lent it particularly well to dramatic portrayals of catastrophe, devastation, and conflict. Smith (1992) has observed that the *Exxon Valdez* was both the largest environmental story of 1989 and among the biggest of all news stories that year. People were outraged that a disaster of such magnitude should have sullied what was perceived as among the last pristine wildernesses in the world, and further by the ensuing botched clean-up effort. The spill received regular attention through the end of the first season's clean-up in mid-September, when Exxon had to capitulate to the oncoming Alaskan autumn tempest and cease its first season's cleaning efforts. However, Smith (1992) also noted that coverage of the *Exxon Valdez* story persisted for years afterwards, tracking the proceedings of a year-long investigation into the events surrounding the spill and follow-ups on the environmental condition of Alaska.

Despite the glut and furor of media coverage, researchers (Smith, 1992; Daley and O'Neill, 1991; Beresford, 1996) have observed that most coverage of the spill tended to focus on a narrow subset of themes, such as the charge of drunkenness against the tanker captain, the ineptness of the spill response, the threats to fish and wildlife, effects on the livelihoods of fishermen, and criticisms within and without Alaska against Exxon for its clean-up efforts. While these themes indeed merited media attention, their treatment in a majority of media outlets studied by researchers – and especially mainstream media, which Smith (1992) criticized in general as following a “pack mentality” in regards to the Alaska spill – was at surface level only, operating within a scope which implicitly acquiesced to the idea of the tanker’s grounding as an unanticipated and apocalyptic disaster. In addition, critical assessments of spill coverage in hindsight have charged that the media’s focus on these easy “cultural stereotypes” ultimately rendered the mainstream media complicit in distracting attention from the less obvious but more important role of the oil industry, the U.S. Coast Guard, and state and federal governments in creating the crumbling social, safety and legislative framework in which the grounding of the *Exxon Valdez* on a night of bad fog and unusually heavy ice floes was an inevitable disaster waiting to happen.

As this study’s textual analysis found, however, none of these charges held true in the case of the *Seattle Times*’ and, to a lesser extent the *Guardian*’s, coverage of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. Where other media coverage failed to examine these themes within the larger and more deeply rooted contexts of deteriorations in maritime safety, public policy, regulatory contexts, and the more nebulous penumbra of social complacency towards the oil industry and the nation’s thirst for cheap oil, the *Seattle Times* in particular stands out for its superb and informative spill coverage in which these themes were an integral part of the news focus, forming a significant percentage of total stories written and often probed in depth in relation to the other unfolding nuances of the spill story. Because of the *Seattle Times*’ conscious effort to grapple with these deeper contextual themes, the spill was thus framed as more than just the environmental catastrophe it was, but as the culmination of a decade-long process of

systemic corrosion in which governments and corporations were both responsible for the drastic declines in maritime safety and standards. Further, although the spill happened essentially in the paper's back yard and its widespread ecological and economic effects struck a chord of deep concern for Washingtonians confronted with the possibility of a similar disaster happening in the heavily oil-tanker trafficked Puget Sound, the *Seattle Times* succeeded in capturing the real tragedy experienced by Alaskans and the complicated tangle of emotion, fact and prevailing confusion without falling into sensationalism.

The *Guardian* also produced a respectful suite of stories that skirted sensationalism while touching on deeper systemic roots of the spill and framing the disaster as a by-product of corporate and government irresponsibility and ineptitude. The *Guardian's* coverage was not nearly as compendious as that of the *Seattle Times*, and differences were observed in use of language and story nuances adopted. However, the number of in-depth stories written by the paper – a sizeable percentage of which were written from first-hand accounts of *Guardian* correspondents on location in Alaska – and the depth of attention to systemic aspects was a surprising discovery of this thesis' analysis. In addition, the analysis found that *Guardian* reporters overall wrote about several news angles with a degree of delicacy, sophistication, and sensitivity to the many nuances and emotional aspects of the spill. Considering the fact that the spill was not local news for the *Guardian*, the paper's relatively extensive attention to the Alaska spill was another surprising find of the textual analysis.

The next section explores the results of the textual analysis in more detail, along with some of the features of reportage in the *Guardian* and *Seattle Times* that characterize the papers' approach to reporting the spill and also helped the papers avoid the temptation to report on the *Exxon Valdez* as yet another cycle in the great "modern myth" of catastrophe in which humans wrestle with primeval forces beyond their control.

The Seattle Times

It is easy to see why the *Seattle Times* won a Pulitzer Prize in 1990 for its coverage of the *Exxon Valdez* spill. The paper published an impressive suite of stories during the six-month study interval, totaling more than 115 stories between Friday March 24, 1989 and the end of September 1989. Between March 24, 1989 and June 8, 1989 the paper published a total of 102 stories which were analyzed for the research purposes of this thesis. The paper also published an assortment of related contextual stories about oil, rising gas prices, Washington State's concerns over a similar disaster, and various editorials and commentaries about the *Exxon Valdez* disaster not written by *Seattle Times* editors or regular contributors. These were not analyzed for this study, but were noted as significant indicators of the *Seattle Times*' extensive coverage of the spill and its related offshoots.

Of the total stories between March and June, the highest number were published in April – 47 stories, or about 45 percent. As there were no stories directly about the *Exxon Valdez* after April 11, 1989, this percent represents extensive *Seattle Times* spill coverage within the first two weeks of April. However, in the immediate aftermath of the spill, the paper published 21 stories in the first week alone after the spill, the last week of March. This number represents about 21 percent of the *Seattle Times*' total spill coverage between March and June. In May, 33 stories, or about 31 percent, were published, and 3 stories were published in the first week of June 1989.

In addition, for two weeks between March 26 and April 7, each day's newspaper contained at least two or more stories about the spill, accounting for 59 of the paper's total *Exxon* spill output through June 8, 1989 – or about 56 percent of stories written. The overwhelming majority of stories appeared on the front page with secondary and continuation stories appearing in a special “Valdez Disaster” section the *Seattle Times* had created as a means of organizing and concentrating spill-related stories. Frequently, two spill stories appeared on the front page with jumps to inside pages, usually to the special Valdez

section located in the “A” section of the paper. The highest concentration of stories on a single day – 8 stories – occurred on Sunday April 2, nine days after the initial grounding. The second highest concentration of stories for a single day – 7 stories – occurred later that week on Friday April 7, 1989 (*see #19 in Appendix*). However, it was common to see a paper with 5 or 6 spill stories on a single day throughout the first month and a half of spill coverage. Except for the last 8 stories between May 21, 1989 and June 8, 1989 (accounting for spill story numbers 95 through 102) when just one story appeared per day, daily papers with multiple stories were commonly observed.

Themes and News Angles

One noticeable aspect of *Seattle Times* spill coverage was the far-ranging scope of themes and news angles covered by the paper. News stories encompassed all the major themes which surfaced naturally as a result of developments in the unfolding spill disaster, including: reporting on the size of the spill and threats to fisheries in the wake of the growing spill; the frustration and anger of residents, local government, and fishermen over a slothful start to clean-up efforts; and the potential role of the tanker captain, Joseph Hazelwood, among others. The paper also produced several deeply informative stories about ecological aspects and threats to the Alaskan environment; the struggles and the situation from the vantage of local fishermen and business owners; as well as highly probing pieces exploring historical, systemic, or regulatory contexts of the spill.

The only news theme which was notably absent in *Seattle Times* coverage was exploration of the effects of the spill on Native Alaskans. Aside from a couple brief references to indigenous Alaskans in passing, no story focused on their experience or sought their perspective on the spill or its effects to their way of life.

Systemic Causes a Mainstay of Reporting Themes

However, unlike other national media reporting on the spill, the *Seattle Times* did not make the “stereotypical” themes the centerpiece of feature-length stories or the primary

subject of stories, but rather, wasted no time in broaching the historical and systemic roots and contexts of the spill. By Sunday March 26, 1989 – two days after the spill went aground, officially at 12:27 a.m. on Friday March 24, 1989 – the paper published two stories, one a front-page piece by Bill Dietrich, who would later be among the *Seattle Times* reporters to receive a Pulitzer Prize for his stories, titled “Anger, Frustration in Valdez” (*see #14 in Appendix*) and a second story by Ross Anderson, another of the core prize-winning reporters, titled “Fishermen, Environmentalists Tried to Block Oil Port,” which explored the historical context of opposition to the building of a major oil port in Valdez, as well as some of the flaws in oil company predictions of the statistical probability of a major spill the size of the *Exxon Valdez*.

The next day, on Monday March 27, the paper published a story, again by reporter Bill Dietrich, titled “Valdez Drowning in the Oil that Feeds It” (*see #15 in Appendix*) which examined the irony of Valdez town’s “love-hate relationship with Big Oil” (pg. A4) and the economic boon of oil in ironic juxtaposition with the natural ecological uniqueness of the region and its near equal contribution to the Alaskan economy. The story also provided substantial historical context for the smaller spills and intimations that a large spill was bound to happen one day, such as detail about how much of the Alaska tanker fleet was beginning to show signs of wear and minor cracks from repeated buffeting by the harsh seas of the Gulf of Alaska. The story began to skirt deeper systemic issues via quotes and context, such as the supremely ironic context that local Cordova biologist Riki Ott had only just warned the Valdez city council the very night of the spill that “it was not a question of if but when” a major spill would occur in Prince William Sound (pg. A4).

By Tuesday March 28 – just three days after the spill – the paper published its first full-length feature examining underlying systemic problems such as cuts in spill workers, equipment and budgets that had been a decade in the making. To present the story, reporters Dietrich and Anderson interviewed retired and ex-Coast Guard and Alyeska Pipeline consortium officials for their first-hand accounts of the slow process of deterioration.

Stories of this nature, which focused on deeper systemic and institutional causes of the spill, comprised a significant percentage of *Seattle Times* stories. According to Beresford (1996, 72) the *Seattle Times* stories selected by the Pulitzer Prize committee were distinctly different from stories written by other news media in that they focused attention on oil transportation safety, public policies in effect when the spill occurred, social and regulatory contexts, and the historical connection between Alaska and the oil industry.

On some days, stories of a systemic nature followed one after another in succession. Between Tuesday March 28 and Wednesday March 29, three stories of a systemic nature were published, two of which were published on the same day. The first, the paper's first editorial by a *Seattle Times* editor titled "Plans for Alaskan Refuge Run Aground in Valdez," broached systemic issues in the context of increasing criticism about the proposal to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to drilling in the wake of the *Exxon* spill. The editorial trenchantly played on words and concepts related to the oil spill and was unabashedly critical of Exxon. Playing off of the profit motive of the oil industry, the editorial opened with the line that "legislation to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil exploration is coated with the same 10 million gallons of North Slope oil that fouls Alaska's Prince William Sound" and continued with the suggestion that the reality of the oil industry is at odds with "years of industry propaganda." After discussing the history of supertanker spills and the empty promises of industry, the editor made a statement that directly addressed one of the biggest underlying causes of oil accidents – the public's demand for oil: "The question is really a moot one," the editor wrote after posing the question of how much oil Prince William Sound can absorb, "because the world has already said that keeping the petroleum flowing is more important than Alaska's environmental Soundness" (pg. A10).

On Friday March 31, one week after the spill, the paper published another full-length story with the headline "The 'Screw-Ups' that Led to 'Alaska's Chernobyl'" which focused on the deeper decade-long process of deterioration in institutional safeguards against oil spills. The story took an in-depth look at the relationship between the state of Alaska and the oil

industry and how that relationship over time had contributed to a slow weakening of the structures that were supposed to have prevented a major oil disaster.

Using strong narrative storytelling elements to introduce and tell the story, Anderson used his observations during an interview with Richard Fineberg, oil and gas advisor to Alaska governor Steve Cowper, to strengthen the weight of the information that ultimately emerged from the story's narrative. Describing how an exhausted Fineberg "held his head in his hands and tried to contemplate why it took days to accomplish what should have been done in hours," referring to the critically slow mustering of materials and men to start containment of the spill, Anderson used this observation to segue into his systemic analysis, which became a probing look at the checkered history of the oil industry's penetration into Alaskan economy and politics.

In a manner typical of other *Seattle Times* stories, Anderson successfully drew together historical and contemporary contexts and used a contrast technique that, as will be discussed more below, augmented the import of information without exaggeration:

"For more than 15 years, the state has been getting fat off its share of North Slope oil profits . . . Oil has built school, parks and highways. Oil has reduced the tax bill for the working man and fattened the campaign war chests of pro-oil politicians. Now oil has inundated one of the state's natural wonders and is threatening neighboring fjords" (pg. A8).

Even stories not specifically about an examination of a meta-systemic issue – such as a story from Sunday April 2 titled "Estimated \$42 Billion in Oil Firms' Profits Angers Alaskans" – incorporated context of a deeper systemic nature. Anderson's April 2 story, for instance, takes a probing look at how Exxon had resisted more costly safeguards, such as a full-time oil response crew or double-hulled tankers, which tallied together would still have cost the corporation far less money than the cost of cleaning up the damage of its single-hulled tanker *Exxon Valdez*, which was supposed to be a state-of-the-art tanker and the pride of Alaska's tanker fleet.

Stories of this nature continue to appear in *Seattle Times* coverage throughout the longer-term sweep of news coverage. A story on Sunday April 2 titled “Safety of Area of Tanker Spill is Disputed” subliminally disputed the prevailing stereotype that the tanker captain was the main spill culprit by opening with the contradictory testimony of experienced mariners who said that the area where the *Exxon Valdez* grounded was a “high-risk navigation area” (pg. A1) and implicating the Coast Guard as part of the underlying problem for inadequate radar coverage. The story – a three page in-depth feature – then spent a substantial amount of time exploring the “private guilt” of Valdez residents, who had eagerly welcomed the oil industry, and tackling the nebulous reporting angle of Valdez’s “unusual history.” It also looked at how oil money had managed to weevil its way into the Valdez economy, boring with it an “ill-defined” and “unsettled” (pg. A6) wedge of greed, guilt, and community conflict.

Another story by Dietrich published on Sunday May 18 reexamined the context and story of the *Exxon Valdez*’s grounding in anticipation of federal hearings which were set to begin two days later. The story, titled “Replaying the Valdez Disaster,” was a perspicacious example of reporting which brought everything together – clear explanation, context, and historical perspective – in a way that made the systemic failures discussed seem obvious and undeniable (see #20 in *Appendix*). The story successfully interwove narration of the historical context, by opening with a historical context lead that flashbacked 12 years to the beginning of the Port of Valdez, with a replay of the night of the spill so that all the major systemic and regulatory details coalesced into a succinct, coherent whole.

The narration itself is outstanding. Dietrich opened by writing: “For 12 years, a fleet of about 70 oil tankers had steamed in and out of Alaska’s Port Valdez without serious mishap, making the voyage 8,548 times.” He then proceeded with a powerful narrative based on extensive reporting, which picked out essential small details of story and place, that took readers about as close to the hours before the spill as they might have gotten had they been members of the *Exxon Valdez* crew themselves. “So there was no special attention paid March

23 as the tanker Exxon Valdez settled low in the water as it was pumped full with 52 million gallons of Alaska crude,” the story continued. The narration that followed brought the entire story of the spill into the space of a feature story without sacrificing scope, facts, or perspective and clearly framed the spill as a corporate, legislative, and systemic failure which could have been greatly ameliorated had all the cogs been functioning as they were meant to.

A Diversity of News Angles

In addition to the attention to systemic issues, which were a noticeable feature of coverage, the *Seattle Times* reported on a huge variety of angles related to the spill (*for example, see #19 in Appendix*). Reporters developed several unique news angles, such as legal angles exploring a phenomenon of prospecting lawyers hunting for spill victims to represent, and often approached the predictable themes in far from predictable ways, for instance, by drawing on first-hand perspectives of local people, crew of other oil tankers, or a variety of other sources outside the normally available ones. As Smith (1992, 101) pointed out, more than two-thirds of *Seattle Times* sources were “unique to that newspaper.” In addition to the usual suspects of spill reporting themes, the *Seattle Times* also reported on business, legislative, federal government, and sports angles (*see #21 in Appendix*).

The *Seattle Times* was also found to have covered certain themes or important considerations which researchers have found to be absent or reported on in misleading ways in other news media accounts of the spill. For instance, ecological angles covered by the general press-at-large tended to focus on the elements of Alaska’s complex ecological system, such as dead birds and mammals, that Smith (1992, 166) has said were “only the most telegenic parts.” Marine biologists, however, have said that mussels and barnacles may have been “more important as victims,” but were “less interesting to journalists” (167). Similarly, another ecological nuance neglected by most media was the long-term threat to some parts of the system as a result of immediate effects of the oil – such as the effects on endangered eagle populations in the years after the spill, as eagles mate for life and a bird who lost a mate to oil

poisoning would never rear another chick. Smith (1992) also noted that the real threat from petroleum toxins may have been the long-term effects of present spill mortality in some parts of the ecosystem which couldn't be predicted or measured except through long-term studies. As Smith (1992) found, however, what the media depicted tended to be death statistics of favored symbolic and anthropogenic creatures which were less critical to overall ecosystem stability and tended to be disproportionately represented by the excessive media attention.

The *Seattle Times*, however, covered all these nuances. A story on April 6 titled "Nature May Help to Mitigate Spill" discussed the role of nature in purifying itself as well as the possible long-term negative effects of cleaning methods being pushed because of their immediate results. The story, by Dietrich, also explored the uncertainty over effects of the oil on different elements of the ecosystem, providing scientific perspective and writing about the potential long-term effects of oil on the intertidal zone animals and specifically addressing such overlooked species as clams, oysters, limpets, mussels, and worms (*see #18 in Appendix*).

Beyond this, typical themes were treated with sophistication, and the dramatic elements of the spill story which researchers have described as hindering complete, informative coverage in other news media actually served as invitations to look at unlikely nuances of the spill story in the *Seattle Times*. For instance, one recurring theme in *Times* stories was the dogged and unrelenting efforts of fishermen on the Alaskan island of Cordova, about 25 miles southwest of Valdez, to protect an important salmon hatchery at the harbor-side town of San Juan threatened by oil migrating from the main spill. Using this news angle, *Seattle Times* reporters broached many different news angles in the process of following it over the weeks after the spill. The San Juan focus was used as a means of writing about the failures of the Exxon-directed clean-up efforts and the empty promises of Exxon to send help and supplies, as Exxon and other oil-experts were described as critical of the San Juan port fishermen and as doubtful of the possibility of the fishermen's success acting on their own. Because the San Juan fishermen had to take their own initiative to protect their hatchery, one of the largest salmon hatcheries in the world, reporters touched on the clean-up angles with its botched and

beleaguered coordination which stymied volunteers and workers everywhere from insufficient management and inadequate supplies. The story also encompassed ecological implications and the role of fishing in the economy, and the complicated lineage of oil clean-up supplies and their use through the perspective of fishermen who had to learn “on the spot.”

Other news angles which appeared in *Seattle Times* stories were various and sundry and included:

- Exxon: Stories about Exxon examined its orchestration of the spill response and its refusal of help and supplies even though its own supplies in Alaska were woefully inadequate. Other stories described what were implied to be bribes to fishermen to keep quiet with the media, and charges that Exxon never intended to clean up the spill. Later stories about Exxon focused on the corporation’s upcoming annual shareholder meeting in Parsippany, NJ. A major feature appeared in the Business Section describing the meeting, in which protestors and some shareholders were calling on chairman Lawrence Rawl – described as “singularly unrepentant regarding the oil spill” by a source interviewed by *Seattle Times* business reporter James E. Lalonde (Sunday May 14, 1989, “Meet Me in Parsippany,” pg. E1) – to resign, and Exxon made the symbolic gesture of promising to appoint an environmentalist to its board (*for example, see #19 in Appendix, top story – “S056”*).
- Spread and Scale of Oil Spill: This angle, while popping up in other stories of different thematic nature by way of context, tended to be less directly emphasized in the *Seattle Times*. When it did start appearing, it was often in the context of reporting on the oil’s unexpected migration far from the epicenter of the spill and the threats to Alaska’s Kenai Fjords National Park, over 125 miles from Valdez, or Katmai National Park’s beaches, up to 625 miles away, as a result. Stories such as Bill Dietrich’s May 5 story titled “90% of Katmai Park Hit by Alaska Oil Slick” (Friday May 5, 1989, pg. A5), or Mary Ann Gwinn’s April 9 story titled “Doom Stalks Alaska’s Migrating Waterfowl” (Sunday April 9, 1989, pg. A8) about the bird death toll in Kenai National Park, expressed this focus.
- Tourism: Stories of this ilk included speculations about the effects of the spill on tourism, narrative pieces exploring effects felt so far by various tour guide operators – including a long feature on Sunday April 4 in the Travel section in which reporter Carey Quan Gelernter interviewed several Alaskan tourist operators and found that some had still seen good business after the spill (*see #21 in Appendix*). A story on Wednesday June 7, 1989 in the Sports section examined effects of the spill on wildlife sport tourism specifically.

- Legal/Legislative: Headlines such as “Legal Action over Spill to be Costly, Complicated” (Wednesday April 4, 1989, pg. A1) and “Proved Claims Will be Paid” (Tuesday April 11, 1989, pg. A1) signified stories of this genre, which included discussions about the cost of insurance claims, the suits already filed by fishermen, concern over Exxon’s sincerity about paying whatever necessary to compensate those affected, and related nuances.
- Moving the Tanker: A story on Monday April 3 titled “Tanker Going to Portland? States’ Officials Concerned” introduced this angle as talk of what to do with the wrecked tanker and how to remove it from the reef began to circulate more regularly. Stories of this nature tracked efforts to re-float the *Exxon Valdez* and subsequent concern and debate – particularly in the states of Oregon and Washington – over where it would be towed.
- Clean-Up: The rescue and clean-up efforts and challenges comprised a news focus which included stories about such diverse issues as a one-of-a-kind oil skimmer loaned by the Russian government and the “Clean-up Gear [that went] Nowhere” (Friday March 31, 1989, pg. A8), as well as the practical challenges of feeding and housing the surfeit of volunteers who rushed to Alaska. One nuance of this angle was the economic profiteering of some Valdez residents who were charging double and triple the usual prices for motel space and rooms in bed and breakfasts (*for examples, see #'s 15 and 17 in Appendix*).
- President Bush / Federal Government: Though a more minor angle overall, stories such as the front-page piece from Friday April 7, titled “Bush Orders Troops to Aid Oil Cleanup” examined the federal government’s role in the aftermath of the spill, including its eventual involvement, as well as its noticeable lack of involvement in the critical days early on in the spill. Stories of this angle reported on the logistical problems resulting from President Bush Sr.’s refusal to declare a national emergency and the almost inane bureaucratic glitch as a result that the U.S. Navy was thus unable to legally fly essential equipment, already gathered and waiting to dispatch, out to the spill site which might have aided containment of the slick. One story from Friday May 5 also reported on Vice President Dan Quayle’s visit to Alaska in the stead of President Bush to survey the damage. The *Seattle Times* displayed a subtle criticism of the Federal Government in this story via its description of Quayle and his wife “don[ning] plastic suits to keep their blue jeans and tennis shoes clean during a brief visit to Smith Island” (May 5, 1989 “No One Gets Off Hook on Spill, Quayle Says, pg. A1), one implied image being that of the contrast between mud and oil-covered workers toiling daily with the cursory, superficial attention given the spill by the nation’s leaders.

- Spill Inquiry: Stories about this angle reported on the proceedings of a National Transportation and Safety Board (NTSB) inquiry into the spill and the testimony of various parties, such as the *Exxon Valdez* crew and the Coast Guard.

Within these broad categories, many side angles and related nuances were reported on by *Seattle Times* reporters.

Storytelling, Avoidance of Sensationalism, and Reporting Techniques

Another noticeable element of *Seattle Times* stories was the lack of overblown drama or superficial sensationalistic qualities. Despite the magnitude of the spill, the Day 1 story heading, for instance, is matter-of-fact (“8-Million Gallon Alaskan Oil Spill”) and the story itself is judicious and circumspect. It refrains from making a value judgment about the rank of the spill and incorporates historical context while objectively describing the current situation. Throughout its suite of spill stories, the paper manages to successfully tread the delicate balance between conveying the enormity of the situation in Alaska and avoiding the threshold over which narration of the spill segued into sensationalism and melodrama under the weight of the scope, emotion, and conflict which were, by themselves, real but powerful elements of the story.

How the paper managed to avoid the stereotypical and succeed at producing such informative pieces where other media failed may be in part the result of management and reporting techniques combined. Smith (1992, 101) said that interviews with *Seattle Times* reporters and editors identified a “substantially different approach” to reporting and identifying news sources. According to Smith (1992), “the *Seattle Times* relied primarily on the wire services for information from press conferences and official sources, and let three of its four primary reporters assigned to the spill know that they were not expected to file daily stories” (101). He noted that this policy freed the spill reporters from the constraints of daily news deadlines, allowing them to “seek information outside Valdez, and thus go beyond the official information sources,” as well as to spend considerably more time doing research. The coordination of the *Exxon Valdez* reporting effort may also have played a role. In a *Seattle*

Weekly story published on February 5, 2003 about the retirement of longtime *Seattle Times* editor Alex McLeod, reporter Philip Dawdy noted that David Boardman – the paper’s assistant managing editor for investigations, business and sports and a possible contender for taking over McLeod’s position as managing editor – had been widely credited as being the force behind the *Seattle Times*’ selection as the winner of the 1990 Pulitzer Prize as a result of his coordination of the spill package and reporting efforts.

Narrative Storytelling

Style, organization and reporting tactics within stories also seemed to help the paper avoid the traps of sensationalistic reporting. Daley and O’Neill (1991) have suggested that development of meaningful narratives may be necessary to foster more thorough understanding of a complex situation. An overwhelming number of *Seattle Times* stories of every theme and news angle were characterized by extensive use of narrative storytelling techniques, narrative-style writing, and storytelling devices such alliteration and descriptive similes and metaphors (see #'s 14, 15, 17, 19 – “So58” – 20, and 21 in Appendix). This narrative and literary-style approach became a central means by which reporters dealt with the difficult, complex, and emotionally charged aspects of the spill. Many stories used scene-setting, historical, and anecdotal leads and narrative-style details within stories, including dialogue between those in a given scene or observations of gestures and the behaviors of sources.

Many stories also embedded the story focus within the experience or viewpoint of a main character – from volunteers to fishermen to political coordinators or officials. Together, these stylistic approaches helped to humanize the spill and conveyed the magnitude of the situation by showing it through the eyes of those actually experiencing its many facets. Using the words of a diversity voices to describe the experience of difficulty or drama served as a direct translation of a first-hand experience and diffused the potential for subjective sensationalism. A typical result of the alternative approach – reporters searching for ways to translate their personal second-hand perspectives or observations into objective accounts –

may have been the use of more evocative adjectives and an artificially augmented sense of drama, which was not found in *Seattle Times* stories.

One of many examples of the narrative approach can be seen in a story from Sunday March 26 with the headline “Fishermen, Environmentalists Tried to Block Oil Port.” Reporter Ross Anderson opened with an anecdotal lead: “When the oil companies proposed to build a huge oil port at Valdez, on Alaska’s Prince William Sound, Knute Johnson was one of the Alaska fishermen who traveled to Washington D.C. to stop them” (pg. A8). Anderson acquired a copy of Johnson’s testimony and used Johnson’s story as a way of interweaving contemporary context with a historical perspective on the debate and eventual construction of the oil port. A story by Bill Dietrich the next day, Monday March 27, also used an anecdotal lead approach via Valdez mayor John Devens as a way of delving into the thorny question of Valdez’s “love-hate” relationship with the oil industry (*see #15 in Appendix*).

Another story from Monday April 3, titled “Tough Lesson: ‘To Prepare for the Worst,’” is almost entirely a narrative piece of the sort that might be found in a novel or literary magazine. Reporter Ross Anderson used volunteer Kelly Weatherling to help illustrate not just the overall challenges of being a volunteer or the standard journalistic template of describing the toilsome work, but the hazier nuance of how volunteers often had to find their own solutions on the ground, engage make-shift resourcefulness, learn on the spot, and become their own experts. The story opened with a quote-directive from Weatherling, a four-day “expert” of the animal rescue effort who was providing a brief training session to new fisherman volunteers about how to collect sea otters: “‘Sea otters have to be approached very quietly,’ Weatherling advises his motley crew of volunteers. ‘Pick them up by the tail and watch out for the front claws. They’ll hiss at you. Get them into the cage as quickly as you can. They’ll settle down.’” (pg. A7).

The story itself relies heavily on quotes of this nature from Weatherling, as well as questions from the volunteers in the form of dialogue. For instance, Anderson included a

section of dialogue between volunteers and Weatherling that, by its style, minimizes excess journalistic description and conveys more information in less space:

“What is the mortality rate? a fisherman asks.

‘Not too bad, if you work fast,’ says Dave LeBlanc, a Canadian volunteer who learned his skills on the beaches of Vancouver Island after the major spill off Washington’s coast in January. ‘They die of hypothermia or of the effects of ingesting the oil.’

How do we communicate?

‘Don’t depend on the radio,’ Weatherling says. ‘It’s total chaos out there – everybody cutting in on everybody else. The only solution is to stay together, solve your own problems, make your own solutions.’” (pg. A7)

When Anderson narrated an observation, his use of small descriptive details played off the quotes and helped to create a very convincing narrative that was far more effective at capturing a sense of the experience on the ground than the sort of omniscient storytelling that relies primarily on a reporter’s translation of observations. The result was a very real story that captured the experiences of the participants through their own eyes and voices and helped the *Seattle Times* avoid sensationalizing the drama-prone elements of the story (*for example, see #17 in Appendix*). There is drama inherent to the story, but it becomes a much more genuine drama as told by *Times* reporters via narration of this sort.

Narrative elements were also frequently found in stories of a more news-oriented, matter-of-fact nature. In a story published on Sunday April 2 by Anderson and news services, titled “Devastating Toll of Wildlife Observed as Spill Spreads,” several narrative features were interspersed with tight news-style reporting. The story, which focused on the effects on wildlife across the affected area as the first large numbers of dead animals were found, dashing hopes that the death toll might be less than feared, tackled a wide range of scientific and economic angles, from explaining how oil ultimately kills eagles to examining the economic effects of increasing likely fisheries closures. Interspersed with the recounting of news, Anderson found several places to interject narrative and help create a sense of place. For instance, after a paragraph describing the movement of the bulk of the slick towards Cordova, Anderson wrote: “In a stillness broken only by the croaking of ravens in Cordova, a few otters soaked with oil paddled listlessly offshore” (pg. A1).

Later in the story, after describing the assortment of “several hundred scientists” from various agencies and Exxon Corp. that had begun coordinating damage assessments via “seven fields of research,” Anderson contrasted the scientific coordination with the less official mobilization of fishermen using a narrative style that vividly depicted the scene in Cordova: “In Cordova, a sleepy land and sea-locked fishing village, things normally don’t come alive until the herring runs get under way in mid-April. But yesterday, fishermen were fully mobilized to save their livelihood” (pg. A11).

In one story, *Seattle Times* reporter Mary Ann Gwinn – another of the Pulitzer Prize-winning reporters – actually used the first-person to write her story, titled “Mournful Cry of a Loon Echoes Through a Land Devastated by Oil Spill.” The story, an early-week piece from Tuesday April 4, was a narrative account of the reporter’s own experience traveling with a former veterinarian and current *Audubon* magazine photographer to Green Island in the Sound. While the story subject was ripe for symbolic framing, as Gwinn told it, there is no hint of sensationalism, but instead a sense of genuine experience that managed to capture larger issues through the telling of a small event. In this case, use of the first person allowed Gwinn to negotiate the nebulous line between narrative observation and sensationalistic inflation of drama. Far from being a story merely about the saddening death toll of wild animals and birds, the story interspersed facts about the clean-up with poignant, powerful description of the scene and her experience on this particular beach. Ultimately, the story was about a loon that the two ended up catching and taking to a rescue center and the deeper philosophical questions that her experience of the beach inspired.

Because the narrative was in first-person, Gwinn had more liberty to express her personal impressions and experience – a freedom which, as it came across in her story, helped to avert sensationalism by allowing her to become invested in the experience as a human being, rather than a superficially impartial observer who had to rely on language alone and third-person detachment to recreate the scene. Gwinn’s personal opinion that “It was hard to believe that we could fly 60 miles, land and walk right into the ruination of a landscape, so far

from that broken boat” (pg. A1) augmented the vividness of her description a paragraph later of a “black lump” that “detached itself from three or four others bobbing in the oil-streaked water” and “staggered up the beach” where she “watched it climb a snowbank and flap into the still center of the woods.” The dialogue that ensued with the *Audubon* photographer Tony Dawson further educated about the biological underpinnings causing such a reaction without need of language that might sensationalize.

The reality of the scene and the visceral reactions of Gwinn herself are narrated in a way that is captivating, and the way in which the story is told is more reminiscent of a book chapter. The main character of the story – a loon that called from the woods and eventually ran out onto the beach – became a vehicle through which Gwinn ultimately got to a question much deeper but little explored in news media accounts: what was the point of all the efforts at animal rescue when so small a fraction of the affected wildlife treated actually survived? The details and narration of her experience immobilizing the loon while Dawson fashioned a make-shift strap from a camera lens to protect the bird’s wings, feeling “its warmth [and] energy” (pg. A8) allowed Gwinn to express by illustration the true point of the rescue efforts – to give humans a symbolic sense of purpose in the midst of such unstoppable disaster:

“Afterward, we talked about whom bird rescues help more, the rescued or the rescuer. Most rescued birds don’t make it. And tens of thousands more from the Valdez spill will die before they even get a chance.

“I know only that the loon told me something that no one other thing about this tragedy could. If only we could learn to value such stubborn, determined life. If only we could hold safe in our hands the heart of the loon.” (pg. A8).

While this was the only first-person narrative account found in the stories, the kind of narrative approach to reporting seen here continued throughout the bulk of the *Seattle Times*’ coverage and was a mainstay of the paper’s stylistic treatment dealing with the many difficult and ill-defined concepts and nuances of the complex spill story. There are far too many examples of the narrative style to recount, indicating that the *Seattle Times* understood the complexity of the situation and the need to move beyond typical journalistic frameworks in order to effectively report on the spill. However, one ultimate effect of this narrative

approach, which often resulted in revealing latent or obscure details, was to unveil deeper problems, nebulous nuances, and vexing issues related to the spill. Even more, this narrative approach helped to frame the disaster as more than just an event-driven environmental disaster, but as a by-product of a complex system in which increasingly progress-driven human society, corporate culture, and complex technological systems clash and collide, revealing sometimes glaring weakness in the underlying structure of the overall system.

Bullet Lists

The complexity of the spill meant that *Seattle Times* stories had to juggle a lot of information and many different, and oft-times confusing, strands of the spill story. In addition to the narrative technique, the *Seattle Times* used bulleted lists throughout its suite of stories as a means of organizing story content (see #'s 14, 16, 18 and 20 in Appendix). The bullet points helped to arrange large chunks of text into a user-friendly format that were easier to process than wading through lengthy blocks of text. Bulleted lists typically contained one to two paragraphs, sometimes more, as opposed to single sentences and reporters used them to organize many different kinds of information. One early story used a bullet list to organize a background explanation of the known events just prior to the spill (#14 in Appendix). Another story from the first few days of coverage used a bulleted list to highlight cuts by the Alyeska Pipeline Co. which left Valdez ill-prepared to cope with the spill in the critical few hours immediately after it happened. In this case, the list allowed the eye to instantly visualize the number of cuts in crew and equipment at a glance.

One example of a bullet list which illustrated their efficacy quite well appeared in a story from Friday March 31, a week after the spill, titled "Oil Spill: One Week of Frenzy" (see #16 in Appendix). The story itself was an analysis of the week's events and how it was possible that the "best efforts" of oil-industry experts and government officials were so "woefully inadequate." Reporter Dietrich analyzed how it was that all the frenzy on the shores had amounted to "little tangible effect at sea," (pg. A1) and peeled away some of the various

excuses to look at underlying causes. In this case, his bullet list organizational approach was particularly effective. He introduced the list with the sentence: “But behind the physical dimensions of this calamity are a series of human errors and miscalculations with no excuse. Consider:” (pg. A6) and then, after asking readers to mull over the information he is about to present, presented seven lengthy bullet points highlighting the various incongruities implicating everyone from Exxon to the Coast Guard to the Alyeska Pipeline Consortium. The list also incorporated historical context and interviews with various sources expressing confusion over why the tanker only had a single hull and why safety measures that were touted as the strongest in place in the 1970’s had suddenly been abandoned or stopped.

Contrast Technique

Another reporting technique that added style, power, and sophistication to *Seattle Times* stories and helped reporters dodge the snare of sensationalism was the placement of contrasting information – in particular, quotes from sources that contrasted with an observational reality, a scenic description that contrasted with a different scenic description, or a historical reality that contrasted with a present reality – in immediate proximity (*see #16 in Appendix*). In this way, reporters let the weight or power of facts and information speak for themselves without need of additional commentary. For instance, a story from Thursday March 30 titled “Bush Team Cites Progress; Activists Outraged” opened with a cleverly subtle contrast in the lead sentence that required no further explanation from Dietrich: “Just hours after Exxon executives conceded they were losing the struggle to contain an oil slick that now covers 575 square miles in Alaska’s Prince William Sound, Bush administration officials said the cleanup was going better than they had expected” (pg. A1).

Another example of the contrast technique appeared in a story from April 6 titled “New Cleanup Controls Sought” via juxtaposition of a quote with the statement of a fact afterwards. An Exxon spokesman, stating he believed Exxon was best suited to organize the cleanup, was quoted saying, “We gathered all the resources and organized the cleanup

We think the most effective and efficient way to carry out this cleanup is to continue” (pg. A1). The quote is followed with the statement that “Exxon’s only notable success so far in the disaster occurred yesterday morning when it managed to refloat the 987-foot Exxon Valdez, grounded on Bligh Reef since March 24” (pg. A1). The contrast between Exxon’s claims and the statement of its singular success carried with it the implicit message that Exxon was not succeeding where it really should have been – at containing the spill and organizing effective clean-up. This technique also had the effect of subtly framing Exxon in a negative way, as unprepared to deal with the staggering mess of its own ill-preparedness.

Another example of a subtle framing effect portraying Exxon negatively as a result of the contrast technique was seen in a story from Friday March 31, with the headline “Cleanup Gear Goes Nowhere.” The lead paragraph, by reporter Eric Nalder, stated: “As weary crews fight a losing battle against an ugly oil spill spreading over Alaska’s Prince William Sound, dozens of oil-skimming boats and machines remain docked and warehoused in cities up and down the West Coast” (pg. A7). The lead itself is a self-contained indictment against Exxon. The contrast suggested that the “weary crews” were slogging away at hard manual labor while the greater force of mechanical energy bound up in the “dozens” of oil-skimmers sitting idle was being squandered by Exxon. The next paragraph provided an extension of the contrast, stating that “Exxon Corp. . . . declined and even ignored offers for some of the equipment that could have blunted the impact of the spill on the environment” (pg. A7).

Images and Graphics

In addition to the paper’s wide-ranging scope of thematic news coverage, the *Seattle Times* also made extensive use of visuals, such as photographs, maps, and detailed graphics, as part of its effort to report on the spill. The paper published a total of 64 photographs, maps, and graphic images between March 24 and June 8. In terms of the total number of stories published during the same interval, this indicates that the *Seattle Times* included a visual element in about 61 percent of its stories during that time. Multiple visual elements often

accompanied a single story, or in cases where a main story and a secondary or third spill-related story appeared on the same page, were sometimes used as visual separators between two stories.

Images focused on a number of themes and often occupied prominent places on the story page. The subject of images ranged across the spectrum of news angles, depicting everything from scenic views of the Alaskan landscape, to various shots of the *Exxon Valdez* tanker, to fishermen and volunteers in numerous contexts, to Exxon and government officials, to animals and wildlife in equally numerous contexts, to an assortment of miscellaneous images that can't be easily classified – such as a photo that appeared on Thursday April 6 showing a sea plane parked on an oily beach. The story itself, titled “Nature May Help to Mitigate Spill” by Dietrich, tackled the job of contextualizing the role of nature in the clean-up efforts and trying to convey that oil, while assuredly an “ugly nuisance for years to come,” was also not necessarily as toxic as some believed, owing to the natural processes which break down the most toxic parts at sea. Thus, the image of an idle floatplane combined with the text exerted the very subtle framing effect of augmenting the suggestion that nature will over time clean the spill, and in some cases perhaps better than humans (*see #18 in Appendix*).

In fact, images tended to focus on contexts, rather than objects (*see #'s 16 and 19 in Appendix*). Very few stories focused on the *Exxon Valdez's* captain, Joseph Hazelwood, but several photographs showed, for example, fishermen at work fashioning booms to protect a hatchery, or volunteers building cages to house rescued otters. Images showed job seekers crouched in a hallway waiting to be hired out as paid clean-up crew as part of a story about the tripling of Valdez's population in the wake of the spill, or depicted residents or locals at a town hall meeting questioning Exxon spokespersons about the spill. While birds and wildlife did appear in several of the 64 images, it is worth noting that very few focused solely on oil-drenched animals as main characters. Animals were usually seen in context with other angles, such as with veterinarians treating them at local wildlife clinics. One image showed a

fisherman-turned-wildlife collector walking on a beach carrying a dead otter, but the focus isn't so much the dead otter as it is the entire context of the scene and the volunteer's role working as one tiny fraction of the overall effort to deal with the vast pollution. Some contextual images showed Exxon officials testifying at the spill inquiry or in their offices in positions indicative of stress or worry.

It is important to note that *Seattle Times* images did not come across as sensational, overly dramatic, or as attempting to express the subtle political or personal viewpoints of the paper's staff or editors. While the editorials left no question as to how the *Seattle Times* managers and editors felt about the spill or Exxon's job handling it – as well as a couple political cartoons that appeared on the editorial page – images tended to be informative, interesting, and diverse, and they attempted to complement the overall suite of spill stories by offering an assortment of windows into the isolated and inaccessible world wherein the spill took place.

Detailed Maps

Maps were also frequent story accompaniments and were often highly detailed and informative as well (see #'s 14 and 16 in Appendix). Maps regularly appeared with images as part of the visual package for a particular story. In some stories, maps were essential for providing immediate visual information or orientation that would have been hard to glean or process quickly from text descriptions also. The majority of maps also tended to be unique maps created specifically to accompany the focus of a particular news story, though a few stories used the same generic map of Alaska showing the location of the wreck, the oil pipeline and the town of Valdez.

Graphic Images

Use of detailed graphic images was also found to be a common visual reporting technique in *Seattle Times* stories. Graphic images were chosen to illustrate important nuances or angles of the spill where a visual representation offered more clarity than verbal

description alone. Frequently, the graphics were so highly detailed that they essentially functioned as mini-stories in their own rights. For instance, a large split graphic published with the paper's third story on Sunday March 26 included a map of Prince William Sound in the top half and a cross-sectional graphic representation of the tanker in the bottom half illustrating the orientation of the oil tanks in the hull and the ones which were believed to have been torn by the reef. The map part showed all the key orientational details, such as the location of Valdez in relation to the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, the village of Tatilek, occupied primarily by the Chugach Alaskan native tribe, and the Columbia Glacier, which had shed an abnormal amount of ice into the Sound. An accompanying paragraph of text provided contextual information about the spill and explained the relationship of the place details shown on the map.

This particular Day 3 graphic appeared at the bottom of the front-page portion of the story in which it appeared, titled "Anger, Frustration in Valdez" with the subhead: "Residents, environmentalists criticize delays in cleanup; human error blamed for spill" (*see #14 in Appendix*). A large vertically oriented rectangular picture appeared to the right of the story, illustrating the oil coming from the tanker with the Alaskan wild horizon in the background. Under this image, a large text box appeared with historical context information titled "Worst Oil Spills" highlighting the worst U.S. spills since 1976. In the middle of the text portion, a large tease box pointed to a historical context story inside about fishermen's efforts to resist the building of the port at Valdez. In fact, the graphic or visual portions of the front page story display occupy more space than the text itself. The entire package – story text and right-side scenic graphic – is essentially bounded by the large headline above, which spreads across the entire "box" allotted to the story. The overall effect of all the elements is to provide instant orientation and information obtained from the eye's perception of the graphics and large headline, which is then honed by the sub-head, indicating anger over delays in cleanup, and the story itself.

Another example of a highly detailed graphic was seen on Friday March 31. *Seattle Times* graphic journalist Randee S. Fox created a large graphic map with the heading “Oil threatens fish, mammals, birds and plants.” The graphic appeared under an unusual photograph of a close-up hand coated with oil, a contextual photograph illustrating the consistency of the oil, and the water-beach interface in the background (see #16 in Appendix). These images accompanied Dietrich’s front-page, one-week update and retrospective of the spill. While Dietrich’s story canvassed many angles of the spill story and used a bullet list to recap the various errors and systemic flaws, Fox’s graphic map highlighted the ecological aspect and provided context and information not contained in the story.

The graphic also had its own tease to its continuation on page A6. The front-page graphic occupied the most space of any of the front-page spill story elements – including the feature story by Dietrich. However, because of its design and its intent to explain in more depth about how the slick was affecting wildlife, the graphic continued inside with a long, vertical strip box entitled “Endangered Animals.” This graphic box contained 11 sub-boxes each representing a different animal, save for the last box which was titled “Habitats” and explained about the importance of different habitats to the imperiled animals and how those habitats were being threatened by the oil. The list of animals was diverse and even differentiated between seabirds, shorebirds, and waterfowl, as each group had different ecological constraints and possible effects as a result of the oil.

Summary

The *Seattle Times*’ multi-pronged approach to reporting the *Exxon Valdez* spill, as revealed by this study’s textual analysis, sets the paper in a category of excellence far apart from other news media. The paper’s coverage is particularly distinctive for specifically engaging with the greatest frequency those reporting tools which researchers (Smith, 1992; Daley and O’Neil, 1991; Beresford, 1996; Wilkins, 1989) have found to be essential to quality reporting of complex story subjects – tools such as narrative storytelling that focuses on

contexts rather than a litany of facts; systematic immersion within the story subject; treatment of images and graphics as vehicles for conveying context, rather than snapshots; and a focus on systemic rather than event-driven news frames. By diverging from the “journalistic norm” in its philosophical and practical approach to writing stories about the numerous angles and nuances of the spills, the *Seattle Times* successfully dodged the reporting traps that often result in shallow, stereotypical treatment of disasters to produce instead a suite of highly informative stories.

The Guardian

Between Saturday March 25 and Tuesday September 19, 1989 the *Guardian* published a total of 27 stories directly about the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, plus several stories of related contexts about North Sea oil development or different U.S. oil spills which occurred after the *Exxon Valdez*. The majority of *Guardian* stories appeared in March and April, with stories totaling 6 and 11 – or about 22 percent and 41 percent – for each month respectively. A total of 4 stories were published in May, 1 story in June, and 2 stories in July. No spill stories were published in August, but 3 stories – or about 11 percent – were published in September, the end of the thesis study interval.

Despite the fact that the Alaska spill story was an international news event for *Guardian* readers in the U.K., the paper devoted space to the spill story almost every day, especially in the first two and a half weeks after the accident, or after a new development in the cleanup or inquiry. Between Saturday March 25, when the *Guardian* ran its first story about the spill, and Saturday April 1, 1989, the paper published a spill-related story every day save Sunday March 26. Regular, almost daily coverage of the spill continued into the first two weeks of April, with a spill-centered story appearing almost every day between Monday April 3 and Monday April 17. On April 3, the *Guardian* published two spill-related stories – notable, because it is the only time throughout the six-month study interval when the paper

ran more than one story per day on the Alaska spill disaster. One of these two stories was an international story by a *Guardian* correspondent in Alaska, and the second was a piece by the same reporter which appeared in the “Comment & Analysis” section of the *Guardian* newspaper.

The majority of *Guardian* stories – 17 total, or about 63 percent – appeared in the International section of the newspaper. Of the remaining stories, 4 appeared on the paper’s Back news page, 3 appeared in Comment & Analysis, 2 in the Financial section, and 1 in a newly created permanent Environment section of the paper that the *Guardian* had recently introduced.

It is also important to note that the *Guardian* had correspondents on location in Washington D.C. and New York, as well as Alaska, allowing the paper to do more by way of context and nuance reporting than reliance on press conference accounts, wire services, or press releases would permit. As this study found, the *Guardian* went beyond the generic event-driven disaster framework to suggest a deeper systemic problem in which the spill was a by-product of America’s profligate energy consumption, federal government and industry arrogance, and citizen lust for cheap oil.

Themes and News Angles

The *Guardian* followed all the major thematic developments of the unfolding spill disaster – emphasizing local British angles or context where possible – and also developed a few side angles that were not seen in *Seattle Times* news stories. While the *Guardian* did not develop news angles to the extent that the *Seattle Times* did, its 27 stories succeeded in capturing the complexity of the spill story, providing informative context, and expressing some of the deeper issues related to the spill, including some of the systemic underpinnings of the disaster and the meta-context of an oil-dependent American society and economy.

Ecological Focus and Frame

In addition to the systemic frames, the *Guardian* also framed the spill in terms of its environmental impact and potential ecological ramifications. Where the *Seattle Times*' first spill story focused more on constructing a historical context for perspective on the spill's size, comparing the *Exxon Valdez* with a 1984 spill which had previously been the largest on record, the *Guardian*'s first story immediately presaged the spill as an environmental disaster. Its headline – “Giant Oil Spill Hits Alaska” – was qualified by a superscript subhead in smaller font which retooled the spill in environmental terms: “Ecological Catastrophe Feared.” Martin Walker, the *Guardian* correspondent in Washington D.C., opened with a lead which captured the sense of a fragile, pristine environment blotted with the “ominous dark stain” of oil (Saturday March 25, 1989, pg. 24), and in its second paragraph paraphrased “environmentalists” – its first source – speculating about the potential environmental damage. It is also interesting to note that the reporter immediately honed in on the potential threat to whales, stating that the spill occurred in “rich fishing waters . . . close to the migratory route of 13 species of whale” (pg. 24), suggesting a more encompassing ecological frame in which the damage would be to more than just the usual fish and birds, but to the larger ecological system.

The spill also had the potential to affect not just Alaskan birds, but birds around the world, causing reverberations from the disaster to ripple outside the remote Alaskan nook nestled near the Arctic and across the globe, according to a story from Monday April 17. In a highly narrative piece full of context and more probing ecological analysis, headed “Oil Holocaust Awaits Birds of the Alaskan Spring,” reporter Martin Walker depicted a scene in which the *Exxon Valdez* spill forebode a potentially apocalyptic end for a huge diversity of birds converging on the food-rich beaches of the Copper River Delta. “The birds are coming from all over the world,” he wrote, “from the China Sea and the Caribbean and the Galapagos Islands; the Arctic tern are flying 12,000 miles from Antarctica” (pg. 8). In all, “some 427 bird species” had been logged by ornithologists. In this story, the spill is thus framed as a

potential disaster of ecological dimensions far wider than imagined. The fact that “even a small speck of oil on the feathers” would most likely be fatal, from ingestion while grooming, posed a portentous prospect with worldwide implications: that “a frightening proportion of the rarest bird life of the northern hemisphere” would be lost if the oil migrated to the Copper River Delta.

Despite the grim prospect of the story, however, it did not get mired in the moribund, but was thoughtful, thorough, and presented highly informative context that considered deeper ecological aspects of the spill, such as the longer-term biological ramifications not easily measured in a few months to widowed eagles or bears. “The real cost of this spill may be measured in generation of unborn eagles to come,” Walker wrote. The story also put the wildlife rescue effort in context, a facet which Beresford (1996, 73) has said may have been given disproportionate media attention outside the real ecological damage. Walker’s story ended with the philosophical comment that: “The rescue of these birds is an irrelevance in numerical terms, yet they represent a powerful symbol of the human need to do something to mark the solidarity of living creatures, and a gesture of defiance against the terrible black tide.” Thus, although framing the spill as a potentially pandemic ecological catastrophe, the story also succeeded in cutting through the hype, craze and drama of the spill presented by media images and accounts and penetrating one of the most difficult and intangible but underlying emotional aspects of the spill – one which was an almost universally shared experience and catalyst for action, no matter how insignificant in the long-term.

Other stories typically reminded readers that Prince William Sound was “considered one of the richest marine environments in North America” (Monday March 27, 1989, *International*, Pg. 6), as well as a beautiful and hitherto unspoilt scenic wild place which “teemed with sea lions, seals, killer whales, and sea birds” (pg. 6). Another story opened with a lead which combined an update of the spill’s movement with a reminder that the spill threatened “one of the world’s most fertile fishing areas” (Tuesday March 28, 1989, *International* pg. 10).

At the same time, however, the *Guardian* also looked beyond the narrow, episodic ecological events associated with the spill typically seized upon by the majority of media, such as dramatization of wildlife deaths, individual clean-up efforts by small groups of volunteers, or the immediacy of the debate over how to clean up the spill, to consider longer-term ecological ramifications often overlooked by other media. Smith (1992, 166) has said that “cleaning the beaches may have been essential for aesthetic, political, and public relations reasons, but in many cases was not a good environmental decision.” Yet, the majority of media accounts of the spill neglected the environmental downside associated with efforts to use chemicals on the spill or purge the beaches of oil.

With this comment in mind, it is interesting to note that by the *Guardian*'s third story on Tuesday March 28, four days after the spill, the paper made a point of mentioning this aspect specifically (*see #22 in Appendix*). Christopher Reed, one of the *Guardian*'s U.S. correspondents who had traveled to Valdez to report on the spill, wrote a story titled “Experts Divided on How to Treat Alaska Superslick” (pg. 10) which discussed the various methods already tried or being considered to treat the spill, along with the failures of those methods. In the telling, he made a point of mentioning that dispersants, favored by Exxon in the clean-up debate, could be even worse in the long-term: “arguments continue over whether the new chemicals [dispersant use] creates could cause longer-lasting and worse damage to the ecology.”

In a few instances, the *Guardian* used more subjective or emotionally assumptive adjectives to refer to sea otters in passing – but, as will be explained, never with the intent to exaggerate or sensationalize. In one story describing how thousands of animals would be killed by the “deadly tide” of oil which was migrating further than experts predicted, the reporter made a point of adding “including the enchanting sea otter” (Thursday March 30, 1989, pg. 24). A second story the next day said that the “playful” sea otters “may be the saddest victims” of the spill (Friday March 31, 1989, pg. 8). However, despite the somewhat more colorful rhetoric used to refer to the media's favored tragic symbol of the oil spill, the

Guardian did not misrepresent the threat to otters and always embedded the subjective qualifiers in text that was informative or offered surprisingly helpful context.

For instance, in the story in which sea otters were described as the “saddest victims” – titled with the somewhat misleading headline “Valdez Captain’s Alcohol Level ‘Over Legal Limit,’” as the story was primarily about ecological aspects of the spill – reporter Christopher Reed contextualized his otter comment with highly informative historical context about otters and simply stated facts about the difficulties of animal rescue. The story also provided a deeper and more informative ecological perspective, devoting a full paragraph to explaining how the spill was a threat to the entire ecological system of Prince William Sound. After mentioning that larger marine mammals such as sea lions, seals, porpoises and whales were at risk from the spill, Reed offered the additional context needed to perceive the marine environment as a larger system in which threats to the smallest elements escalated up the chain: “Fish such as salmon, herring, and crabs, shrimp and other crustaceans provide food in a chain which in turn can harm bears and other large mammals. Contaminated plankton can also hurt whales that spend part of the year in the area” (pg. 8).

The ecological focus pivoted back to otters, and the earlier “saddest victims” comment is soon realized to have been a just a preface to a more thoughtful analysis of why the description was merited. Reed interviewed a University of Minnesota biologist specializing in sea otters and offered new facts about the biological explanations underpinning why the oil was such a devastating death knell to otters – specifically, because “sea otters . . . literally spend half their lives keeping afloat by constantly aerating their fur, a plucking technique they do with their paws” (pg. 8).

Systemic Frame and Roots of Spill

Beyond the ecological frame palpable in *Guardian* coverage, the more enduring frame was of a systemic nature. The *Guardian* framed the *Exxon Valdez* spill in terms of deeper systemic problems stemming from a system unprepared to deal with a spill of that size,

corporate greed and self-interest, and an American energy consumptiveness that demanded cheap oil at the expense of environmental safeguards and maritime safety. In the process of reporting these deeper meta-issues, occasionally sarcastic or sharp words used to describe Exxon contributed to the emergence of a negative sub-frame for Exxon (see #'s 24, 25, and 26 in *Appendix*). The corporation was framed as negligent and nonchalant regarding the oil spill, and insincere about its concern for local people or the environment.

By the *Guardian's* fourth story on Wednesday March 29, the primary focus of the spill story had shifted from the immediate news angles following on the heels of the spill – updates of the spill's spread, mentions of the potential role of Captain Hazelwood, and debates over how to contain the slick, among others – to a focus on the glaring discrepancies in the pipeline consortium's contingency plan and the ineptness it had demonstrated at implementing the plan. The story's headline – "Pipeline Group 'Not Prepared' for Alaska Oil spill Disaster" – introduced the critical news focus, and the lead sentence reinforced the theme of unpreparedness (see #23 in *Appendix*). Reporter Christopher Reed noted that bad weather – cited as an excuse by Exxon for difficulties in responding to the spill – "was to have been allowed for in a contingency clean-up plan devised by Alyeska" (pg. 20). With a powerful contrasting statement, his next sentence drove home the failure of the response system and revealed some of the underlying systemic cracks which had been laid bare by the spill: "Yet even booms, the most basic anti-spill equipment, were not deployed immediately because of a crippled carrier barge that had remained unseaworthy for months."

The story also criticized the American media for its superficial focus on Captain Hazelwood – a small sub-current observed in *Guardian* coverage which reinforced the paper's framing of the spill as a product of system failures and social irresponsibility and, as will be seen below, was related to an overall less condemnatory tone towards Captain Hazelwood seen in *Guardian* stories. A story by Reed the next day, titled "Alaskan Fishermen Angry at Oilmen's Bombast" and appearing in the *Guardian's* "Eyewitness" section on the back page, suggested all three of the major systemic issues: unpreparedness, corporate greed and

unconcern, and energy consumptiveness (*see #24 in Appendix*). Without using the first-person, Reed prefaced comment about the first systemic problem by illustrating the difficulty he had in gaining access to information from an Exxon press spokesperson. After being refused entry into a “Command Centre” located at a Valdez hotel, the Exxon press spokeswoman had to be summoned five times before coming out to speak with him, and then denied knowledge of a dispute between the Exxon Oil Corporation and the State of Alaska’s Department of Environmental Conservation. Reed drew on the experience to comment that:

“The incident encapsulates events here since the Exxon tanker hit a reef and ruined a town’s livelihood, perhaps for ever. The oil industry’s bombast, its strutting pretense of power, conceal an only too visible inefficiency. This combines with what many regard as a carelessness not only about oil leaks, but about the truth” (pg. 24).

Context provided later in the story about how so few reporters had seen the tanker or the slick, how reporters thus had to rely on Exxon-released bulletins, and how reporters who wanted to see the site of the tanker could spend \$3,000 per day chartering a boat prefaced Reed’s suggestion of the second underlying problem: corporate self-interest and unconcern. Using mildly sarcastic language, Reed described how “Exxon officials drone through statistics,” and then quoted a fisherman accusing Exxon of caring only about money and profit, and not about “Alaska or its people.” The quote was followed by journalistic comment and context supporting the quote: “The men have a point. A contingency plan devised a decade ago has been flouted,” Reed wrote, but then contrasted the “flouted” plan with the reality of a clean-up effort that was “late, slow, poorly equipped, confused and inefficient.” Combined with comments from an earlier story on Monday March 27 where Exxon and the pipeline group were described as having “dragged their feet” (pg. 6), and additional context from this March 30th story where Exxon is described as “bombastic” and displaying a “strutting pretense of power” (pg. 24), the *Guardian’s* sub-frame of Exxon’s arrogance contributed to the larger systemic frame of industry greed and self-interest developed here and elsewhere.

The story concluded with anecdotal context which addressed the third systemic problem of American oil consumptiveness. Describing how Exxon had immediately defended its decision to renew tanker deliveries at Valdez immediately after the spill, Reed cited an Exxon executive reminding everyone that “a quarter of US oil comes from Alaska” and that “They need it for those Mercedes Benzes in California” (pg. 24).

A third story by Reed on Monday April 3 broadened the onus of responsibility to include the U.S. Coast Guard, which Reed implicated in the systemic failings for having replaced its formerly strong radar system in Prince William Sound with a “cheaper and weaker system” in 1984 (April 3, 1989 “Oil Pipeline Faces Threat of Closure,” pg. 9).

That same day – the day on which the *Guardian* ran two stories about the Alaska spill – Reed wrote the longest of all the stories published about the Alaska spill for the paper’s “Comment and Analysis” section. Titled “Crude Confrontations,” the story specifically targeted America’s “profligate energy consumption” as a major culprit of oil spills and also implicated the oil industry’s interest in short-term profit over safety and longer-term solution as an equally important underlying cause of spills (*see #26 in Appendix*). Employing an occasionally unmasked wry and mildly tongue-in-cheek tone, the story interwove context about the debate over drilling in ANWR, which had become a heated contemporary topic following the *Exxon* spill, with context about the Alaska spill to produce a commentary critical of both the social system in which Americans demanded cheap oil and the economic motives of the oil industry which compelled it to seek short-term gain in environmentally sensitive areas like ANWR.

One of the primary motivations fuelling the ANWR debate, Reed wrote – and all such “classic confrontations of environmentalists and the developers of Big Oil” (pg. 19) – was the “nation’s insatiable need [for oil],” which industry sources said could only be met by opening the Arctic refuge. After presenting the industry’s arguments, including worry over the “national security” implications of reliance on foreign oil, Reed offered one of the strongest systemic comments seen in *Guardian* stories about America’s prevailing cultural

consumptiveness – one of the most important but overlooked systemic issues underlying oil spill disasters, of which the *Exxon* spill was the most recent example – that hinged somewhere between factual statement and subtle editorial indictment:

“Questions of America’s profligate energy consumption, its recent abandonment of alternative energy development, its unrealistically low petrol prices (compared with the rest of industrial world), and the fact that Japanese and West German economies seem to thrive on foreign oil are dismissed” (pg. 19).

The statement directly criticized American society, but more implicitly, was critical of the U.S. government for failing to pursue more sustainable energy alternatives. In Reed’s story, this was suggested in his comment about oil companies “echo[ing] their erstwhile compadre in the business, President Bush, who said there was ‘no connection’ between Valdez and ANWR.” Combined with subtle negative framing of the Bush administration seen elsewhere in *Guardian* stories about the spill, the *Guardian* develops an ultimate frame for the *Exxon Valdez* spill in which the systemic problem undergirds the whole of American society, encompassing a wasteful population comfortable with cheap oil and a government entangled by the same self-interest motivating a short-sighted industry.

Though the *Guardians’* intervening stories between early April and September meander through various other angles related to the spill, its last story on September 19, 1989 leaves no question about the paper’s ultimate frame of American energy consumptiveness as a root cause of the *Exxon Valdez* and other oil spills. The story, titled “Oil Firms Join Battle with Ecologists” with the subtext “Wildlife refuge at risk months after tanker disaster,” was partly a recap about the Alaska spill as Exxon prepared to cease its cleaning efforts for the season and part a context article about other U.S. areas targeted for oil exploration by the industry, including ANWR.

After leading the story with news about the oil industry’s proposals to open other sensitive areas to drilling, from ANWR to locations in Florida, California, and North Carolina, *Guardian* correspondent Simon Tisdall in Washington D.C. bluntly stated that “the controversy extends to the vexed issue of America’s use of cheap energy and the question of

conservation and economic need” (pg. 10). Through a quote from a source with the Center for Study of Responsive Law, Tisdall expanded the frame to encompass industry self-interest and problems with maritime safety, particularly in refusing to pay for double-hulled tankers: “legislating to defend wilderness areas is always a problem. The only incentive for the oil companies is their fear of being sued. They have ignored latest technology – for example, tankers going into Prince William Sound still are not double-hulled” (pg. 10).

Similar to the *Seattle Times*’ approach to ending the final spill piece, the story concluded with a statement which, as the last *Guardian* comment about the *Exxon Valdez* spill, left to linger a pointedly direct comment about the deeper systemic problem of desire for cheap energy. Quoting an oil industry lobbyist commenting that “the American public has come to take cheap and plentiful oil for granted” and prefacing the statement with the ironic and unlikely fact that in this, “oilmen and environmentalists are as one,” the statement reaffirmed the *Guardian*’s attention to the deeper systemic causes of the spill by projecting the American energy consumptiveness frame to the forefront.

Local British Angle

In some stories, the *Guardian* tried to add a British story peg where possible or include context relevant to British readers. Five of the *Guardian*’s total 27 stories – or about 19 percent – included a local peg or angle. Some cited local British sources knowledgeable about oil spills or involved somehow in the Alaska clean-up. In one case, a British spokesman for Heavy Lift Cargo Airlines, a British company shipping several thousand gallons of dispersant to Alaska, was cited (Tuesday March 28, 1989, pg. 10).

In another case, a full two paragraphs were devoted to presentation of the local angle that five members of the British Oil Spill Service Centre had arrived in Alaska “48 hours after the first appeal for help arrived in Britain” and the various equipment taken by the team to assist in clean-up efforts (Wednesday March 29, 1989). The reporters made a point of mentioning that “oil experts from Britain have taken a leading role in the vast [clean-up]

operation” (pg. 20). The two details are juxtaposed with a comment about how four days had gone by without “an all-out attempt to disperse the oil” by Exxon, thus creating the subtle micro-frame of British competence, willingness to help, and readiness which was in contrast to the ill-prepared Exxon Corporation (*see # 23 in Appendix*).

One story included a small story blurb at the end of the main story with a local angle by John Ardill, a *Guardian* reporter in England. The local context blurb had no headline of its own, but contained four short paragraphs introduced by the italicized text “John Ardill adds:” about how “20 British oil cleaning experts” were to arrive in Alaska within 24 hours in order to “help tackle the Valdez slick” and how British companies had offered equipment to coordinators in Valdez if needed (Friday April 7, 1989, pg. 10).

Finally, two stories provided context with which British readers would be familiar in order to make a comparison with some detail in the stories. One story, titled “Fish Harvest Hopes Rise as Exxon Inquiry Opens” (*see #28 in Appendix*), focused on the tenuous hopes for some Alaska fisheries after testing had proved the areas safe for fish harvesting. In the story, reporter Martin Walker included local British context in order to explain a ritual practice in Alaska of sending the fishing season’s first sockeye salmon catches to fancy restaurants around the U.S. and how the practice was jeopardized that year because of concern over oil-contaminated fish: “The season’s first catches of sockeye are usually flown to gourmet restaurants across the US, rather like August 12 grouse or Beaujolais Nouveau” (Wednesday May 17, 1989, pg. 8).

In the final example, appearing in the *Guardian*’s second-to-last story of September 8, Reed used the island of Great Britain as a figurative measuring stick of the spill’s size that provided local British readers a more familiar comparative visual metaphor: “six months later the oil patch has spread not only further than the full length of Britain’s east coast, but oozed onto more than 2,400 miles of convoluted Alaskan shoreline and islands” (Friday September 8, 1989, pg. 27).

Captain Hazelwood – Criticism of U.S. Media Focus

A few *Guardian* stories explicitly criticized the U.S. media or Exxon for excessive focus on the role that tanker captain Joseph Hazelwood played in causing the disaster. Although this study's textual analysis found that *Guardian* stories framed the spill most prominently in terms of deeper systemic problems, and thus did not fall into the same media trap of focusing on the simplistic but superficial theme of targeting the captain, the paper's outspoken – sometimes mildly sardonic – censure of Exxon's and the U.S. media's focus on this theme was surprising nonetheless.

At the same time, the *Guardian's* criticism of Exxon and the U.S. media fits with the paper's broader systemic frame. Smith (1992, 164) commented that “the way most stories about the spill were framed carried the implicit message that government regulation is unnecessary and that corporations should be expected to consider statistically improbably environmental risks more important than their own profits.” The *Guardian* framed the spill in almost exactly these terms – as related to corporate greed and self-interest. This fact lends further strength to the observations of this section's textual analysis that the *Guardian* demonstrated higher quality reporting of the *Exxon Valdez* spill by avoiding the widespread pitfall of pack journalism and trying to probe the deeper context and issues smoldering beneath the surface.

The first story, already mentioned, appeared on Wednesday March 29, five days after the spill. As part of the story's focus on the failings of the contingency plan by the Alyeska Pipeline Consortium, reporter Christopher Reed observed in the second paragraph that the “American news-media interest is focusing on Mr. Joe Hazelwood” (pg. 20), and then directly stated that the focus was “diverting attention” from the more important focus on why four days had gone by without any tangible efforts to disperse the spill.

The second story appeared on Saturday April 1 and criticized Exxon for using Captain Hazelwood as a scapegoat (see #25 in *Appendix*). Titled “FBI to Launch Oil Spill Inquiry,” Washington D.C. correspondent Mark Tran was mildly sarcastic in his comment that “the

oil company has already thrown to the wolves the tanker captain . . . after receiving a report from federal investigators that he had failed a blood-alcohol test” (pg. 6). Later in the story, Tran commented again that “while Exxon laid blame for the disaster squarely on the shoulders of Capt. Hazelwood, the oil giant continued to be battered by criticism.” In addition to demonstrating the *Guardian’s* awareness of how Hazelwood was functioning as an easy but obscurant scapegoat, these comments also contributed to the larger frame of Exxon as self-interested and unconcerned about its effects on people or the environment.

As a related facet of its criticism for overplaying the role of the captain, the *Guardian* also seemed to express a mild undertone of empathy for the captain. While the *Guardian* did not justify the captain’s higher-than-legal blood-alcohol limit or fail to report the facts about the captain’s whereabouts and actions the night of the accident, it did not vilify the captain as other news media did, and also seemed – through stylistic treatment via inclusion of certain details or quotes, and in one case a photograph – to express a subtle degree of respect for the captain.

The first mention of the tanker captain appeared in the *Guardian’s* second story, titled “Alaskan Oil Slick Spreads as Captain is Questioned” (Monday March 27, 1989, pg. 6). After mentioning that the Coast Guard had subpoenaed the captain for questioning, he is described as a “20-year Exxon ship veteran.” A story on Wednesday May 17, primarily focused on rising hopes among some fishermen about salvaging a few fisheries after a fortuitous near-miss of the slick, concluded with details about the NTSB hearing into the disaster and specifically ended with a quote which portrayed the captain as self-aware about the role of a captain in the wake of such a disaster and as graciously accepting responsibility for the spill in the first hours after the wreck (*see #28 in Appendix*). Walker quoted Coastguard chief Mark Delozier telling him how Captain Hazelwood had said “within hours of the accident” that “he was responsible,” and that “he had overestimated the third mate’s ship-handling capabilities” (pg. 8).

Additional context provided through the *Guardian's* development of a side nuance not seen in *Seattle Times* stories – specifically, reportage about events pertaining to Captain Hazelwood outside of Alaska, such as his disappearance from Alaska, his retreat to his Long Island home, and the NY state police search for him – also contributed to the sense of the *Guardian's* more respectful treatment of the captain. Small details, such as the fact that Hazelwood lived in Huntington Bay, “a seaside village . . . with his wife, daughter and parents” (Tuesday April 4, 1989, pg. 24) offered by the *Guardian's* New York correspondent Mary Brasler, helped to humanize the captain and present a fuller picture of his life outside the tainted image of his role as captain of the tanker that caused the worst oil spill in U.S. history.

In addition, the fact that the captain left Alaska at all when access out of Valdez was so difficult is blamed, not on the captain, but on the ineptitude of those in charge of the clean up organization and operation. A story from April 3, with the headline “Oil Pipeline Faces Threat of Closure,” devoted nine of its 16 paragraphs to the captain’s disappearance from Alaska and related context, including his firing by Exxon. Reporter Reed commented that “the captain’s disappearance adds yet another example to the incidents of inefficiency that have plagued those in charge of the oil spill crisis” (pg. 9). Reed also marginalized the alcohol culprit fanaticized by other media by portraying alcohol use as part of a wider phenomenon among tanker crew. Reed’s comment that this fact was “widely known” undermined Exxon’s credibility, along with the potency and potential shock value of the fact that Hazelwood’s blood-alcohol was higher than industry regulations permitted, and twisted the blame back towards Exxon. Reed also made a point of mentioning that Exxon “took away the lawyer it had assigned [to Hazelwood]” after he was dismissed. These elements all furthered the frame of corporate selfishness.

A photograph that appeared in a *Guardian* story on Thursday April 6 – during the same few days when the NY State side angle was being reported in the paper – also contributed to this humanization of the captain by depicting him handsomely with a

somewhat rugged but pensive countenance wearing clothing that invoked images of traditional sailors' shore garb. The prominent photograph is almost the same size as the entire 9-paragraph story, titled "Valdez Captain in Jail on \$1m Bail," with which it appeared. A hazy background hints of rocks, sand and ocean. The image and story work together in this case to further subtle support for the captain. The caption, which states merely: "Charged skipper . . . Mr. Joseph Hazelwood, the former captain of the Exxon tanker, Valdez," combined with the headline focused on the high bail and the pensive expression and slightly furrowed brows evident on the captain's face suggests a seaman who perhaps lost his job prematurely.

Finally, the *Guardian's* criticism of Exxon and U.S. media for levying unwarranted scrutiny on the captain also contributed to the mild sense of respect for the captain. Criticizing Exxon for "throwing [Hazelwood] to the wolves" contained the implicit message that he was being thrown as bait to the media, and that his side should be given a chance to be heard. Once again, Exxon is framed as merely interested in saving its own skin to the extent possible by diverting attention and fingers of blame unfairly at the captain.

Storytelling Elements and Narrative Context

In several places, the *Guardian* used a storytelling style of writing and incorporated narrative elements, such as poetic descriptions, narrative and scene-setting leads, description of observational details, strong and vivid imagery, and occasional use of dialogue writing in stories. In many cases, the narrative style was used to present particularly informative or descriptive context or information that would have been less interesting or effectively presented in a hard-news manner.

One example of this can be seen in a *Guardian* story from Saturday April 15. *Guardian* correspondent Martin Walker had traveled to Alaska and published a story titled "Alaskan Clean-Up Gets Tangled in Red Tape" that explored some of the organizational problems that had caused needless delay in clean-up efforts (see #27 in *Appendix*). He used a narrative lead to

segue to the main point of the story about how clean-up crew had been forced to idle three hours doing nothing because they had been sent to the beach they were supposed to clean without the beach expert or ecologist, whose pre-cleaning inspections were mandatory before any work could begin. He also used a literary style to present details inside the story, such as the “ironic cheer” that “suddenly broke the silence” of the deceptively peaceful natural scene, a description which supported his later comment that “this operation is throttling itself with bureaucracy” (pg. 24). Together, the information had more impetus with the weight of the narrative context built up behind it. The narrative style – including use of the second person – was also more conducive to the presentation of important contextual detail about the ecological cues that the ecologist and beach expert were looking for to make their assessment:

“Without their approval, no work may begin. They check for signs of ancient human habitat, and for ‘environmental sensitivity.’ This means that if you can see the milky green of spawning herring in the shallow waters, or if there are salmon eggs dug into the gravel of a stream bed, or if this is designated as a nesting point, then no matter how thick the oil, the beach may not be cleaned” (pg. 24).

In other words, the story used its narrative base to augment important details that would have seemed less important reported in a more hard-news style. After the above description, Walker was able to use the accumulated weight of the many problems, obstacles, and requirements of clean-up efforts described in more painstaking narrative detail to make a powerful factual statement: “We are now nearly three weeks into the disaster. There are more than 3,000 beaches, or affected shorelines, inside Prince William Sound. So far, only 44 have been approved for cleaning” (pg. 24).

A different story, titled “Harbour Hits Slump as Oil Slick Spreads,” used an anecdotal lead and story frame to report about the devastation to fishermen as a result of the spill. The story, published on Thursday April 13, described the disruption to local lifestyles through the new vantage of a harbormaster saddened by the unnatural quietude and stillness of the fishing harbor, and used several direct quotes to capture the flavor of the man’s perspective and experience.

In another story, Walker flew with a helicopter scout attempting to locate oil slick positions aerially and used the experience as the lead to his narrative story about some of the challenges confronting Alaskans in the town of Seward to locate and deal with the spreading oil before it hit land. Walker included small descriptive details, such as describing a sign on a window, and contemporary details such as a present-tense description of how a “phone call comes in” (Wednesday April 12, 1989, “Wind Grounds Flying Eyes in Oil Slick Operation, pg. 24), that provided a perspective not possible from strict hard news writing, and painted a vividly real picture of what it was like to be in the midst of the disaster. The small details in particular helped to portray the spill as more complex and multifaceted than disproportionate reporting on news themes such as wildlife deaths, the tanker captain, or anger at Exxon would suggest.

Photographs

The *Guardian* published a total of 6 photographs related to the oil spill during the six-month study scope. While this represents a relatively small percentage of the total stories written – about 22 percent – the selected images were a diverse lot that touched on most of the major news angles covered in *Guardian* stories. The images included a photo of the tanker visible through oil-covered icebergs, an image of the tanker captain, one small image of a bird’s head, a head shot of Vice President Dan Quayle, and an image of Exxon chairman Lawrence Rawls at a hearing.

The *Guardian*’s first photograph is particularly interesting, however, because its visual theme is unique to the image, the topic not appearing in any *Guardian* stories. Contrary to the expectations of this thesis, the *Guardian* did not publish any photographs about the spill until its third story on Tuesday March 28. The lead story did not have an accompanying picture, and the first photograph it did publish was not an image of the stricken tanker or the Alaskan wilderness befouled by oil, but a large and prominent photograph of Gary Kompkoff, leader of the Tatitlek town council – predominantly inhabited by native Alaskans – wearing a hat

and vest and standing near what appears to be the bow of a boat pointing towards something not seen off the left edge of the photo (see #22 in *Appendix*). In the background, a church and a few buildings – which are presumed to belong to the town of Tatitlek – are visible across a body of water with white-capped mountains behind them. The caption reads: “Oil peril . . . Gary Kompkoff, leader of Tatitlek town council, talks of the risks facing his home on Prince William Sound” (pg. 10).

What is interesting about this photograph is that it provides information presented nowhere else in any of the *Guardian's* 27 stories, and also intimates that Native Alaskans will be affected by the oil spill. Altogether, the elements of the image, including the caption, frame the spill as a threat to Native Alaskans, whose home – shown in the background – is at risk from oil affecting areas important to Tatitlek residents, which Kompkoff was in the process of showing to those on the boat with him. His stance and posture pointing out things familiar to him, coupled with the caption, which describes him as informing others about threats to his home, collude to give him a subtle air of authority in the image.

Given the *Guardian's* attention to other overlooked issues and angles related to the oil spill, it is curious that this photo was chosen to stand alone, with no story taking the image's context further in words. At the same time, however, in lieu of writing a story focusing on the perspective and threats to Native Alaskans, the photograph – given a prominent placement on the page, and the largest visual element of any other feature – still serves to give a presence to Native Alaskans where most media, even the *Seattle Times*, gave scant or no attention at all. By offering an unavoidable image, instead of brief reference easily lost in a larger story, the *Guardian* gives voice – though a minor voice via visual framing – to the existence of the Native Alaskans and ensures that their presence is included in the community of locals affected by the spill typically portrayed as including just the fishermen, Anglo residents, tourist operators, and business owners of the Alaskan Sound.

Summary

The *Guardian's* emphasis on development of systemic story frames which pointed to America's desire for cheap oil and corporate greed as more important underlying causes of major spill disasters allowed the paper's 27 stories to be highly informative despite the fewer number of stories published. Combining narrative storytelling techniques – in particular, eyewitness accounts – with thoughtful or novel information in places where reporting on the spill could have easily been overly dramatized resulted in the *Guardian* producing surprisingly informative stories that avoided the pitfalls of disaster news coverage – especially for an international newspaper. By having *Guardian* correspondents travel to Alaska to report on the spill, the paper was able to develop its own unique perspective on the spill that otherwise would have been impossible from afar. In addition, the fact that the paper even sent reporters to cover the spill in person indicates a dedication to covering important environmental issues to the best of its abilities.

Comparison of the Seattle Times and Guardian

Both the *Seattle Times* and the *Guardian* successfully dealt with the complicated and difficult story of the *Exxon Valdez* disaster. The complexities of the spill, and the journalistic practices which led other media astray, were negotiated with skill and delicacy by these two papers as a result of specific, conscientious reporting decisions. When analyzed together, it is evident the two papers shared some of the same reporting techniques. Both the *Seattle Times* and the *Guardian* specifically emphasized story contexts and developed deeper systemic frames. This fact alone allowed the papers to sidestep some of the more insidious traps of disaster reporting.

The papers also used more literary and narrative approaches that allowed them to better express important nuances of the spill that would otherwise have been lost in a traditional event-driven approach which tends to rely on easy symbols, standard accessible sources, and short-term causes and consequences. While the *Seattle Times* developed more

nuances, side stories, and angles of the spill, the fact that the *Guardian* produced so many of its own stories on the spill – despite the international nature of the disaster, which thus negated proximity as a news factor – indicates a dedication to coverage of important environmental issues and a more global perspective on the environment itself.

5. PRESTIGE – SPAIN’S “ENVIRONMENTAL NIGHTMARE”

As a case study of the media’s ability to report on an exceptionally complex ecological disaster, the *Prestige* spill could not be a better model. Everything about the disaster was messy, from the tanker’s agonizingly protracted pollution of Galician and French coastlines, to the record devastation to the region’s environment and heavily fishing-dependent communities, to the Spanish’s government’s mishandling of the situation and the byzantine web of ownership which confounded attempts to determine who was responsible for the disaster – and for compensation.

In many respects, it was a disaster which should never have happened. On November 13, 2002, one of the ship’s tanks burst during a storm off the Galician coast in the northwest of Spain. Worried the ship might sink, the tanker’s captain called for help from Spanish authorities. However, instead of towing the *Prestige* into a safe harbor where it could be repaired or off-loaded, the Spanish government banished the 26-year old, single-hulled tanker from its coast. Refused safe ports of call by both Portugal and France, the damaged tanker, leaking a trail of heavy fuel oil, ended up being towed aimlessly around a particularly rough section of the Atlantic Ocean for almost six days, destined ultimately for Africa when no other European nations would accept it, before fierce weather gales finally caused the tanker to break in half on the morning of November 19, 2002. By day’s end, after a dramatic display of its death throes, the *Prestige* was completely gone, sunk over two miles beneath the Atlantic, where it would continue to seep hundreds of tons of oil a day into open water, eventually re-polluting beaches already coated and cleaned.

Neither the Spanish nor the Portuguese governments wanted to accept responsibility for the disaster. Spain tried to blame Great Britain, claiming the tanker was en route to Gibraltar, an overseas territory of Britain since the early 18th century. The Spanish government also tried to pin the wreck on the tanker’s Greek captain, accusing him of having obstinately refused to heed Spanish directives. Ultimately, the spill affected more than 1,800

miles of coastline along the Iberian Peninsula, from northern Portugal to southwestern France, with Spanish Galicia suffering the greatest damage. The pollution process languished across months as a result of bad decisions and premature assessments of the oil's likelihood of solidifying in the cold depths of the sunken tanker. In addition, when Spain finally acknowledged that the tanker's sunken oil was a serious problem, the depth of the shipwreck presented new logistical and technological difficulties. No one had ever tried to recover oil from a tanker so far beneath the ocean, and the heartiest robotic submersibles were only capable of dealing with pressure up to about 1.5 miles under the sea.

The media's response to the disaster was likewise extraordinary. Raul Garcia of World Wildlife Foundation Spain said in a November 2003 report on the disaster that "never in the history of Spain had an environmental disaster aroused such public outcry, exerted such a political impact, or elicited such media coverage as the Prestige spill" (pg. 4). Indeed, in journalistic terms, the *Prestige* was a disaster of the truest kind. The tanker's heavy fuel oil wreaked havoc on an ecologically cornerstone area that, as Tito Drago of the regional paper *Tierramérica* reported eight months after the spill, is "the European region mostly highly dependent on its coastal and fishing resources." Interwoven with the raw devastation were tangled threads of complexity and controversial angles ripe for the telling. The spill could easily have conformed to the classic disaster narrative. Images of dead birds and fishermen trying to hold back the oiled waves with their bare hands flooded television screens around the region. Death to birds reached record levels for Europe, estimated at between 250,000 and 300,000 – rivaling the high tally after the *Exxon Valdez*. The spill is expected to be the costliest in history, in part because a majority of the region's people, many of them fishermen, suffered substantial economic loss. In Galicia alone 120,000 people were directly or indirectly affected by damage to the fishing and shellfishing industries there, according to Garcia (pg. 19).

As told by the *Guardian* and *Seattle Times*, however, the *Prestige* spill was more than just a prototypical oil spill disaster, but an even more egregious example of industry failings and inconsistencies within the system of maritime standards. As this study's textual analysis

found, the *Guardian* focused primarily on the interrelated ecological aspects and threats to the region's largely family-based fishing communities, dependent on the rich coastal and marine ecosystems responsible for supplying a significant percentage of the total European fish catch. Predictable themes observed in media coverage of earlier oil spills, such a focus on the tanker captain – who police also arrested in this case and charged an exorbitant €1 million bail – scarcely appeared in the paper's coverage of the *Prestige* spill. Instead, through a dual focus on the ecological and regional consequences, and a strong focus on deeper systemic issues aided by rich historical context, the *Guardian* framed the spill as a preventable disaster caused by serious bureaucratic inefficiencies and an industry more driven by capitalistic self-interest than responsible stewardship. The *Guardian's* treatment of the *Prestige* spill is also particularly noteworthy for its outstanding convergence reporting. Making full use of print and web technologies, the paper developed extensive online material about aspects of the spill best reported through audio-visual means, and repeatedly alerted readers to its existence by prominent asides, teases, and advertisements within its suite of print spill stories.

Most of the *Seattle Times'* spill stories were written by wire services or outside news media. However, the wire stories the paper selected to publish also emphasized the ecological and regional consequences and, like the *Guardian*, explored pressing questions of maritime standards and questionable industry ethics. Despite the international nature of the news, the paper ran a steady stream of wire stories throughout the study interval, though fewer than the *Guardian*. Additionally, in the two cases where the *Seattle Times* published its own material on the spill, the overwhelming emphases were on the deeper systemic problems of greed and sloth within the shipping and oil industries – epitomized by the reluctance to pay for safer vessels and their reliance on cheap, ageing, single-hulled tankers – and the public's fickle, short-lived concern for environmental disasters like oil spills. As a result, the *Seattle Times* framed the spill as a preventable disaster caused primarily by glaring self-interest on the part of industry concerned more with its bottom line than with stewardship and responsible business.

The Guardian

The *Guardian* published a total of 33 stories about the *Prestige* spill between Thursday November 14, 2002 and Sunday March 16, 2003. The overwhelming majority – 20, or about 61 percent – appeared in the month of November. Perhaps significantly, 42 percent of the *Guardian*'s total spill coverage over the 6-month interval – 14 stories – is accounted for in just 4 days of reporting between Wednesday November 20 and Sunday November 24. The dates coincide with the immediate aftermath of the tanker's break-up and sinking on November 19. On November 20 and 21 the *Guardian* published 4 stories per day, and 3 stories per day on November 22 and 24. If the first 3 stories prior to the actual sinking of the tanker are counted, the *Guardian* published a total of 17 stories in the first 11 days after the *Prestige* first signaled distress on November 13 – accounting for just over half of its total spill output over the study interval. In December 2002 and January 2003, the paper published 5 stories each per month (about 15 percent). Only 1 story was published in February, 2 stories in March, and no stories during April and May, the last two months of the study interval.

In many ways, the *Guardian*'s distribution of stories parallels the nature of the spill story. Initially, the *Prestige* was just a damaged, leaking tanker looking for a place to safely dock in order to stanch the leak and make repairs. While the five days during which the tanker was carted around the Atlantic permitted enough oil to leak so that environmental damage was substantial, the actual sinking of the ship took everyone by surprise and drove the realization that a tanker-full of oil would be perpetually enshrined under water close to Spanish, Portuguese, and French coasts. The threat of an even more serious disaster thus became more imminent, and the severity of the spill solidified into the realm of catastrophe.

As such, the *Guardian*'s concentrated story distribution reflects the surprising and stark developments during the critical first two weeks following the spill. Curiously, this is also the interval when the *Guardian* published the majority of its stories of a systemic nature. With the exception of one story published in early January, nine of the *Guardian*'s 10 stories

with a systemic focus or bent coincide with the most significant breaking developments in the spill during the first two weeks. The conjunction underscores the *Guardian's* conscious attempt to penetrate the deeper issues surrounding the spill as well as its attempt to develop a more probing systemic frame for the disaster. After this period, however, the *Prestige* spill diverged from the normal phenotype of other spills in that it remained a long-drawn affair which stretched out over months – ultimately, through August 2003 when authorities and scientists realized that 60 percent more oil had escaped the tanker than had been believed.

Thus, the news accounts that fell within the scope of this thesis had to reckon with an unusually persistent and uncertain spill scenario. Developments in the spill tended to be of a more homogenous, chronic – but not breaking or overly novel – nature. The *Guardian* dealt with the situation by updating readers about developments related to new slicks from the leaking, submerged tanker – as well as the emerging threat to France's Aquitaine oyster region, affected by some of those slicks – and tracking the efforts of the Spanish and French to deploy submersibles and robot scouts to assess the status of the tanker or patch holes, or examining aspects of the clean-up process. The *Guardian's* story distribution reflects this comparative lull in news developments owing to the atypical prolonging of the pollution affair, and it may therefore be noteworthy that the paper decided to end its coverage in mid-March during this relative lull instead of carrying it through May.

Overall, most of the *Guardian's* stories appeared in the International section of the paper, save for the instances when a strong British local angle appeared in a story. However, beginning on Wednesday November 20, the *Guardian* created a special “Tanker Disaster” section where most of the *Prestige* stories appeared (see #33 in *Appendix*). The special section floated between the Home and International sections of the paper, but was advertised from the front page and also contained a hard-to-miss dark bold heading. The special section only lasted for 8 stories, which also coincided with the *Guardian's* concentrated reporting between Wednesday November 20 and Friday November 22.

Themes and News Angles

While many of the usual threads of an oil spill disaster story appeared in *Guardian* stories about the *Prestige* – such as updates about the movements of the various slicks, effects on wildlife, and the proceedings of the clear-up effort – the three angles most noticeable in the *Guardian's* coverage focused on the environmental consequences, the effects on fishermen – and by extension, the livelihoods of a regionally distinct group – and the systemic underpinnings of the disaster. For this spill, the ecological threats were closely interwoven with threats to fishermen in the *Guardian's* narrative.

One issue that *Guardian* stories focused on almost immediately was the status and history of the tanker itself. The fact that the *Prestige* was a 26-year old tanker with a contested safety history, built during an era when many tankers were mass produced at sub-standard quality, became a topic of immediate importance in the pages of the *Guardian*. The tanker's age became a hook for stories of a systemic nature, many of which examined the issue of single versus double-hulled ships. Combined with the overwhelming focus on the other two angles, the story of the *Prestige* thus became the story of a regional environmental and economic disaster caused almost solely by the manipulations of a self-interested industry that actively dodged regulation while seeking to maximize profits by knowingly contracting aging vessels to transport a substance notorious for its ecological toxicity.

One angle that was noticeably absent in *Guardian* stories was any sort of focus on the real or alleged role of the tanker's captain, Apostolos Mangouras. With the exception of a few references to some fact of his imprisonment or bail bond, the *Guardian* completely bypassed the Spanish government's accusations about Mangouras' role in the disaster and speculations at large in society, instead focusing on the history of the tanker and the role of the Spanish government in causing a much more severe pollution disaster.

Ecology and Fishing Intertwined

Throughout *Guardian* stories, a palpable current of concern for the ecological consequences of the spill was observed, often closely coupled with narrative about the threats to fishermen and coastal fishing communities. Almost immediately, the *Prestige* spill was billed as an environmental disaster. While the environmental damage had not yet spread widely, the *Guardian's* first story on Thursday November 14 established the prominent ecological disaster frame by presaging the ominous possibility: "Spain was bracing itself for an environmental disaster last night as a tanker carrying 77,000 tonnes of fuel began spilling oil while struggling to save itself from sinking off the north-west Atlantic coast" (pg. 19). The portent for fishermen reverberated through the story as well. The *Guardian* concluded this lead story with an ominous historical reference to the 1992 *Aegean Sea* tanker disaster, which occurred in virtually the same area off Galicia, and was "a major disaster for a local economy that remains heavily dependent on the sea" (pg. 19).

The paper's second story on Monday November 18 more closely concatenated the two key threads of ecology and fishing (*see #29 in Appendix*). The lead paragraph of the front-page story informed readers about the first major slick to hit the coasts and ended by stating that it was "devastating local fishing grounds, coastal ecosystems and birdlife" (pg. 1). The superscript heading to the story – "Wildlife suffers as slick swamps Spanish coast" – accompanied a prominent photograph of an oiled shearwater, a bird rare to Spain, on a beach. Later in the story, reporter Giles Tremlett – one of the *Guardian's* main reporters on location in Spain – employed two tactics for conjoining the ecology and fishing angles that would become routine methods observed throughout the *Guardian's* coverage, namely: 1) providing information about the status of wildlife followed immediately by information about fishermen; and 2) citing environmentalists and fishermen together, or using sources derived primarily from these two groups. Coupled with the *Guardian's* simultaneous focus on the larger meta-causes of the spill, these methods emphasized the importance of ecological soundness to the regional stability of the area hit by the *Prestige* spill.

For example, in this November 18 story, Tremlett followed a paragraph about bird rescue centers with a paragraph about fishermen that compressed narrative detail with factual emphasis on the effects already felt: “Local fishermen and those who harvest the wealth of goose barnacles, mussels, crabs and octopus sat watch gloomily on rain-lashed cliffs and beaches as black waves washed over some of Europe’s richest seafood grounds” (pg. 1). Later in the story, Tremlett wrote that “fishermen and environmentalists” warned that despite the smaller quantity of oil spilt by the *Prestige* in comparison to the earlier *Aegean Sea* disaster, “the impact on local ecosystems would be worse” (pg. 2). This dual citing invested the knowledge of fishermen with a degree of authority equal to that of the environmentalists, presumably basing their opinions on scientific knowledge, while accentuating the emphasis on the predicted ecological impacts. The fact that fishermen were prognosticating such widespread ecological damage also emphasized their own dependence on the local ecosystem, thus binding the two themes closely together and framing the spill as both an ecological disaster and a threat to a regional way of life.

This pattern is seen several times in *Guardian* stories, in several instances by making use of narrative and storytelling techniques. The paper’s third story on Tuesday November 19 – written just before the tanker broke up and started sinking early on Tuesday morning – engaged the same tactics. The story, titled “Got a Sticky Problem? Don’t Worry, You Can Always Dump it on Africa,” is a perspicacious systemic examination of the much bigger, but little explored, global problem of the developed world’s perception and treatment of developing nations (see #30 in *Appendix*). Tremlett structured his mildly sarcastic story around the new context that the *Prestige* would be taken to Africa because no European nations wanted to deal with the “ticking time-bomb” (pg. 3). In the process of examining what this NIMBY attitude held by European nations meant globally, he again engaged the tactic of consecutive ecological / fishing references. A paragraph about how the “vessel was last night close to an especially rich part of the Atlantic seabed known as the Galician bank” (pg. 3) is followed immediately with a paragraph describing the “long faces” of fishermen

who had gathered in a café as a result of a recently implemented shellfishing ban. A large section of the story goes on to interview local mayors, fishermen, and regional nature reserve wardens about memories of effects after earlier spills and recent effects to nature preserves.

By the next day, November 20, the spill had morphed from being “Europe’s biggest environmental headache” (Tuesday November 19, 2002, pg. 3) to “threatening Europe’s biggest ecological disaster in a decade” (pg. 1) as the stricken tanker cracked and started sinking close to the Galician coast. The implications of this development to the ecological and economic vitality of the region were suddenly magnified many-fold, and subsequent *Guardian* stories reflected the starkly augmented gravity of the situation by focusing even more on the intertwined ecological and regional implications. The paper published stories focused on the effects to various regional villages that featured the voices of local fishermen. The paper also printed environmentally-oriented stories exploring the nature of the particular type of oil involved and continued to engage the tactics already explained of closely interweaving the ecological and fishing aspects into the story narrative.

A story on November 20, for example – the paper’s fourth story of the day – focused exclusively on the environmental aspects of the disaster by exploring in detail how type of oil and climate factored into the severity of a spill (see #32 in *Appendix*). Paul Brown, the *Guardian*’s environment editor, wrote the story, headed “Spill will Test Nature’s Ability to Recover,” which appeared in the newly created “Tanker Disaster” section. At the bottom of the story was a large convergence ad box titled “guardian.co.uk, on the site today” in bold, with detailed explanations of the online specials, interactives, and audio reports on the paper’s website – including an audio feature focused on the dual “environmental impacts on coastal wildlife and the people of Galicia” (pg. 5). A story from December 2 mainly about a new slick from the tanker that had moved “perilously close” to Galicia devoted time to explaining the “great concern for nearby areas which [were] breeding grounds for many species of shark, dolphin, porpoise, seal and turtle” (pg. 15), and followed the segment immediately with perspective of local fishermen.

Other stories maintained the awareness of the particularly interconnected place of ecology in the area hit by the *Prestige* by highlighting the dependency of locals on the sea and using quotes from fishermen explaining how oil affected important marine species like mussels and clams. Some stories not primarily about environmental or fishing aspects maintained an ecological focus in their headlines. For instance, a story from Monday November 22 updating readers about new slicks and other ships believed to be exploiting the spill to illegally clean their own tanks, contained very few internal references to wildlife, but had the main headline “Wildlife Suffers as Oil Spreads Along Spanish Coast” (pg. 18). The story’s primary focus was identified in a smaller sub-heading beneath this.

Systemic Focus and Frame

Systemic issues formed the other predominant focus of *Guardian* stories about the *Prestige* spill. The tanker’s old age and the fact that it was single-hulled served as fodder for many stories exploring the tanker’s checkered history and regulatory issues, use of flags of convenience and cheap older vessels, and industry ethics that prompted calculated action to avoid regulation, resist upgrading to double-hulled vessels, and seek the cheapest means available of shipping oil. Attention to systemic issues was often integrated with the paper’s other dual focus on ecology and fishing. In doing so, the *Guardian* is following its own precedent. While integration of these topics may have been, to some extent, a natural element of the *Prestige* story because of the facts of the spill – for instance, that the widespread devastation was primarily the result of an outdated tanker plying a particularly sensitive and dangerous section of ocean – the *Guardian* has demonstrated a propensity to pinpoint these deeper issues in the past. The degree to which it developed in-depth systemic angles here suggests a conscious attempt to highlight the specific regulatory and industry problems that allowed the *Prestige* to set sail in the first place.

While the first story of a primary systemic nature does not appear until the *Guardian*’s third story, the paper introduced the systemic frame early in its second spill story

on Monday November 18. After the story's lead, which advanced the fishing / ecology focus, reporter Giles Tremlett referred to the tanker in the second paragraph as "the ageing, single-hulled *Prestige*" (pg. 1), introducing one of the key systemic elements of the *Prestige* disaster which would become an acute focus in subsequent *Guardian* stories. The same story suggested that the debate between Britain and Spain boiled down to arguing over "who was to blame for the decrepit state of the vessel." Though the rest of the story focused on other topics, it concluded by mentioning that "the EU has agreed to phase out single-hull tankers by 2015" (pg. 2), thus ending the story on a systemic note. The story also included a map and mini-graphic illustrating the differences between single and double-hulled ships.

The *Guardian's* third story, about how the *Prestige* was being towed to Africa, supplied important systemic context that "one-sixth of the world's fleet of 6,000 tankers was as aged and decrepit as the *Prestige*" (pg. 3), and used the story of the *Prestige* to introduce a related pervasive systemic problem of how the developed world perceives the role of developing nations. Tremlett described the solution to tow the *Prestige* to Africa as a "ruse" and quoted an environmental source describing the practice as "a way of getting rid of [Europe's] environmental problems by exporting them to the developing world" (pg. 3). Tremlett returned to this point at the end of his story, concluding with the powerful systemic and global context that "although spills in Europe and the US got most publicity, many of the worst tanker disasters had occurred off Africa" (pg. 3) – a statement which implicated media as much as governments in the peripheral concern for developing nations.

The next day – the same day that the *Prestige* had broken up and sunk – the *Guardian* published one of its more telling systemic stories exposing the fact that a slew of tankers had been mass-produced during a surge in tanker manufacturing in the 1970's. Reporters Tremlett in Spain and Owen Bowcott in Britain gathered comments from an editor of the highly respected Lloyd's List shipping newspaper in Britain revealing that the *Prestige* had been among "a large number of tankers built in Japan during the boom years of the 1970's," a fact which had started "triggering international disputes about maritime safety" (pg. 1). The story

also included highly critical commentary from France's President Jacques Chirac, who had become the most vocal European leader condemning the *Prestige* spill and calling for accelerated implementation of stricter maritime rules (*see #31 in Appendix*).

Several other stories in the concentrated window of days between November 20 and 24 canvassed other systemic issues in depth, many of them concerned with maritime safety and profit-driven practices of the shipping and oil. The second story of Wednesday November 20, appearing in the newly created "Tanker Disaster section," explored what it meant that the *Prestige* "may have split along old lines of repair," as the story's sub-heading suggested, and provided new context that the *Prestige* was among a cohort of tankers of its age and build to have sunk in recent years, as well as the startling fact that 60 percent of the world's tanker fleet was still single-hulled (pg. 5).

A story the next day, headed "Oil Giants Still Hire Cheaper, Older Ships," suggested that the oil industry had tried to mask its main interest in profit beneath a veneer of environmental concern (*see #33 in Appendix - story "Goo8a"*). Reporter Terry Macalister scoured shipping industry records and commented, somewhat wryly, that "while Shell and others are keen to trumpet their commitment to the environment . . . their records suggest they are mainly choosing vessels on the basis of price" (pg. 5). The story continued by providing more specific information about the age and history of ships chartered in recent weeks by some of the major oil companies.

On Sunday November 24, the *Guardian* published two feature-length stories specifically of a systemic nature in its Sunday-only sister paper the *Observer*. Both the *Guardian* and the *Observer* are owned by the Guardian Media Group. While the *Guardian* is published on weekdays and Saturdays, the *Observer* is essentially the *Guardian's* Sunday edition. The *Guardian* also published an online special by one of its regular monthly contributors. While the first story, titled "How Oil Slick Will Bring Black Death to Coast's Way of Life," constructed a probing anecdotal narrative focused on fishermen in the Galician village of Caion, the story contained a strong systemic component that was an integral part of

the narrative on fishermen. After quoting a local town councilor speculating that he “supposed at some point [the disaster] would end,” the story immediately transitioned into a powerful systemic comment related to the *Prestige* that directly addressed the deeper problems of worldwide demand for cheap oil and wanton industry self-interest:

“It might. But that will not end the controversy about how a rapacious industry that feeds the insatiable demand for cheap oil across the world operates largely hidden from scrutiny and regulation, trading through a bewildering chain of companies that defy attempts by government and environmentalists to guard against such disaster” (pg. 18).

The story then devoted a substantial section to exploring the dubious and labyrinthine ownership history of the tanker, which traced back to a supremely wealthy Russian industry mogul who also happened to own the British company that chartered the *Prestige*. The story, written by three reporters gathering information in both Spain and London, included another strong systemic statement near the end that pinpointed a problem underlying many tanker accidents: “It is this ‘flag of convenience’ system that is blamed by environmentalists as one of the main factors that allows cheap-to-rent, sub-standard vessels, manned by untrained crews, to travel the world’s ocean with impunity” (pg. 18).

The other print story of the day was a commentary by *Guardian* columnist Will Hutton, titled “Capitalism Must Put Its House in Order,” which probed the wider issues of globalization and de-regulation of the shipping and oil industries in context of the *Prestige* disaster. In the process, Hutton made a few strongly condemnatory systemic comments that expressed the larger systemic frame of industry self-interest: “The *Prestige* was not just a garbage ship,” Hutton wrote. “It has exposed the international framework of maritime regulation and attitudes of many shipping companies as garbage as well” (pg. 30). The online special by Ian Willmore of the environmental group Friends of the Earth, and regular monthly *Guardian* columnist, explored in detail the “complex web of ownership and control behind the oil tanker disaster,” arguing that the disaster “showed the worst excesses of corporate globalization in action,” thus complementing Hutton’s print feature on

globalization and industry regulation. The piece relied on extensive reporting to unveil the facts behind the various companies and parties involved.

British Local Angle

In several instances, the *Guardian* developed story pegs of interest to home readers in Britain, whether by developing an angle on the home front related to the *Prestige* spill in more depth, referring to context widely known by most Britons, or by seeking a British source to quote. One news angle related to the *Prestige* spill by its intrinsic nature extended into the British domain – namely, Spain’s accusations that Britain was to blame for the disaster because the tanker was supposedly on its way to Gibraltar (*see #29 in Appendix*). The *Guardian*’s second story on November 18 clearly indicated this angle in its headline: “Spain Blames UK for Oil Disaster” (pg. 1). After informing readers the Britain and Spain had become “embroiled in a bitter row” over blame, reporter Giles Tremlett wrote in the story’s third paragraph that: “the Spanish government produced documents from shipping authorities in Latvia and France allegedly showing the *Prestige* was bound for Gibraltar, a revelation that could worsen the political row over the Rock” (pg. 1). Immediately after reporting this and allowing the Spanish a paragraph to comment, Tremlett provided contrary evidence from Crown Resources, owners of the oil on board the *Prestige*, who Tremlett wrote “had repeatedly said the vessel was going to Singapore” (pg. 1).

To understand the importance of this context to local British readers, it is important to understand that the issue of sovereignty over Gibraltar has been a major source of contention between Britain and Spain for centuries – since 1713 when Spain ceded control over to Britain after the War of Spanish Succession. Located on the southern tip of the Iberian Peninsula, the British Overseas Territory shares a border with Spain, but throughout history has been an important naval base for the British Armed Forces. In the 1960’s, Spain entirely closed the border to Gibraltar and severed all communication links after a referendum asking voters’ preferences for Spanish versus British sovereignty overwhelmingly chose to remain

under the British. Later, in 1981, the Spanish king at the time refused to attend the wedding of Prince Charles and Princess Diana after they had announced plans to board their honeymoon ship in Gibraltar. Despite joint talks in recent years between the two nations over the future of Gibraltar – and a second referendum on joint sovereignty, which was soundly rejected by the people there – the issue has continued to figure into Anglo-Spanish relations. Thus, Spain’s accusation that Britain had caused the *Prestige* disaster because of Gibraltar added an important layer of meaning to the local angle, potentially aggravating a much older and deeper source of political tension.

Some stories added a British peg by examining the role of Crown Resources, the shipping subsidiary based in London that had chartered the *Prestige*. Other stories cited British ornithological or shipping experts where possible, or examined the *Prestige* in conjunction with related historical context of spills that had occurred near Britain, such as a January 3 story by Paul Brown centered on the WWF’s calls for better government action to prevent tanker disasters. The story opened by invoking the historical context of the *Braer* tanker disaster near the coast of Shetland in 1993, and after examining the ecological and political context of that spill, segued into how the *Prestige* spill was playing into the symphony of calls from around Europe to prevent tanker spills.

Hutton’s systemic commentary about globalization and regulation from Sunday November 24 also played off local political context to get into his case for regulation of the oil industry. The story opened with the comment that “even the committed deregulator Tony Blair might have borrowed President Chirac’s description of the *Prestige* as a garbage ship” (pg. 30), thus using a clever contrast based on context familiar to local readers to introduce the commentary’s wider focus on the *Prestige* spill.

One news brief from November 29 mentioned that some oil from the *Prestige* had “come ashore at Caw Sand Bay” near Devon (pg. 7), and the *Guardian*’s last story on Sunday March 16, titled “High Tides Add to French Oil Slick Woes,” made a point of including a local British angle into information about the threats to tourism in the French Aquitaine

region affected by the oil spill. Reporter Paul Webster specifically mentioned that Biarritz, one of the areas hit, was “a favourite British holiday zone,” and later emphasized the effect of the spill on British tourists by commenting that “as much as 20 percent of holidaymakers [in three French counties] are from Britain” (pg. 23). The statement had the dual effect of highlighting how the lost tourism might also affect the economic welfare of the affected French areas as well as British holiday plans.

Regional Galician Identity – Families Bound to the Sea

In addition to the *Guardian's* emphasis on the threat to fishermen as a strong news theme, *Guardian* stories also suggested a unique regional identity based on the special connection between fishermen of the Galician region and the historical source of their livelihoods, the sea. In the case of Galicia – an autonomous region of Spain with its own regional president – fishing was often a tradition that involved entire families and was passed down through the generations. *Guardian* stories picked up on this and fostered a sense of regional identity uniquely and specifically structured around the family-oriented nature of fishing to the Galician communities that depended almost entirely on the sea for survival. *Guardian* stories also suggested a regional identity by specifically referring to the wide variety of marine species harvested by local people – identifying each by name – and in a few instances, including regional Galician dialect to illustrate the complex structure of the fishing community. The tactics emphasized even more the critical importance of fishing to daily life.

Guardian stories repeatedly included narratives about fishermen in terms of the variety of unique species they either harvested or were being prevented from harvesting because of the spill. Interviews with fishermen were often padded with literary details such as how a fisherman “should have been out harvesting valuable goose barnacles,” or “out fishing for octopus” (Tuesday November 19, 2002, pg. 3). One story included narrative context about how a woman was “carting sacks of clams into the market.” Other stories included substantial detail about the traditional methods used to harvest species like mussels,

clams, winkles and goose barnacles followed with explanations or quotes about how the shellfish would die from oil contamination. The detailed narratives underscored both the regional identities and the serious threats to the people's traditional livelihoods.

While the *Guardian's* conjunction of the threats to ecology and fishermen helped to construct the sense of a regional identity, several stories specifically highlighted the family-oriented nature of fishing in the affected regions and the potential loss to an entire regional way of life as a result of the spill. Several local fishermen and women were quoted emphasizing how "everyone here lives from the sea" (Wednesday November 20, 2002, pg. 2), or expressing grave concern that the devastation to fish, shellfish, octopus, clams, mussels, rays and other marine species so critical to the local economy would force entire villages to be abandoned.

A large feature story about fishermen from Thursday November 21 (*see #33 in Appendix*) picked up on this widespread current of concern and incorporated it into the story's subhead: "Villagers fear having to abandon home were 6,000 depend on the sea" (pg. 5). The lead paragraph of the narrative piece by Tremlett quoted a local fisherman in the lead saying, "We know there's oil floating out there. If this storm brings it in, we might as well all emigrate." The very next paragraph, Tremlett made a point of mentioning that the fisherman was a "son and grandson of O Grove mussel gatherers," and that "he was not the only one talking of packing his bags if the sunken oil tanker . . . spilled its deadly cargo" (pg. 5). Other fishermen worried that "the whole town will have to close down" if the oil came ashore, and Tremlett pointed out that even the women of fishing families were intimately involved with seafood-gathering. He quoted "two thick-armed sisters" who went out every day to "gather clams and winkles" also expressing worry that they would be forced to emigrate. The story also chose to emphasize the family nature of fishing in its singular bolded pull-quote from an O Grove village fisherman: " 'My father, my brother, and my cousin work with me on the boat. We all have families. If we can't fish, nobody will have anything to eat.'"

The *Guardian's* Sunday feature on fishermen and their coastal way of life in the *Observer* on November 24 opened with the descriptive detail of a fishermen scrubbing “fuel oil off his mother-in-law’s doorstep,” and emphasized the integrated economic family structure of fishing in Galicia:

“It is the fishermen of Galicia who have been the first victims of the Prestige disaster. Those fishermen put out more boats than the rest of the EU fleet put together in an enterprise worth more than €190m a year, divided among family-owned boats whose efforts sustain entire communities along the coast” (pg. 18).

The story also featured the regional dialect of Galician fishermen, another method by which *Guardian* stories fostered a sense of regional identity. After quoting a local fisherman who “expected to lose two-thirds of his income harvesting spider crab, octopus, sole and rays” (pg. 18), the story emphasized the complex and deeply rooted structure of fishing to local people by using Galician regional terms to identify people who made their living from the sea in ways besides fishing:

“It is not just the fishermen [who would lose money]. It is also the marisqueros who have been hit, the men and women who make a living raking clams and cockles from estuary sands, hauling ropes of mussels in from platforms set in protected inlets, or grabbing goose barnacles off the rocks without getting swept into an angry sea.”

The level of detail provided about the nature of this task and methods used by these “marisqueros” to avoid the “angry sea” illustrates the skill required to carry out the job, further stressing the fact of fishing as a traditional way of life. Immediately after this passage, the story introduced Mari-Carmen Lista, “a percebeiro,” or “one of those who earns a living collecting goose barnacles off the rocks,” in anecdotal fashion and described how she would likely lose €80 per kilo as a result of the spill (pg. 18).

A story on Monday December 2 with the headline “New Oil Slick Threatens Galicia” also made a point of including a quote that expressed the family-oriented regional fishing identity. Though the bulk of the story focused mainly on providing details about the new slick, including the threats to wildlife and the French submarine *Nautile* that was about to go investigate the sunken tanker, the story’s single quote from a fisherman stressed this

identity: “ ‘They call this the Costa da Morte [coast of death],’ said Juan Antonio Toja, head of the fisherman’s cooperative in the village of Laxe. ‘It couldn’t be more appropriately named. Hundreds of families are without work and it is unclear when they will be able to go fish again’” (pg. 15). The *Guardian* also selected this quote to emphasize in the story’s pull-quote space. Thus, in addition to the ecological and systemic frames for the disaster, the *Guardian* framed the spill as a reckless – but preventable – disaster which was threatening the very survival of a region’s identity.

Historical and Global Context

References to historical and global contexts featured prominently in *Guardian* stories about the *Prestige* spill. These contexts were often integral means of providing a deeper perspective on everything from threats to the Galician coast, to the scope of the *Prestige* spill and its ecological and economic significance, to unique historical contexts about the expertise of a French submarine noted for its “important role in finding the wreck of the Titanic” (Monday December 2, 2002, pg. 15) that was leading a pioneering effort to investigate and patch the sunken wreck of the *Prestige*.

Many stories of a systemic nature drew on historical contexts pertaining to tanker manufacturing and spill statistics for single-hulled vessels built in the 1970’s. Stories also frequently referenced the *Exxon Valdez* spill in order to make comparisons with type of oil and its effects, ecological damage, and subsequent clean-up costs. One story from Friday November 29 referenced the *Amoco Cadiz* spill to help explain how the Brittany coast had “suffered from several oil spills from wrecked tankers” in the past 25 years (Friday November 29, 2002, pg. 17). The story was about a ship of the same questionable age, safety, and destination as its sister ship, the *Prestige*, which was heading past France towards the site of the *Prestige* spill. On Wednesday November 20, the *Guardian* also published a large information box full of historical contexts highlighting the largest oil spills in recent history. The box, titled “A Sea of Troubles,” featured a map and eight of the worst spills since 1967 –

including the *Amoco Cadiz* and *Exxon Valdez* – with brief explanations about each spill (see #32 in Appendix).

Several stories wove substantive historical contexts about previous spills – especially the 1992 *Aegean Sea* spill, but also the 1976 *Urquiola* spill – along the Galician coast in order to discuss the repeated oil damage the region, its ecosystems, and people had suffered in recent years. For instance, the *Guardian*'s first story on November 14 ended by reminding readers that “in 1992 the Aegean Sea tanker grounded and burst into flames just outside the mouth of the Galician port of Coruna . . . in what was a major disaster for a local economy that remains heavily dependent on the sea” (pg. 19). Another story noted that the “[Baldaio] reserve's ecosystem still had not recovered from the spill caused by the Aegean Sea tanker when it grounded off Coruña 11 years ago” (Tuesday November 19, 2002, pg. 3). In that same story, Tremlett quoted the mayor of Arteixo saying that “the goose barnacles had just recovered from an oil spill 26 years ago when the *Urquiola* tanker went down” (pg. 3).

Images and Graphics

The *Guardian* published a total of 16 photographs related to the spill during the study period, including 5 maps and 2 graphics. In terms of total stories published, an image or visual appeared in about 48 percent of *Guardian* stories. Of these images, 75 percent were published within the first 10 days after the spill – and of these, most appeared in the same concentrated interval of *Guardian* reporting between November 19 and 24. The majority of images focused on people in the context of a wider landscape, such as volunteers working amid the larger background of a rocky beach; fishermen at work trying to gather mussels and clams in the surf before oil came ashore; or single individuals standing by an oiled beach with a much larger backdrop of ocean, coast and beach. Three images of the *Prestige* also appeared in *Guardian* stories on November 19 and 20 only.

The *Guardian* printed just one image of an oiled animal– a close-up of an oiled shearwater, which accompanied the paper's second spill story on November 18 (see #29 in

Appendix). As the inaugural *Guardian* photograph about the spill, the picture helped to establish the ecological disaster frame, which was carried solely by textual means after this point. The fact that *Guardian* stories emphasized people – and often people as small parts of a larger background – stressed the grave regional impact, and also complemented the *Guardian*'s emphasis on the interconnectedness of humans and environment in the areas affected by the spill. In addition, the fact that several of the people-oriented shots featured a solitary individual – either standing reflectively by a vast shoreline, or shoveling oil from a beach alone – stressed the impact to a more remote regional group of people. These images also subtly captured the anger at the Spanish government and the fact that locals, fed up with the government's response, often struggled on their own to clean the coasts they depended on.

On Tuesday December 3, the *Guardian* published a giant graphic-story in its “Learning” pages about the *Prestige* spill, titled “A Slick Operation.” The graphic-story included a small text story summarizing the spill and highlighting some of the difficulties of clean-up nested inside a huge graphic illustrating various clean-up technologies, the differences between single and double-hulled ships, and featuring a huge map with a key that showed everything from affected coastlines, to various reported slicks, to the locations of important fisheries along the Galician coast. The superscript to the section itself read: “Five pages of resources for teachers and parents” (pg. 60). Thus, the inclusion of this large graphic-story suggests that the *Guardian* regarded the *Prestige* spill as newsworthy enough to educate young readers about its importance.

Convergence Reporting

Extensive development of highly informative convergence reporting using online media was another noteworthy feature of the *Guardian*'s coverage of the *Prestige* spill. The first tease to online content appeared at the bottom of the paper's third story on Tuesday November 19, referring readers to a special “Waste” section on the newspaper's website. By the next day, the *Guardian* had developed a full suite of online material, including: a special

“*Prestige*” section on the website featuring a photo gallery of spill images; a Q&A explaining how modern science could be used to deal with spills; an animated interactive graphic illustrating the route of the tanker, the events that led to its sinking, and theories of why it cracked; and an audio news story from Giles Tremlett about efforts to save the tanker from sinking and prevent damage to wildlife.

The *Guardian* continued to place teasers to this material throughout its stories. The *Guardian* also used its website to publish Ian Willmore’s story of Sunday November 24 about the tanker’s complex ownership history. Later in the spill story, the *Guardian* developed another online graphic illustrating different methods traditionally used to clean oil spills and why those methods were problematic in the case of the *Prestige*’s spilt oil. All of this material is still available on the paper’s website today.

Summary

The *Guardian*’s coverage of the *Prestige* is a telling example of excellence in reporting. The paper avoided traps of oil spill reporting while producing highly informative stories that focused on the systemic problems behind the disaster and the complex interrelationship between ecology and the vitality of a region defined by its maritime traditions. Through the paper’s ability to weave together seeming disparate narratives of ecological and economic effects, the *Guardian* clearly revealed how closely the two realms can overlap – and how damage to one could threaten the survival of a people’s entire way of life. Though this is a story that is repeated around the world, especially in developing nations, industry and the developed world display little regard. The *Guardian* demonstrated a sophisticated approach to reporting by addressing this systemic problem, rarely discussed openly among nations, and by using the inherent advantages of the internet to produce a diverse suite of convergence materials. The paper’s approach to covering the spill helped to frame the *Prestige* disaster as yet another example of a disaster – in this case, a preventable disaster – caused by chronic systemic problems within industry and regulatory frameworks that have yet to be resolved.

The Seattle Times

Between Saturday November 12, 2002 and Monday May 5, 2003, the *Seattle Times* published 20 stories about the *Prestige* spill. Fully half of these stories were published in November. Of the remaining 10 stories, 4 were published in December, 2 in January, 3 in February, and 1 in May. No stories about the spill appeared in March or April. On November 20 and 22, the *Seattle Times* ran 2 stories about the spill in each day's paper – the only times throughout the study interval when the paper ran more than one story per day about it. Of note, these dates coincide with the significant turning point in the spill affair of the tanker's unexpected sinking and the subsequent amplification of concern for a major catastrophe. A few of the paper's stories were longer features with narrative storytelling elements. After the first two weeks of reporting, stories tended to be news briefs published in the "World Digest" or "Around the World" compilation section, or smaller stories. Nonetheless, many of these smaller stories still packed a lot of informative context into their narratives. In December, all the spill stories were news briefs, while other spill briefs were scattered among slightly longer stories through May.

With the exception of two stories written by *Seattle Times* editors or staff, all the paper's stories came from wire services or outside newspapers, including one *New York Times* story. A few stories were amalgams of different news sources, pooling information from both the news wires and newspapers such as the *Los Angeles Times*, *Knight Ridder Newspapers*, and the *Washington Post*. However, the two pieces written by *Seattle Times* staff distinctly emphasized systemic issues related to the spill. Combined with the informative nature of the outside sources selected by the *Seattle Times* to represent its voice in its news pages – several of which also explored the deeper systemic aspects of the spill – the explicitly systemic focus of these two pieces by the paper's staff suggests a conscious attempt to foster understanding of the spill's more complex systemic underpinnings.

Themes and News Angles

Though many of the *Seattle Times*' headlines tended to emphasize the movements of oil – such as new or old oil slicks “spreading,” “coating,” or “closing in” on different coastlines – the stories themselves touched on all the major news angles and developments of the *Prestige* spill story, from the breaking news aspects, to the friction between the Spanish and British governments, to the ecological and regional effects and the subsequent attempts to pioneer a method of patching the tanker in the depths of the ocean, among others. Like the *Guardian*, the *Seattle Times* emphasized the ecological damage and its interrelationship with the livelihoods of fishermen, though the *Seattle Times* also tended to use adjectives and phrases that emphasized the sullied scenic beauty and rugged isolation of Galicia more than the *Guardian*. Coupled with the overall emphasis on the threat to fishermen's livelihoods, this practice helped to foster a sense of regional identity based on maritime traditions maintained in an autonomous region of Spain more insulated from outside influence.

Stories with strong systemic components also formed part of the bulk of *Seattle Times* stories. Many stories drew on a rich diversity of historical contexts to discuss the deeper framework of problems related to the continued pervasiveness of single-hulled tankers, industry greed and self-interest, and the particularly deep-rooted problem of society's fickle attitudes about persistent environmental problems. Combined with the other prominent emphasis on threats to the pelagic ecosystem and fishermen – and some harsh language proffered through quotes and editorials – the *Seattle Times* clearly framed the spill as a preventable disaster born of collective human stupidity and industry self-interest.

The *Seattle Times* also developed nuances of the spill story not seen – or as distinctly – in *Guardian* stories. A few stories devoted time to exploring in more depth the tricky technological aspects related to recovering oil from the sunken tanker and explaining the processes involved in refining different types of oil. The *Seattle Times* also wrote more about the effects to France's Aquitaine oyster region and threats to the Basque coast – including the new contextual angle of the threat to surfing (see #37 in *Appendix*), a popular pastime in that

region (and also in coastal America). In addition, the paper devoted more space to discussing the captain of the *Prestige*, though with a subtle bent towards criticizing the Spanish government while exculpating the captain of any guilt.

Threats to Ecology and Fishermen

Throughout its stories, the *Seattle Times* framed the *Prestige* spill as an environmental disaster that threatened a particularly rich ecological region of Spain and the fishermen who depended on the bounty of the sea. The lead of the paper's second story on November 19 established the ecological focus, stating that "a damaged tanker carrying more than 20 million gallons of fuel oil . . . [was] threatening an environmental disaster" (pg. A9). A few paragraphs later, A.P. reporter Mar Roman established the threat to fishermen using a punctuated style that emphasized the human aspect of the disaster: "Fishing was prohibited, putting hundreds out of work. The spill threatened some of the region's richest fishing grounds" (pg. A9). When a *Seattle Times* editor commented in the paper's first and only editorial on Friday November 22 that the sinking of the tanker had "produced an environmental catastrophe of epic proportions," and then said a few sentences later that "Spain's fishing industry has taken the first economic hit" (pg. A10), the weight of reading the paper's own voice for the first time helped to frame the spill in ecological terms that linked "sea-dependent" fishermen and workers with the environment.

Like the *Guardian*, *Seattle Times* stories often featured environmental information in close proximity to comments or information about fishermen. Some stories wove the threads together in a single sentence, as in this example from a story on Wednesday November 20: "The *Prestige* has already inflicted severe environmental damage on Spain . . . threatening birds and the fish and shellfish on which the local economy depends" (pg. A3). Other stories placed passages about environmental aspects immediately next to passages about fishermen or their ocean-based economy. A narrative story focused on the threats to fishermen from Thursday November 21, titled "Spain's Fishing Industry Endangered by Oil Spill" placed a

paragraph explaining why oil spills are so damaging to sea birds immediately after two paragraphs explaining the importance of Spain's mussel culture industry. The reporter, Daniel Rubin of *Knight Ridder Newspapers*, stressed the threat to fishermen's livelihoods by quoting a World Wildlife Foundation source: "About 30,000 southern Galician families rely on . . . one of the world's largest mussel beds for their livelihoods" (pg. A2). Immediately following the quote with the statement that "sea birds also suffer in oil spills," and then later context about a dolphin that was found dead, linked fishermen and wildlife together as two elements of the same ecosystem equally threatened by one oil spill.

Feature stories using narrative and anecdotal stories from fishermen also helped to stress the threat to fishermen's livelihoods in *Seattle Times* stories. Rubin opened his November 21 story with the narrative detail of a fishermen who "wasn't about to stop casting his fishing nets" because of a "little oil spill from a sunken tanker" (pg. A2). Framing the story from the fishermen's initial perspective on the spill helped to emphasize the gravity of the information that came after – about how the fisherman's catch of "175 pounds of fish had to be thrown away" because it was contaminated by oil – and more effectively illustrated how the spill could be so devastating to people almost fully dependent on such catches.

Many *Seattle Times* wire stories also provided informative ecological context that conveyed the complexity of the ecosystem under threat, helping the paper to present an ecological frame that didn't misrepresent or over-dramatize the spill. For instance, in Rubin's November 21 story, his explanation of the scientific reasons behind why "only 10 percent of oil-soaked fowl make it to shore" (pg. A2) provided helpful context that enabled a deeper understanding beyond the statistics and speculations often found in oil spill stories that focus on keeping track of bird mortality. Similarly, after mentioning the dead dolphin found, Rubin added the useful context that "but experts say that those marine mammals, like fish, usually avoid oil spills and survive," information which explained why it is that marine mammals are found much less frequently than birds.

A story the day before, on Wednesday November 20 titled “Tanker’s Troubled Voyage” (see #34, pg.2 in Appendix), provided additional ecological perspective for why the location of the *Prestige* spill may have merited its designation as a “catastrophe”: it had sunk near the underwater island known as the Galicia Bank, “home to a wide range of sponge species, crustaceans and fish, including 11 species of shark” (pg. A3), the reporter wrote. Similarly, *New York Times* reporter Emma Daly’s November 24 story provided important ecological context that cut through some of the potentially misleading conjectures of experts and authorities who were arguing that environmental effects would be minimized if the tanker’s oil congealed in the cold temperatures under the ocean. She quoted a marine biologist stating that “even if the fuel solidified on the seabed, toxins would still leach into the water and enter the food chain” (pg. A20), a statement that added longitudinal perspective on the longer-term environmental impact of the disaster (see #36 in Appendix).

Emphasis on Galicia's Scenic Beauty

A few *Seattle Times* wire stories used language emphasizing the scenic beauty of the region affected by oil in the context of the threats to fishermen. One story referred to “the picturesque Galician coast” in the same sentence describing how “at least 1,000 Spanish fishermen were thrown out of work” and how the coast “boasts one of Europe’s richest fisheries” (Wednesday November 20, 2002, pg. A3). The same story later wrote that “at stake in Spain’s misty, green northwest corner is a fishing and seafood industry that feeds much of the country . . . [and] employs tens of thousands of people” (pg. A3). Another story reported that contamination along “about 185 miles of shoreline” was “killing wildlife, spoiling sandy beaches and imperiling a fishing industry that is the most bountiful source of income for tens of thousands of people in rugged Galicia province” (Thursday November 21, 2002, pg. A2). This conflation of the region’s beauty – along with suggestions of its unspoiled ruggedness – with the effects on local fishing communities added emphasis to both the ecological and regional impacts by intimating that Galicia was a more pristine and remote region inhabited

by people isolated from the outside world, and thus more dependent on the sea and the health of its ecosystems.

Systemic Frame and Roots of Spill

Systemic issues were a clear focus of *Seattle Times* stories. Several stories addressed the technological and capitalistic underpinnings of spills, pertaining to the continued predominance of more dangerous single-hulled vessels and the flagrant self-interest of the responsible industries. However, a handful of stories also commented on the murkier aspect of society's current mercurial attitudes towards the environment and the collective failure to proactively learn from past mistakes.

The almost unanimous belief that a disaster the size of the *Prestige* could have been averted had the tanker been outfitted with a double hull made the focus on shipping construction and the delayed implementation of a European Union mandatory phase-out of single-hulled tankers by 2015 a natural part of the ambient debate among governments and sources. However, beyond exploring the systemic problem of single-hulled vessels, the *Seattle Times* exposed the seriousness of industry self-interest in relation to single-hulled tankers. Its fourth story on Wednesday November 20, synthesized from various news outlets, devoted a sub-section of the feature-length piece to the profit motive operating insidiously behind the rationale to charter older vessels with single hulls. The story set up its presentation of the information by juxtaposing the context of the *Prestige* disaster with seemingly behind-the-scenes industry actions: "Even as Spain struggled to contain the *Prestige* spill, dealers were planning similar shipments that make money by chartering old tankers at cheap freight rates" (pg. A3). Later in the same section, the story reported that "higher prices for fuel oil in Asia than in Europe were the financial incentive," and that European oil dealers stood to make "about \$400,000 in profit from using the cheap *Prestige*." A source commenting that "the fact is . . . the hundreds of older vessels in the world fleet . . . shouldn't be allowed to carry toxic cargoes, never mind pass anywhere near pristine coastlines" (pg. A3) further highlighted the

selfish interests of the major oil and shipping industries, operating without regard for environmental welfare or the communities sustained by it.

The *Seattle Times*' editorial of November 22, titled "The Pain in Spain," focused on the same issues, but with a little more flair: "All the numbers are huge" (pg. A10), the editor wrote. After listing some of the large numbers associated with the spill, including the length of shoreline affected and the volume of oil involved, the editor expressed the systemic punchline: "Perhaps the scariest number of all is the figure 5,000. That is the number of ageing, single-hulled tankers still on the job." In a statement two sentences later, the editor implied that the companies chartering the ageing ships were willfully avoiding countries with more rigorous inspections protocols: "This is not simply about replacing one maritime technology with another . . . these aging rust buckets are avoiding European Union ports to avoid inspections" (pg. A10). Also of note is the fact that the paper's last story on Monday May 5, titled "Oil Tankers Slow to Shift to Anti-Spill Hulls," written by *Seattle Times* reporter Craig Welch, was a distinctly systemic piece about the dangers of single-hulled vessels that ended the paper's spill coverage. The fact that the long systemic feature came from the paper's own voice and concluded its spill coverage indicates that examining the systemic problems still plaguing the industry was a priority for the paper.

Two stories in a row touched on perhaps the most important systemic causes of environmental disasters like the *Prestige*: cultural attitudes and society's collective level of mercurial attention to environmental problems. The first story, from Saturday November 23 titled "Sunken Tanker's Oil Salvageable, Expert Say," ended with three paragraphs that pinned the repetitiveness of oil spill disasters on society's fickleness with regard to environmental issues (see #35 in *Appendix*). A.P. reporter Daniel Woolls quoted a conservationist saying that "as time passes, it is unlikely anyone would continue to monitor the leakage" (pg. A16) because "in cases of maritime environmental disasters . . . governments and citizens tend to make a big fuss at first, then it all eventually dies down." With the

Prestige so far out and under the ocean, it would be “easy to ignore [and] people would say, what is the worry now?” (pg. A16).

The next day, *New York Times* reporter Emma Daley wrote a long narrative feature highlighting the new angle of the threats to an ocean-side aquarium in La Coruña that had been built on the site of where the tanker *Aegean Sea* had ten years earlier caused the region’s formerly worst environmental disaster. It had been built “in homage to the sea,” she quoted the aquarium’s director saying, “so people would fall in love with the sea and never dare to damage it again” (pg. A20). Her chosen ending to the story returned to this context with a strong statement of condemnation for the short-sightedness of human actions. Not only will an EU measure to bring a “swift end” to single-hulled tankers fail because of industry greed – because “it will cost more,” according to the aquarium director Daley quoted – disasters like the *Prestige* would happen again because of human folly.

The story’s ending echoes with this source’s harsh words of criticism: “We thought, naively, that having two tanker accidents here would inoculate us against this. But it seems that human stupidity is greater than we thought” (pg. A20). If the statement itself weren’t strong enough, the paper chose to give the sentiment prominence by highlighting it in the story’s singular pull-quote space, thus suggesting an even deeper meta-systemic frame for the spill as an inevitability borne of human stupidity. The story leaves the dark systemic overtone that future spills will be the result of human folly bracketed by our repeated failure to learn from past mistakes (see #36 in *Appendix*).

Technological Nuances of Spill

A few *Seattle Times* stories explored technological and scientific nuances of the oil spill in more depth, a focus which added unique perspective to the spill story and demonstrated that oil spills can generate opportunities for informative news reporting beyond the stereotypical disaster angles. The paper’s second story explained that fuel oil is a “heavy, viscous blend gathered from the bottom of tanks at the end of the refining process” (Tuesday

November 19, 2002, pg. A9) and could be far more difficult to clean up. The long feature published the next day fleshed out the scientific exploration of fuel oil in two paragraphs, making use of informative contexts and language that lent well to visualization. The story described fuel oil as “the viscous goo literally left at the bottom of the barrel after refineries take gasoline and lighter components off the top” (Wednesday November 20, 2002, pg. 1). The story used the information to explain the difficulties of traditional clean-up methodologies for this type of oil. The paper’s story on November 23 prefaced its primary focus on the technological aspects of submarines attempting to salvage the sunken tanker’s oil with a witty statement: “All you need are robotic submarines, pipes and cables that can withstand pressure 350 times Earth’s atmosphere, an electric heat rod . . . and lots of time and money” (pg. A16). The rest of story drew on informative historical and scientific contexts to explain how robots would do the job (*see #35 in Appendix*).

Historical Contexts

Quite a few *Seattle Times* stories incorporated historical contexts in meaningful ways, often to help provide a wider historical perspective for ecological, regulatory, maritime, and even technological aspects of the *Prestige* story. Many stories drew on historical contexts highlighting the history of tanker construction or the volume of tanker accidents that had occurred off the coast of northwestern Spain in recent years. Because of the severity of the *Prestige* spill, these contexts added a grim and sobering perspective to the nature of threats facing the people and environment of Galicia. Some of these stories, such as Daley’s November 24 aquarium feature which commented that “the ecosystem [near La Coruña] had yet to fully recover” (pg.A20), also drew on the ecological historical contexts of these past accidents to emphasize the long-term nature of ecological damage caused by tanker spills.

Other stories included historical contexts related to the *Seattle Times*’ technological angle. The paper’s November 23 story, for instance, used the historical context that “pumping oil out of a sunken ship is not new,” but that “no operation [had] been attempted at that

depth” (pg. A16), information which underscored the pioneering effort in the process of being planned by the salvage company hired to do the job.

Historical Context of Exxon Valdez

However, *Seattle Times* stories demonstrated a particular tendency to draw on historical contexts related to the *Exxon Valdez* disaster as a way of framing and assessing the seriousness of the *Prestige* spill. The paper’s second story from November 19 commented that “if the [*Prestige*] lost its entire cargo of fuel oil, the spill would be nearly twice the size of the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster” (pg. A9). Its third story, on Wednesday November 20, drew heavily on Exxon Valdez contexts for everything from ecological, circumstantial, and systemic aspects of the *Prestige*, including references in the lead and a large section of the story structured around a side-by-side comparison of the two spills (*see #34 in Appendix*). The story prefaced the comparative section with the comment that “it is difficult to say how the environmental impact of the spill would compare with the Exxon Valdez,” and then proceeded to point out the similarities and differences between the two spill scenarios: “the Valdez held crude oil; the *Prestige* held heavier fuel oil” (pg. A2), for instance, and the “Valdez ran aground in the enclosed Prince William Sound” while “the *Prestige* sank in open seas.” However, using the historical context of the *Exxon* spill, the story commented that, like the Alaska spill, had the *Prestige* been outfitted with a double-hull, “the problem could have been averted” (pg. A2).

Also noteworthy about this story is a separate information box titled “How it compares to Exxon Valdez spill,” located on the front page immediately under the side column front page section of the day’s spill story. Although the *Seattle Times*’ first piece written by one of its staff doesn’t appear until the paper’s seventh story two days later, this comparative information box was not a part of the spill story with which it appeared, culled from various news sources. It was placed in its own box with a bolded line overtop and a bold title heading, thus suggesting that the *Seattle Times* added the box in order to provide context

about the *Prestige* based on an incident widely known among the paper's readership area – and with which the *Seattle Times* itself had been intimately involved.

In addition, the paper's last story on Monday May 9 – a long, probing feature on the many threats and “close calls” posed by the high number of single-hulled tankers still sailing the seas – opened with a comment that linked the systemic focus to the *Exxon Valdez*: “fourteen years after the Exxon Valdez ruptured against a reef in Prince William Sound, fewer than a third of the tankers ferrying crude between Alaska and Puget Sound are equipped with a double hull (pg. A8). As the last *Seattle Times* comment on this problem in relation to the *Prestige* spill, the prominent reference to the *Exxon Valdez* linked the 1989 disaster with the *Prestige* in the context of a harsh systemic critique, thus ending coverage on a systemic note.

Images and Graphics

The *Seattle Times* published a total of 12 images related to the spill during the study interval, including 11 pictures and 1 map. No graphics appeared in coverage. With the exception of one photograph that appeared on February 6, 2003 with a story titled “Oil Spill Spreads to Basque Coast,” all the images appeared in stories written during the two-week interval between November 16, 2002 and November 30, 2002. This is not entirely surprising, because half of the paper's 20 stories were written during this same interval. Of the stories written after November 30, several were just news briefs.

The bulk of *Seattle Times* images focused on human contexts of the spill. Of the total 12 images, 8 focused on people, usually in the context of cleaning oil from the beaches (see #'s 34, 35, 36, and 37 in Appendix). Fishermen were portrayed at work collecting cockles and clams in one image, while another picture captured the interesting context of a cluster of fishermen standing together while fashioning a floating oil barrier. The image presented an active angle focused on the fishermen's hands at work and their faces intent on the task. Other people shots depicted solitary individuals at work cleaning up the spill, or pausing to rest amid the

wider scope of an oiled beach. One image also showed Greenpeace protestors at work making a sign reading “Oil Kills.” The image was the smaller of two that accompanied Daley’s aquarium feature of Sunday November 24, and in this case, helped to augment the systemic frame of human folly expressed in the story by its placement immediately next to the paragraph that quoted a Greenpeace marine biologist describing the effects to the food chain.

The paper published 2 images of the tanker, including its first image which accompanied the paper’s third story. The image, contained in a small box under a much more prominent story headline, showed the tanker with its bow sticking out of the water as it sank into the ocean. The story’s inside page, with two stories contained in a “Close-Up” section on the spill, displayed the other tanker image – a larger picture of the tanker from the previous day when it had split but not yet sunk. The paper’s one map also appeared with this third story on the front page, showing the location of the tanker’s sinking and the stretch of coastline hit by oil so far.

Only one image of an oiled animal appeared in *Seattle Times* stories, accompanying the paper’s sixth story on November 22 with the headline “Oily Muck Coats More of Coastline.” In relation to the size of the small six-paragraph story, the image of the oiled bird flapping in oil was noticeably larger. However, considering that two-thirds of the paper’s photographs depicted people in contexts of cleaning oil or fishermen at work to salvage bits of their livelihoods, the focus on people rather than the tanker reflects the paper’s emphasis on the ecological and regional impacts of the disaster.

Summary

Although the majority of stories about the *Prestige* spill originated in wire or outside news sources, the *Seattle Times*’ selection of stories to represent its voice indicates a strong attention to systemic causes of the spill over superficial dramatic aspects. It also reveals that since the era of the *Amoco Cadiz*, the criteria used to select wire stories had significantly advanced. Whereas the paper’s 1978 wire stories were simplistic, event-driven, and lacked in

crucial contexts, the wires chosen to tell the story of the *Prestige* were noticeably more sophisticated and sensitive to the complexities of the spill disaster. This observation provides strong evidence for a process of evolution with regard to the *Seattle Times*' approach to oil spill coverage. Through its primary focus on people in the affected regions, and the role of ecological soundness to economic and regional stability, the paper helped to convey that the real toll from oil spills is more than just the tally of birds, but the collective people dependent on the health of an integrated ecosystem, which oil spills damage in numerous complex ways. As in the case of the *Guardian*, the fact that the overarching frame for the *Prestige* spill was of a systemic nature beyond the generic disaster frame reveals a process of growth in reporting, that as will be discussed in the conclusion chapter below, is the result of an evolution in the approach to coverage of oil spills.

6. CONCLUSION

The field of environmental journalism has significantly advanced since environmental issues emerged as topics of social and journalistic importance in the 1970's. Environmental reporters have become essential investigators of the human-environment relationship at a time when global environmental problems are becoming increasingly acute and complex, and their solutions elusive yet indisputably more urgent. Despite the pressures of the consolidating news business and the threats of environmental stories being marginalized or underreported in the wake of newsroom downsizing and cuts in environmental writing positions, the beat's reporters have overcome many challenges relating to the quality of their work since the field's early days (Friedman, 2004; Frome 1998; Sachsman et al., 2002).

However, despite a noticeable process of maturation in covering environmental news, media scholars (Friedman, 1990; Smith, 1992; Sachsman, 1996; Daley and O'Neill, 1991) have found that environmental journalists continue to wrestle with some of the same reporting challenges specific to the beat since its beginnings – especially in the area of environmental disaster reporting. Some of these challenges include criticisms that: environmental stories are still sometimes crisis-oriented and episodic; official news sources continue to dominate over a diversity of alternative voices; stories do not always cope well with complexity and nuance; and reporters undertake too few investigative environmental stories, among others.

Society is approaching a critical juncture when the decisions and actions of people on the planet today will determine the quality of life for generations to come. Most of the environmental problems today are acutely complex, slow to mature, and require long-term perspective to discern their urgency and work towards solutions. Environmental problems are no longer just someone else's problem, isolated to far-flung corners of the globe. The critical problems of today are of a global nature, uniting nations and people under the universal specter of irreversible environmental change and the serious problems that will follow: climactic shifts; loss of biodiversity; erratic and increasingly dramatic natural

phenomena; increasingly strained water resources; and widespread famine crises from the destruction of soils, to name a few. The collapse of any of the earth's currently stressed vital systems will undoubtedly result in future environmental crises of serious proportions. Yet, conveying the importance of these issues to the public, and thus enabling informed citizens to pressure political leaders to action, requires excellence in reporting that specifically defies the nagging criticisms that continue to haunt environmental reporting.

In an effort to assess how well environmental reporters have adapted to the changing landscape and rigors of environmental issues – and to obtain a more holistic historical perspective on this change – this thesis sought to document how environmental news coverage has changed across three decades according to several qualitative criteria, as evident in two newspapers reputed for their excellence in reporting: the *Seattle Times* and the British paper the *Guardian*. Three highly complex oil spill disasters were selected as models of inherently difficult and nuanced environmental stories: the 1978 *Amoco Cadiz* disaster off the Breton coast; the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* wreck in Alaska; and the 2002 *Prestige* disaster off the Spanish Galician coast. These spills served as case studies of how well environmental journalists reported on a highly complex environmental disaster.

In all areas of inquiry, this thesis found that both newspapers displayed significant improvements in quality of coverage between 1978 and 1989, suggesting that conscientious newspapers attentive to their quality of environmental coverage can overcome even the most nettlesome of reporting challenges. Both newspapers gravitated noticeably towards a thematic, systemic outlook on the environmental disasters that exposed failures in underlying regulatory frameworks. Reliance on official sources was abandoned for a people-centered focus relying on local perspective and a diversity of voices, permitting formerly marginalized disaster narratives to assert new frames for the 1989 and 2002 disasters. Because the quality of reporting improved so profoundly between 1978 and 1989, the papers had few improvements to target between 1989 and 2002. However, equally significant, both papers maintained the standards of quality coverage demonstrated in 1989 as they reported on the Galician disaster

of 2002. In addition, despite the quality of their 1989 coverage, both papers attempted to improve even further. The *Guardian's* extensive use of convergence reporting and online media to report on the *Prestige* demonstrated an awareness of the potential of emerging technologies to facilitate reporting in new ways. The *Seattle Times's* choice of wire stories to represent its voice on the *Prestige* marked a clear shift in the criteria it used to select wire stories over its 1978 *Amoco Cadiz* coverage. The following sections explain the findings based on this thesis' primary questions and their significance in more detail.

The Changing Role of Government

After 1978, both papers were noticeably more skeptical of government's role in oil spill disasters, an aspect which closely related to the overarching systemic frames advanced in 1989 and 2002. Although the *Guardian's* reporting of the *Amoco Cadiz* broke from journalistic routine on a few counts, demonstrating the glimmerings of an independent and quality-oriented approach to disaster reporting, the official narrative of the *Amoco Cadiz* was the clearest narrative to speak through the paper's coverage. When oil damage threatened local people, *Guardian* stories framed government as competent and proactive. The government failed to take action numerous times, always blaming bad weather; yet, the failures of government's response were not emphasized at the local level so much as the government's readiness.

Some stories did portray the British government as paternalistic and insincere in its treatment of the Channel Islanders, suggesting that some individual reporters were ahead of their time in possessing a critical mindset about disaster stories. Some stories also demonstrated the beginnings of an awareness that government action can relate to systemic problems. However, probing and critical coverage of this sort was inconsistent in 1978, suggesting that the *Guardian* as a news organization had not yet progressed to the point of promulgating environmental reporting news values based on critical, investigative reporting at the editorial level and reinforcing these practices consistently across the entire newsroom.

In some cases, quality reporting was related to story focus. When government clashed with regional identity in *Guardian* stories, the paper tended to operate outside journalistic convention. When the paper focused its attentions on the effects to a regionally distinct group, its watchdog role seemed more noticeable and defined. Governments were scrutinized more closely for their insincerity or ineffective responses. Similarly, stories about the Breton angles contained subtle currents of criticism towards the French government for failing to adequately respond to the disaster in Brittany. Thus, focus of story played a role in how governments were framed. The paper tended to frame government more favorably when writing about threats to British people, but more negatively when establishing a regional identity or writing about regional angles. This observation suggests that a correlation exists between more critical reporting and the focus on broader regional implications.

The scant number of *Seattle Times* stories about the Breton disaster suggests that the paper did not place a high news value on environmental disasters at the international level. Thus, its related watchdog role for those issues was in a nascent stage at this point.

However, both papers displayed a noticeable shift in their framing of governments in both 1989 and 2002. Governments – and media – were scrutinized closely and the papers demonstrated a clear watchdog role by: 1) soliciting facts, perspective, and information from local people and nongovernmental sources; 2) investigating the systemic frameworks and the failures of governments that contributed to the disasters; and 3) using a suite of images that also emphasized the grittier, truer contexts of the spill over the stereotypical symbols of disaster. The fearless attitude toward implicating governments as part of the causes of the 1989 and 2002 disasters in both papers accompanied the marked shift towards framing the spills in systemic terms. For the *Guardian*, the consistency with which governments were scrutinized suggests that in the 11 years between the two spills, the paper had developed an institutional approach to spill reporting based on deeper scrutiny of the official viewpoint.

While perhaps a well-known principle of reporting today, these findings suggest that to begin to probe a complex environmental story more deeply, reporters have to be able and

willing to dig beneath the official accounts of an environmental problem and investigate potential failings of governments. In addition, the results of this research suggest that frames which run counter to those established by official accounts of a complex environmental situation will likely provide a less simplistic and more accurate picture of a problem.

Effectiveness of Writing Styles

Based on the research of scholars such as Daley and O'Neill (1991) and McComas and Shanahan (1999), who have argued that narrative storytelling may be more effective at conveying complex information, this thesis operated under the similar premise that reporting effectively on the oil spill disasters would require a strong emphasis on use of storytelling techniques and narrative styles outside of hard-news reporting. This in fact proved true in the cases of the oil spill stories studied for this thesis. In both newspapers, stories that adopted a narrative style or made more frequent use of storytelling techniques seemed to be especially effective at conveying regional identity, expressing systemic angles, prying out latent nuances, and developing a more genuine sense of the disaster's effects – especially when the stories focused on the effects to people. In 1989 and 2002, both papers engaged a narrative style for a significant percentage of their stories. And, even in 1978, the *Guardian* used a narrative style specifically when reporting on effects of the disaster at the local level – as felt by the Channel Islanders and the people of Brittany.

While the story focus sometimes dictated whether a more hard news versus narrative style was adopted, this study observed that in all three cases, using a narrative approach helped to express difficult or less obvious nuances, and also helped to avoid sensationalism of the drama-prone elements of the stories. In 1978, the *Seattle Times* used a strictly hard news style with spatterings of linguistic color. The *Guardian*, however, engaged narrative techniques more frequently than expected to write about the effects to local people. Here again, the *Guardian* seemed ahead of its time on this front, outpacing its otherwise typical treatment of other aspects of the spill stories. The sophistication of the narrative approach

increased in 1989 and 2002, however. After 1978, the paper's stories explored more news angles from the narrative approach with more depth, and from novel vantages not seen previously.

In both papers, stories of a hard news nature after 1978 were more analytical and often probed regulatory contexts of the spills. In these cases, the analytical news tone was an effective style, not least because the papers provided informative context and sought information from a range of sources. Shorter stories also were more likely to be of a harder news nature. However, as expected, stories that adopted a narrative approach and applied other storytelling techniques, such as informative similes and metaphors, were effective at promulgating other frames for the disasters besides the meta environmental disaster frame, including systemic frames and frames that advanced the usually marginalized narratives of local people or communities.

Themes and News Angles

Thematic treatment of the oils spills was a strong point in both papers – especially after 1978, but also including the *Amoco Cadiz* to some extent in the *Guardian*. While the *Guardian's* thematic treatment of the 1978 spill did emulate certain predictable patterns of oil spill reportage, by emphasizing the controversy over the tanker captain, for instance, while the systemic aspects – though hinted at – remained consigned to the periphery, the paper also displayed a surprising narrative dexterity at interweaving local British and Breton news angles during this first study year. The *Guardian* explored the political angles, some scientific angles, regional angles related to lost livelihoods and economic effects, and the role of the tanker's captain. The discovery of the paper's broader thematic attempt during the early years of environmental reporting contradicted the initial expectations of this thesis, and again suggested a degree of environmental disaster sophistication slightly beyond the norm of the time period.

However, a significant part of the paper's thematic treatment also conformed to Button's (1999) observations of how media reported on the 1993 *Braer* oil spill near the

Shetland Islands. His study found that “the impacts of the spill and cleanup on the human population were all but ignored” (119), even though that spill generated other more significant health effects to the human communities nearby. Additionally, he observed that “the focus of attention was turned toward oiled marine life and the fury of the North Atlantic, which provided more photogenic drama than the possible invisible effects of chemical contamination” (119). The focus on weather and the fury of the seas figured prominently in the *Guardian’s* coverage of the *Amoco Cadiz*, though the paper did not strictly conform to Button’s (1999) observations about the scrutiny of oiled marine life. Systemic causes were touched upon, but only in fragmented fashion.

In telling contrast to Button’s (1999) findings, however, both the *Guardian* and the *Seattle Times* demonstrated significant maturation in their thematic treatment of the 1989 and 2002 spills. The investigation of several themes related to the spills correlated strongly with the heightened emphasis on systemic causes. Also in contrast to Button’s (1999) observation that the relegation of disaster to natural forces outside human control thus detracted from investigation of the human impacts, both the *Seattle Times* and the *Guardian* actively pursued news themes in which the human effects were the central focus. Similarly, Button (1999, 130) observed that “in so-called environmental disasters such as oil spills,” the focus is generally on “the effects on the ecology and not on the effects to human communities” – a tendency which he described as “an attempt to naturalize the disaster.” According to Button, (1999), the effect of such reporting is to remove “oppositional discourse” about responsibility and blame “from both government and corporate entities.” The *Seattle Times’* and the *Guardian’s* 1989 and 2002 spill coverage completely contradicted these observations by focusing primarily on people – and even more, by interweaving human and ecological contexts so that humans were seen as both affecting and affected by environmental conditions.

These results suggest that thematic emphasis is linked with more probing investigative reporting. In the case of oil spill disasters, the results suggest that investigating a diversity of news themes helps to guard against event-driven reporting that obscures

systemic explanations and suffers from lack of critical contexts. Smith (1992, 189), citing Entman's identification of three "production biases," argued that quality reporting on disasters is beleaguered by a tendency to oversimplify, to "personalize" stories so that "individuals rather than social institutions or historical contexts" are emphasized, and to favor symbols that "reduce complex concepts into easily grasped" symbolic portrayals. Because the excellent reportage observed in the *Seattle Times*' and the *Guardian*'s 1989 and 2002 stories directly contrasted with all three of these points, these results suggest more broadly that fleshing out the thematic angles of complex environmental issues breeds quality reporting by encouraging "intensive data searches" that reveal critical nuances and contexts while discouraging preconceived stories of a simplistic nature.

Environmental Reporting and Regional Identity

An interesting correlation between environmental reporting and regional identity emerged over the course of this study. Across all three dates, stories in both newspapers cultivated a sense of regional – and on occasion, national – identity. During the *Guardian*'s 1978 reporting, stories that tended to foster a regional identity tended to be higher-caliber stories that probed more deeply, invoked narrative styles, and broke from journalistic routines. Coverage of the *Exxon Valdez* also triggered intense focus on regional perspective. A sense of Alaskan regional identity did emerge in the *Seattle Times*' coverage, though the paper's reporting was so thorough that its outstanding investigative reporting on the systemic causes of the spills and its numerous human contexts most noticeably distinguished its coverage and regional identity aspects were usually interwoven with the systemic angles. In 2002, the regional perspective was the mainstay of reporting in both papers, and in the process of reporting on the plight of Galician fishermen and portraying them as regionally distinct, the papers developed stories acutely focused on the systemic and regulatory contexts of the spills while completely sidestepping the traps of "routine" spill reporting.

These unexpected results suggest that adopting a regional perspective, of which cultivation of regional or national identity is one form, is more conducive to the formation of richer conceptual frameworks for complex environmental stories. Perhaps Button's (1999) observations can lend some insight into why this may be so. According to media scholars (Button, 1999; Daley and O'Neill, 1991; Wilkins, 1989; Smith, 1992), technological disaster frames tend to focus on individuals as victims. Button (1999, 115) argues that "individualism, the mainstay of capitalist ideology, obscures the extremely relevant categories of class, race, gender, and age which are essential to understanding and explicating the politics of disaster." It can be argued, based on the results of this thesis, that "extremely relevant" regional characteristics could be included in this list as well. Correlates of regional identity could also easily include reporting that focuses on environmental justice and perspectives of unique racial groups; reporting that presents alternative views of environmentalism – such as the seldom heard from Native American views; or reporting that examines environmental problems in relation to the perspectives of smaller regional groups, such as states or counties.

Button (1999) further argues that dwelling on the individual in these stories "displaces any systemic account of [a] disaster and its causes, and . . . serves to decontextualize the larger sociopolitical conditions in which the tragedy occurred." The end result of this kind of narrative discourse on spills is to make individuals appear helpless, victimized, and "not as active agents struggling politically to redefine events and reframe official accounts of the disaster" (pg. 115).

What this study found, however, is that systemic explanations and the expression of traditionally marginalized voices tended to accompany stories that cultivated a sense of regional identity. The *Seattle Times*' attention to the multiplicity of angles about the struggles, conflicts, successes, and losses of different Alaskan fishing communities portrayed the fisherman as anything but passive. Stories expressed their angst, their concern, their frustration, their self-reliance, and their active efforts to take control of their situation. Their narrative accounts of the spill expressed a far different reality than the official accounts. The

Guardian's conflation of regional identity with environmental wellbeing emphasized the long-term nature of the spill and its long-lasting effects while expressing the interdependence of environment and humankind. This critical lesson from the oil spill disaster may have been lost through a focus on single individuals as passive victims. On the contrary, both *Guardian* and *Seattle Times* stories portrayed Galician fishermen as actively engaged in efforts to prevent damage to their livelihoods and regional identity, and their narrative accounts of the spill framed the disaster in vastly different terms than official Spanish government accounts. In the *Guardian's* earlier 1978 spill reporting, the stories that expressed a regional identity tended to be those where rich contexts emerged. They also gave voice to habitually suppressed disaster narratives showing the clash between official and regional viewpoints and illustrating the dissatisfaction with the official disaster frame.

Thus, the results of this study seem to indicate that reporting which aims to foster regional identity will be more likely to focus on the broader conceptual and systemic frameworks that do not easily fit within traditional journalistic templates of complex environmental problems. The discovery of this correlation between a regional outlook and higher caliber environmental reporting may be of particular importance given the nature of the environmental problems facing society today. If regional perspective fosters greater understanding of the complex relationship and interdependence between humans and the environment, journalists may have a better chance at informing the public and avoiding superficial reporting while unraveling the layers of complexity that often deter journalists away from investigating the more difficult, but meaningful, systemic frameworks.

Photographs and Framing

Across all three spill dates, the use of photographs in spill stories was surprisingly judicious. With the exception of the few images that accompanied *Seattle Times* stories in 1978, which lacked context and emphasized disaster by featuring large images of the wrecked tanker, both newspapers used photographs in ways that tended to emphasize complementary,

informative contexts. From the *Guardian's* 1978 photograph selection onwards, use of images, maps and graphics in both newspapers differed distinctly from the observations of some media scholars (Smith, 1992; Daley and O'Neill, 1991) that oil spill images tend to reinforce drama, superficial contexts, and easily available symbols.

At times, images helped to advance story frames. For instance, the overwhelming focus on human contexts in photographs of the *Prestige* spill contributed subtly to a sense of regional identity. During coverage of the *Exxon Valdez*, the *Guardian's* photographic portraiture of the tanker captain reflected the paper's implicit sense of respect for him and his profession. In a similar way, the *Seattle Times* amplified many of its sub-themes during its *Exxon Valdez* coverage by publishing context-rich photographs that synergized with some element of the text. Active shots of fishermen engaged in efforts to protect their harbors, or images of volunteers at work hunting for wildlife or cleaning beaches, helped to convey the remoteness of the locale and the need for fraternal cooperation and dogged self-reliance. These photographic expressions complemented the paper's emphasis on the independence and active struggles of the local people.

More often, however, the visual components of the stories served as complementary but stand-alone contexts, offering insight into angles of the spills that captured their complexity and contradicted official discourse about the scope of the spills or their impacts. Like the stories themselves, that often used descriptive narrative and storytelling features to dig deeply into difficult contexts, photographs often functioned as small visual stories that encapsulated moments in time during the lengthy disaster events. Drawn together, the visual components formed their own subtle spill narratives based on visual contexts.

Beyond this spotlighting of aspects and nuances of the spills that might otherwise have remained hidden, the study found that the *Seattle Times'* and *Guardian's* images helped to amplify the voices of those same marginalized groups that in other spill coverage have usually been trampled by official accounts of disaster. As the only visual representations of the spill disasters that most people experienced, the photographic forum played an important role by

either reinforcing or undermining textual frames or narratives. In the case of spill images from 1989 and 2002 – and in *Guardian* images from 1978 – photographs noticeably reinforced the alternative accounts of the disaster, which included depictions of the spills’ more problematic long-term effects, the true nature of impacts to local people, and some of the self-defeating systemic problems sabotaging the safety of the industry.

Source Use

The selection and treatment of sources in spill stories over time showed marked improvement in both newspapers. Again, the most noticeable evidence of evolution took place during the interval between 1978 and 1989. *Guardian* stories in 1978 attempted to include a diversity of voices. However, the paper’s philosophy in practice appeared fragmented and less effective at deviating from the official story line. Several stories sought local perspective, but always through a collective, anonymous attribution. Individual fishermen never appeared defined by their proper names, though regional mayors were cited by name. In effect, this tendency served to individualize the collective, so that instead of enforcing a sense of several village voices uniting with one narrative message, the effect was essentially to treat the collective as a single unit which thus appeared as victimized and passive. While collective citing did at times suggest a broader base for dissent from the official view, failure to quote individuals meant important contexts were lost.

It is still significant that the *Guardian* attempted to seek input from local people, wildlife biologists and conservationists, and tourist operators to the extent that it did. However, Coleman and Dysart (2005) have argued that sources can function as framing devices within stories. Despite the *Guardian*’s attempts to strive for narrative diversity, the paper still relied heavily on a handful of official sources – especially when writing about local British angles. Thus, the *Guardian*’s coverage of the *Amoco Cadiz* enforced the official narratives that extolled the government’s concern and readiness while attributing the disaster to natural forces outside human control.

By contrast, in both newspapers, source use had modified significantly by 1989. As Smith (1992) noted, many *Seattle Times* sources on the *Exxon* spill were unique to that paper. Quotes from science and environmental sources formed a substantial part of source commentary in both papers, along with in-depth, varied commentary from a huge diversity of fishermen and local people. This again contradicts Button's (1999, 128) findings in his study of how media reported on the *Braer* and *Sea Empress* spills in Great Britain. Though the spills were presented as environmental disasters, he found that "few scientists or environmentalists – who could potentially have explained the spills in more objective context – were actually quoted." He further argues that "when media do construct a catastrophic event as a disaster, they seldom construct the frame from the victim's perspective" (129). While the victims – in the case of the spills studied by this thesis, the fishermen, families, and communities of sea-dependent coastal regions – are usually most harmed by the disaster, they must struggle to establish their interpretations of the disaster "against the ideological frames generated by the status quo and replicated by the media" (129). As explained and seen in previous chapters, the *Guardian* and *Seattle Times* specifically privileged these sources over official sources in stories about the *Exxon Valdez* and *Prestige*. The practice helped to foster a sense of regional identity while investing the spill frames with a greater sense of complexity through the diversity of voices and perspectives sought – especially in the *Seattle Times*' 1989 coverage.

In 2002, the *Seattle Times* and the *Guardian* again quoted primarily local people and environmentalists. The emphasis on local people experiencing disaster – in part via predominant source quotes from many named local people – as well as environmental perspective, enabled local people to assert their own frames for the disaster specifically because of the collective weight of their individual voices. Gathering perspective on regional effects from many different individual voices unmasked the subtle nuances and variations in experience. Added together, however, the many local voices captured by the papers revealed the breadth of disaster shared by many people across the regions. The unified strains of diverse local voices helped to stress the regional impacts while giving reporters a vantage

from which to probe the underlying causes of the spills. Whereas the government attempted to frame the spill as an isolated failure of faulty seamanship by the captain, or as the fault of other nations failing to do their jobs rather than a failure of Spanish government coupled with a failure of broader underlying systemic frameworks, the alternative frames established by giving voice to local people revealed the spill as a regional environmental and economic disaster firmly rooted in preventable systemic origins.

The Guardian and Seattle Times as Case Studies

One important question raised by this thesis is how representative are these two papers of the larger community of news media and the broader status of environmental reporting quality today. It has been acknowledged that the *Guardian* and the *Seattle Times* have a historical reputation as quality newspapers. As case studies of environmental reporting evolution, their selection as research subjects for this thesis has both a positive and a negative side – though more positive aspects than negative. On the plus side, the papers' established reputations within the world of journalism as quality representatives of their trades meant that problems and deficiencies in environmental reporting could be isolated and attributed more specifically to the papers' philosophy towards environmental news and their approach to reporting on these stories. Using a paper with a lower overall record of excellence in reporting would have complicated the textual analysis, as pinpointing whether observed problems were directly related to a paper's grasp or perception of environmental news, or more generally to lower reporting standards, would have proved more difficult.

At the same time, this very point may also be one downside to the use of these two papers as case studies. As this study revealed, both the *Guardian* and the *Seattle Times* demonstrated a marked learning curve in their handling of the complex spill disasters. This ability to learn from past mistakes may be a function of a newspaper's base level of quality, and could mean that in less-reputed papers, the specific nettlesome challenges of environmental news could be thornier and take longer to overcome. Additionally, the

conscientious attention to overcoming reporting problems observed in the *Guardian* and *Seattle Times* may also be a function of the specific set of newsroom values that caused the newspapers to obtain their quality reputations in the first place, and may thus be less developed in newspapers of more average quality. To some extent, these points represent a weakness in using the *Guardian* and *Seattle Times* as case studies, because their overall quality may mean that the papers are also ahead of the curve insofar as environmental reporting evolution. Thus, it is possible that in the larger scope of news media, environmental reporting has not evolved in quality to the extent demonstrated in these papers. A similar study of a different sub-set of newspapers would be a question for future study that would permit this question to be answered more definitively.

Nonetheless, despite these weaknesses, it is still possible to use these two papers as case studies of environmental reporting evolution. First, the *Guardian* and *Seattle Times* represent what is possible to obtain in environmental reporting. Specifically because of their quality reputations, the papers serve as models of the challenges likely facing all media in grappling with complex environmental news. As Smith (1992) observed, a newspaper's receipt of a Pulitzer Prize indicates that it adhered to a set of news values which all media desire to emulate, but are perhaps prevented by the constraints of daily reporting. Therefore, it is possible to assume that the news values guiding the *Guardian* and the *Seattle Times* in their oil spill reporting represent standards which most news organizations desire to follow. Further, because environmental journalism itself is a newer reporting concept, studying how environmental news infiltrated and evolved in an above-average paper such as the *Guardian* or *Seattle Times* – including how the papers grappled with complexity or modified their approach to environmental reporting – offers a more genuine picture of the challenges of environmental news, as well as a purer basis of comparison for a paper's learning curve and the degree of evolution possible for the beat.

Environmental Journalism in Perspective

Another peripheral question raised by this thesis is where environmental journalism stands in relation to other beats. This thesis has demonstrated that in the quality press, at least, environmental reporting has significantly advanced over 25 years. This indicates that in relation to itself, environmental reporting today is noticeably better than it was when the beat first came into existence. A more nebulous question is whether this evolution puts environmental reporting on a par with reporting of other news, such as politics, government, or even other types of science news. There are indications that environmental journalism, even in smaller newspapers, has gained more legitimacy and that more people are familiar with environmental concepts, as well as interested in reading more environmental stories. This may very well be a positive result of the news media's greater attention to environmental issues. It is more common to see investigative environmental reporting today than in 1989 – and certainly than it was 30 years ago. It is also more common to see stories today with a local environmental angle in smaller papers.

However, as Friedman (2004) and others have noted, environmental reporting continues to struggle with aspects of quality. One striking contemporary example is the mainstream media's treatment of global warming. While the overwhelming scientific consensus is that global warming is occurring and that humans are the primary culprit, many stories treat the issue as if it is still equally debated among scientific experts. Many papers have reverted to using the “dueling scientists” tactic seen in the earlier days of environmental reporting, giving equal weight to climate change dissenters even though they comprise a very small fraction of the global scientific community.

The issue of global warming is indeed politically charged, and whether fear of political reprisal is at work or merely shoddy journalism is difficult to say. Regardless, global climate change represents the ultimate challenge to environmental reporting. The problem is deeply complex, highly nuanced, hard to visualize – save through dramatic portrayals of drowning polar bears – and measured in increments rather than breaking events. As with the

oil spill disasters, the issue of global warming penetrates into many social, economic, and political realms, and requires a deep scrutiny of underlying systemic contributions. Some newspapers today have done commendable jobs at producing, thoughtful, narrative pieces addressing these complexities.

However, the news media overall bear a significant responsibility for failing – in aggregate – to devote the kind of media attention, with the same reporting standards, to the subject as to, for instance, the war in Iraq. Thus, global warming may be the ultimate litmus test of how environmental reporting has evolved in the media-at-large. Still – and this may be significant – there is substantial debate among journalists about the media’s treatment of global warming. The fact that the media are even arguing amongst themselves over the state of reporting on the issue, or critically assessing the reporting of their colleagues, is itself a powerful indicator that an evolution in environmental reporting has taken place. In 1978, there was no such debate.

Covering Complex Environmental Stories Better

Based on the results of this thesis, it would seem that reporters covering complex environmental problems, such as an oil spill disaster, would produce more thoughtful, informative stories by following certain reporting principles over others. First, as seen in the dramatic shift in approach to covering the *Exxon Valdez* spill in the *Seattle Times*, reporters should resist the temptation to focus on blame and responsibility and instead look at underlying causes. The results suggest that obtaining the perspective of diverse representatives of an affected group, area or people – instead of selecting a few individuals to symbolize abstract aspects of the situation – will contribute important context that lends itself to a deeper conceptual understanding the spill, as opposed to reporting that seeks to quantify the scope of disaster or provide “alarmist sound bites.” Smith (1992, 185) has commented that while focusing on individuals can help to produce a compelling narrative, “it seems to reflect the values that drama is more important than conceptual understanding and

that interesting things are more newsworthy than important ones.” Personification of a few dramatic aspects of an oil spill encourages journalists “to ask who was responsible instead of what was the cause” (185).

As explained, however, reporters who approach an oil spill disaster with a different template in mind – one that seeks to explore deeper underlying causes over the immediacy of blame – will be more likely to target broader conceptual frameworks over dramatic but superficial explanations. Seeking information from a wide variety of sources – a familiar journalistic refrain – is equally if not more important when writing about a complex environmental problem. Relying on official sources and accounts prevents important context and nuance from coming to light that could inform a systemic perspective. As seen in the *Guardian* and *Seattle Times* stories of 1989 and 2002, however, stories that minimized official sources in favor of scientific, regional, and environmental perspective gained from richer conceptual information. Smith (199, 187) also cautions against using sources to “verify a preconceived story.” This problem may be related to the unfamiliar territory of complicated environmental disasters that discomfits journalists used to operating by routine models of reporting. The defense mechanism is often to cast stories in predictable contrasts or to adhere to familiar reporting templates, such as the “5 W’s and an H” of traditional reporting – a formulaic practice which Smith (1992, 186) argues “reduces journalists to conscientious stenographers” of disaster – a phenomenon seen at time in the *Guardian’s* 1978 spill coverage – and leads to stereotypical, superficial stories.

Because many of the pressing environmental problems today are elusive and their implications are difficult to summarize or foresee, journalists need to jettison these familiar reporting templates and instead ask questions that aim to explain some of the elusive, difficult, and challenging contexts. Writing stories from many thematic angles may help in this task by providing many inroads into nuances and ill-defined concepts of a complex problem. Grounding information about the present in rich historical contexts also relates a complex problem to deeper systemic causes by showing that environmental disasters like oil

spill are not episodic, but rooted in systemic problems with a longer historical lineage. Given the important and historical role of the news media in serving as a watchdog of social wellbeing, fostering journalists equally competent at investigating the area of social environmental wellbeing will be essential for public understanding of the many complex environmental problems with which the world of today is just beginning to grapple, and the world of tomorrow will have no choice but to solve.

Future Study

As with any scholarly undertaking such as this thesis, there is never space enough to examine all the important questions that arise during the course of study. This comprehensive study of environmental reporting's evolution over time is the start of a process of inquiry that deserves considerable future attention. The present study attempted to determine the extent to which environmental reporting has improved over the long-term in quality newspapers in order to pinpoint specific areas where even the quality press have had difficulty. The results of this study have raised several questions that would benefit from additional, focused scholarly attention. First, this study has demonstrated that environmental journalism has significantly improved in relation to itself. However, environmental reporting has always been characterized by unique difficulties. Answering the question of where the quality of the beat stands in relation to other traditional news beats would complement the results of the present study by orienting the hard-to-quantify question of "quality" in the context of more well-documented journalistic endeavors. Such study would also further refine journalists' understanding of what they need to do to surmount the continuing obstacles to quality environmental reporting.

This thesis also happened upon the surprising discovery of a relationship between a regional outlook in environmental news and higher quality reporting of a systemic nature. Studies designed to target this question specifically could shed light on whether regional identity is a theme that relates to quality environmental reporting on a more general level, or

whether oil spills and similar disasters are unique in this regard. Based on the results of this study, cultivation of regional identity emerged as connected to a more holistic view of the human-environment relationship. If this discovery proves true in other studies of environmental reporting, the significance for journalists seeking to improve the effectiveness of their reporting, and to reach the broader audiences necessary to foster larger-scale social change, could be profound. Because the majority of environmental problems facing society today are not about isolated threats to endearing wildlife, but about our broader social relationship with the environment and our own behaviors as the dominant species on the planet, the possibility that reporting focused on the relationship between regional identity and the environment could produce more effective stories is a potentially important discovery that needs to be explored in much greater depth.

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APPENDIX - STORY SAMPLES

1978 - Guardian Stories

1 (pg. 1) - Prominent Front Page Tease

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THE GUARDIAN

Printed in London and Manchester

Monday March 20 1978

NEWS IN BRIEF

Oil slick drifts towards Britain

THE plan for protecting the beaches of South-west Britain was put into operation yesterday as oil from the tanker wrecked off the coast of Brittany drifted up the English Channel. *Back page.*

Bhutto appeal

PAKISTAN'S military rulers are determined that the former Prime Minister, Mr Bhutto, will hang, says his senior defence lawyer. He appealed for foreign pressure to save the life of Mr Bhutto, who was sentenced to death at the weekend. *Report, page 4; Leader comment, page 10; Bhutto's tenuous lifeline, page 11.*

Poll scorn

RUMOURS of a spring general election were dismissed with scorn by senior Labour Party sources yesterday. *Back page.*



Left alliance disintegrates in face of government election triumph

Giscard sails to victory

From Walter Schwarz in Paris

The government of Giscardians and Gaullists was returned triumphantly to office in the final round of the general election yesterday—with a bigger majority than it had dared to hope for. And, during the night, the Union of the Left began once more to disintegrate as Mr Fabre, the Left-wing Radical leader, pulled out of the alliance and Socialists blamed Communists for the defeat.

Computer estimates from early results ended six years of hopes on the Left by giving the government alliance roughly 200 seats and the combined Left 200. The Left's defeat was immediately attributed to the six-month-old quarrel between Communists and Socialists which yesterday prevented thousands of Socialist voters from transferring their votes to Communist front-runners, and vice versa.

However, Socialists and Communists gained seats at the expense of the Gaullists. The Giscardian UDF alliance also improved its position but failed to catch up with the Gaullists, who remain the largest party in parliament, promising a prominent role for their leader, Mr Chirac in the new government.

Official results three hours after poll closing of 403 out

the Left-wing Radicals—the third partner in the union of the Left—said as the results came in: "Today I consider myself unbound by the engagement I made in signing the common programme in 1972, which I have loyally respected but which for the third time has failed to get the approval of a majority of people."

However, other leaders of the Left-wing Radicals, who got about 10 seats in the election under the banner of the United Left, said that Mr Fabre's remarks were "premature and unauthorised."

For the Socialists Mr Bocard, a national secretary, regretted that the disagreements with the Communists had led to the defeat of the Left, but added: "There is no practical possibility of change without a union of forces. What we are going to meet now is a process and agreed programme."

Jubilant government leaders last night promised a policy of bold social reform and Mr Barre, the Prime Minister, spoke of President Giscard's desire to "open up" the ruling coalition. The apparent departure of the Left-wing Radicals from the Union of the Left could provide him with the chance of a first step in this process.

Mr Mathias, the Communist leader was alone on the Left in refraining from polemics against the way the union had worked. "After this election the task



David Hirst: the man in the middle

Reporters in

IT WAS bound to happen sooner or later, said the military spokesman who received us at the "good fence." According to him, three correspondents—Ned Trenko, of UPI; Douglas Roberts, of Valley of America; and myself—had become the first, in the long history of Arab-Israeli warfare, to start their coverage from one side and end up, inadvertently, on the other.

The crossing occurred at Hadatha, a village about eight miles north of the frontier. At the time it marked about the furthest point of the Israeli thrust. But, when we entered it early on Friday afternoon it was a no-man's land.

Israeli armour had withdrawn earlier in the day. We

Two days after he left his base in Beirut to report on the fighting in south Lebanon, David Hirst, the Guardian's Middle East correspondent, arrived in Tel-Aviv. Tomorrow he tells the

were taken on a tour of the village by its holder inhabitants. The rest were Indians, helpless victims of conflict in which they play no part. The village had been heavily bombarded the day before.

Just as we were in the basement of the village school the shelling started again. It was tank fire, and aimed at us. An Israeli officer later told us that we had been mistaken

Israelis press home

From Martin Woollacott in Tyre

Israeli forces, laying down before them a ferocious volume of fire from their artillery and fighter bombers, are advancing deeper and deeper into Lebanon. Now well beyond their original "security zone," they threaten to cut off the port city of Tyre and even, perhaps, the whole region of Lebanon south of the Litani river.

Reporters and TV crews in Tyre watched as the Israeli bombing and shelling, at first concentrated on the Palestinian camp of Rachdlye to the south, moved closer until the shells and bombs were exploding at a road junction within the city limits. Equally intense bombing further inland seems to amply confirm reports from Palestinian military commandants that the Israelis, using two newly introduced armoured brigades, are advancing from three directions towards Tyre.

The Israelis appear to be moving on two routes from Tibune to the east, and also up the coastal main road from the

The UN Security Council last night called for an immediate withdrawal from Southern Lebanon by Israeli forces to be replaced by 2,000 UN peacekeeping troops. The UN resolution was approved in less than half an hour after the Lebanese delegation demanded a shortened procedure.

However Israel is no longer thinking about a six-month security strip along its border with the Lebanon, but of creating a new balance of power in the country.

UN vote, Israeli campaign, Begin mission to UN and Gloom in Egypt, page 6



ing it heavy going. The best indication of this is their use of artillery and air strikes to clear out very small groups of Palestinian guerrillas. The basic Palestinian tactical unit is a team of four or five men. They are armed with a variety of light weapons, including rocket

trucks and jeeps. Facing an army which is clearly very anxious to minimise its own casualties, and which responds to any fire by demands for air and artillery support, these small units are quite effective. By the time the air strikes or artillery arrives

THE GUARDIAN

Monday March 20 1978

GOOD

BACK PAGE

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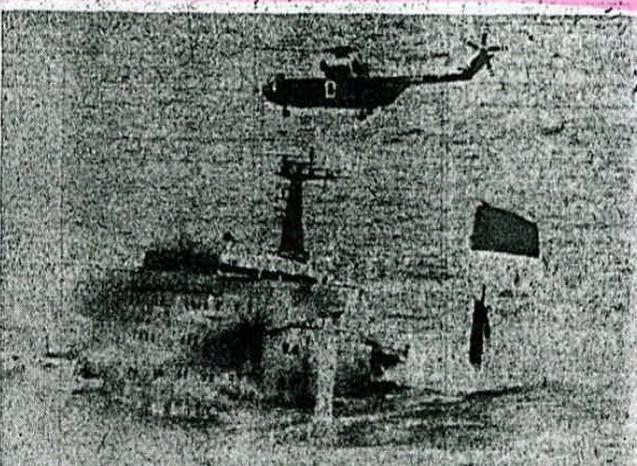
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AMOCO AFTERMATH: A dead sea bird killed by oil on the beach at Porsall; helicopters fly over the crippled tanker.

Heavy seas pound Amoco Cadiz as oil slick moves towards the British coast

Row grows over delayed tanker alert

From Paul Webster in Paris

Oil from the wreck of the Liberian super-tanker Amoco Cadiz covered an area of more than 600 square miles off the Brittany coast yesterday as it was reported that a smaller patch of oil was being pushed towards the English coast. More than 80,000 tons of crude oil have spilled from the ship since it ran aground near Brest last Friday morning.

British, French and American experts who have flown to the area to study the wreck, now being pounded by heavy seas, say that pumping operations for the 140,000 tons of oil still in the hold cannot start before next week. Weather forecasters say there'll be no calm weather before Wednesday, when it is hoped to start installing pumping equipment. Winds and strong currents are pushing the oil inshore and there is still a chance that the tanker will break up further.

The oil is now spread along 60 miles of the Brittany coast and is being blown into Brest harbour, 25 miles from the wreck. The French Navy is

leading operations to spread chalk and detergent on the oil. Farmers have used pumps linked to tractors to retrieve oil from the little fishing harbour of Porsall and other holiday areas.

The coastline has had to be closed to traffic because thousands of sightseers are hindering operations. The ship is hardly a mile from Porsall. Controversy over responsibility has caused several reactions. The Italian captain of the Shell-chartered tanker and the German captain of a tug which took the ship in tow are held in custody. They could be charged with failing to alert the French authorities when the tanker was in trouble near Brest last Thursday night.

Premier Raymond Barre's office issued a communique saying: "The tanker and the foreign tugs failed to alert French maritime authorities, while the storm raged. The French authorities were alerted only at the time the tanker went aground."

Mr Harry Rinkema, vice-president of maritime transportation for Amoco International, told reporters yesterday that there "may have

been a discussion over the towing contract" during the critical hours when the tanker was helpless on Thursday.

Two tugs stand by permanently in Brest to help tankers in distress along what is known as the "oil railway," a tanker route which comes within a few miles of the French coast.

The Secretary General of the French sailors' union, Mr Roland Andreux, said that the French government should take action to stop "flags of convenience." Ships flying these flags were responsible for 75 per cent of accidents.

Mr Alain Bombard, director of the French sea laboratory, was among ecologists who condemned the lack of an adequate government response to oil pollution. He was "horrified" at the emergency preparations. "Nothing has improved since the Torrey Canyon catastrophe in 1967," he said. "One of these days there will be a similar disaster in the Mediterranean which will be fatal to all its sea life."

This is the third major accident off the Brittany coast in

two years. The first involved the Greek-owned super-tanker, Olympic Bravery, and the second the East German tanker, Boehlen.

Philip Jordan writes: Britain's national plan for protecting the South-west's beaches was put into operation yesterday as oil from the wrecked Amoco Cadiz drifted up the English Channel in 20-knot winds.

Since the Torrey Canyon disaster in the '60s, 27 years ago Britain—in cooperation with France and our North Sea neighbours—has been working on a system of mutual cooperation as a way of safeguarding coastlines.

As part of the slick started to drift towards Britain the first phase of the operation was yesterday put into action. The Department of Trade, which is responsible for all pollution more than one mile from the British coast, sent eight detergent spraying ships to South-west England.

The second string of the protection plan was put into operation yesterday and local and county councils in the South-

west went on to an amber alert, to "watch and wait." If the oil comes closer than a mile offshore despite the Department of Trade's dispersal fleet, backed up where necessary by the Royal Navy, a fleet of specially equipped fishing boats will put to sea.

In the case of Cornwall, one of the first possible areas to be hit, emergency planning officer Lieutenant-Colonel Bill Vickers and home civil servants from the county surveyor's department would occupy a special basement operations room at County Hall, Truro. This has radio and telephone links to both Government operators and highways department work teams, who have been specially trained in anti-pollution tasks.

In the case of a bigger threat the Department of Trade would commandeer vessels and equipment from wherever necessary. For instance, Kent—overlooking the Dover Straits—has a good supply. They would be used not only in conjunction with counties' own supplies of detergents, but strategically placed central Government reserves.

Computer can predict extent of damage

By Charles Cook Energy Correspondent

A detailed prediction of where the huge oil slick from the Amoco Cadiz will make its landfall could be produced this week with the help of computers at the Royal Dutch-Shell Oil Group headquarters at The Hague in Holland.

The firm's computer programmers have written a complex programme designed to predict accurately the outcome of different types of oil spills from North Sea offshore fields and it could be modified to help in

Shell said last night it would be pleased to use Sliktrack on the Brittany disaster if asked. The oil in the tanker is owned by Shell, which had chartered the Cadiz to run a cargo of Iranian and Arabian Light Crude from the Persian Gulf to its Rotterdam refinery.

Had the ship passed the Brittany coast safely, it would have anchored temporarily in Lyme Bay off Dorset to tranship part of its cargo to smaller tankers.

Shell's computer programme

the blow-out in the Ekofisk oilfield in the Norwegian sector of the North Sea. It predicted that only 1 per cent of the oil spilled there would reach shore and, although anti-pollution experts dismissed this low forecast in the event less than 1 per cent is thought to have reached land.

Those fighting the Ekofisk pollution were helped by the light consistency of the oil, and the same factor should assist this time. Lighter oils have a lower tar content.

Amoco's clean-up bill will be

pollution insurance schemes. As tanker owners, Amoco is a signatory to TOVALOP, the agreement on pollution from ships.

The final bill could run into tens of millions of dollars. One current oil industry estimate puts the cost of coastal clean-up operations at \$180 per barrel spilled, and pollution from the Amoco Cadiz looks like exceeding a million barrels. However, the \$180 includes the "invisible" costs such as lost tourist income, and many experts put the clean-up costs at less than

British anti-pollution officials remain unimpressed by the plan to pump out the remaining oil rather than set fire to the tanker. It will take several days to empty the 100,000 tons or more of crude oil.

The Amoco Cadiz is now expected to be a total loss. The ship is insured for \$12 million and its cargo for about \$20 million, with perhaps a further \$20 million worth of cover on the ship's equipment. About 80 per cent of the insurance cover was provided by the London

THE GUARDIAN

Tuesday March 21 1978

9003 (BACK PAGE)

Teachers turn 8pc

pay increase for salary drift has been recalculated and was put at £5.4 million instead of the original £4 million.

The teachers' sanctions, which had disrupted many schools through teachers refusing to undertake voluntary overtime supervision duties, continue to the end of the month, although many schools are already broken-up. They then will be reviewed at the next conference of the two largest unions, the NUT and the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers.

Yesterday, Mr Jarvis claimed the sanctions had clearly been successful in that they had brought the other side to the negotiating table with a better offer.

The leader of the management negotiating team, Mr John Kelly, said last night: "We have been conciliatory all day and we are still hoping." The agreement offered totalled 10 per cent, including a 9.8 per cent increase for all teachers which would mean an extra £5 week for a probationer teacher and an extra £20 a week for the most highly paid. A management spokesman said: "We intend to pay maximum possible under government guidelines."

Shirley Williams, the Labour Secretary, was not cited back from North London until tomorrow, but now decided to return to London today.

ALKS on an 181 per cent claim for polytechnic and college lecturers were added yesterday until April. No meaningful offer had been made by the management, a spokesman for the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education said.

Tanker captain in oil disaster faces trial

By David Fairhall
Shipping Correspondent

The captain of the wrecked supertanker Amoco Cadiz was formally charged at Brest yesterday with violating the law on sea pollution. He will stand trial for causing a spill of 100,000 tons of crude oil.

Rinaldo Bardari, the Italian master of the supertanker, was freed by the French court pending trial. The charge carries a maximum two-year gaol term on conviction.

Britain has sent four ships and promised four more to help the French navy stem the tide of black oil spewing from the American-owned tanker chartered by a British firm.

Clareon Babermp have claimed that before the ship cracked in two Capt Bardari lost time by arguing with **Friedrich Weinert**, German captain of the **Amoco**. Marine officials alleged that the captain did not immediately call for rescue when the tanker's steering failed. Later weather worsened and the crippled ship crashed into the rocks.

The captain of the German tug involved in the attempt to tow the crippled tanker has been released by a judge so the tug could join the salvage operation. It was emphasized that the investigation of the tug captain's role was not yet completed.

The oil slick poses "no immediate threat to English beaches," the Shipping Minister, **Mr Stanley Clinton-Davis**, assured the House of Commons yesterday.

But on Guernsey, harbour authorities were preparing for an early siege by the oil leaked from the damaged vessel, and French officials said it might take as long as a week to pump the remaining 140,000 tons from the tanks that remained intact.

The official French view was that no further spillage was likely. However, a force seven south-westerly wind was driving a heavy swell on to the rocky coast where the Amoco Cadiz is lying near Brest, and was also hampering British efforts to help disperse the existing slick by spraying it with detergents.

Unless the weather changes, the oil is expected to reach the Channel Islands by tomorrow and — just possibly — the Cornish beaches on Friday. Air patrols reported the slick 70 miles off the Lizard.

Cornwall's pollution officer, Mr Bill Vickers, predicted yesterday that the main battle, if it is ever fought, will be waged in the **English Channel**. The French Navy has been using detergents and seeding the slick with polystyrene, which tends to make the oil congeal and sink.

In Guernsey they are, nevertheless, preparing for the worst. Two floating booms are on their way from England to enclose the harbours of St Peter Port and St Sampson, and the local fire brigade has been experimenting with air-filled hoses as a makeshift alternative.

Local councils

The funds allocated by the local authority, on which local authorities would have only one third of the seats, did come from local authorities contributions to a pool. But money would not cover the full costs. For some courses local authorities would pay 5 per cent of the local authority, the amount rising to 15 per cent over a period.

The AMA had opposed the introduction of a local authority and had suggested a joint present pooling method of using local authority higher education. The worry of the local authority was that in the short term the recommended system would produce the big rate increases in some towns.

Further education changes, page 9.

US charges

US charges

'Break-even' car firm seeks new transfusion of Government money Leyland 'on the road to recovery'

By Jane McLoughlin

British Leyland made a pre-tax profit of £21 million in 1977, according to preliminary figures announced yesterday. After tax, there was a loss of £5 million and taking into account the cost of extraordinary provisions—in this case almost entirely the planned closure of the TR7 plant at Speke—the loss was £51.9 million.

The Leyland chairman, Mr Michael Edwardes, described the small pre-tax profit yesterday as "break-even." It comprises profits of £26.6 million from trucks and buses, and £8.4 million from non-automotive products. Against this, cars and light commercial vehicles made a loss of £13.9 million.

Announcing the 1977 figures at Leyland—it coincided with the opening of the new engine proving centre which the company sees as a first step to a

more automated future—Mr Edwardes said that the break-even must be judged against the serious internal and external disputes in 1977.

"If we can achieve break-even against that background we must have a future. I think we can say we are back in business."

Mr Edwardes did not make light of the losses in the car division. Until November, the Austin/Morris production was not assessed separately from Rover/Triumph, so he could not figure on the loss made by the Austin and Morris, but he did admit that they were the "least profitable" of any section.

"We need major restructuring to staunch the losses in the car division, and I don't think that our relative success in production and in market penetration so far this year means we have turned the corner. We are producing at a rate of knots now and we should break the back of our problems in two years."

But future progress depends on a new injection of Govern-



Never at a loss—an animated Mr Michael Edwardes explains British Leyland's sheet and future plans.

City Notebook, page 18

ment money. Mr Edwardes made it clear that without £90 million to cover new investment, British Leyland cannot hope to compete with foreign car manufacturers. He believes it "inconceivable" that the money will not be forthcoming.

Last year the capital spent throughout British Leyland was £96 million. In 1978, this must be considerably more to give the company a chance of competing on equal terms with other countries.

Assuming that Government funds are made available, £8 million will go to the new engine proving centre opened yesterday, £32 million are assigned to a new assembly building, £34 million in advanced engineering facilities, and £50 million on the Scottish plants at Bathgate and Alblion.

As far as the distribution of funds between bus and truck and cars is concerned, the highly successful bus and truck side will have an increase in capital spending available — 30 per cent of the total rather than 20 per cent. Cars will suffer a significant reduction in their cut — perhaps 60 per cent.

Within the car division, Mr Edwardes said that spending will be weighted towards Range Rovers and Land-Rovers.

Mr Edwardes pointed out that in only one year in the past decade had the company failed to make a trading profit.

He said that there was deep public misconception about the funding of British Leyland, with many people believing that the company had received £1,000 million. In fact, Leyland had drawn down £150 million since the original equity injection.

"Our approach to Government money is ambiguous. I have said that I want no strings attached, but of course I accept proper accountability to the National Enterprise Board as a shareholder."

Now investment, he said, was an act of faith and Leyland was on the way to justifying that faith. Leyland's share of the car market was running at 27.9 per cent up from January and February's average 23 per cent.



Election result scraps Union of Left

Continued from page one

Uluis Clos, forever to love and share (though the Communist share of the electorate is slightly lower) was a small consolation, irrelevant to the basic calamity: the Union of the Left, the bedrock of both parties policies for six years, has failed in practice.

"The Common Programme has failed for the third time to get the support of the electorate," wailed Mr Fabre during his TV tantrum on Sunday night. But it failed in a much deeper sense than that because it has turned out to have a built-in contradiction. For it to be reassuring enough to get a majority of votes it needs to be moderate — and in the hands of a strong Socialist party, with the Communists kept firmly in their place.

Yet that very situation is intolerable to the Communists, whom it threatens to make irrelevant. It would seem to condemn Communists and Socialists, like characters in

the hardest thing for Socialists to bear this week is the feeling that they have been had by the Communists—all along the line. The municipal election last year brought hundreds of Communist mayors into office on the back of the Union.

And then, as soon as by-elections showed the Socialists were getting too popular for the Communists' liking, the line abruptly changed. The feud which followed "scuttled" the victory of the Left, as Mr Fabre put it on Sunday night.

The only consolation for the Socialists is that the Communists are in just as sorry a plight, even though they have 34 more members. For them, too, the union was the only hope of power. In the event they have proved the fidelity of their electorate—but it is the fidelity of a perpetual ghetto.

In the feud of the last six months the reassuring image of Euro-Communism has evaporated: the winds blowing lately

have been cold, Siberian winds. The Socialists will never forget what happened and the electorate at large may also remember the traumatic lesson that Communists will always be Communists.

"Criss of the regime," as Mr Mendes-France predicted last month, in the event of a narrow election victory? Will the election have, as some say, "a third round" between the trade unions and the Government?

There were few signs of anything so traumatic. The Communist-led CGT and the Socialist CFDT, were both invading the Government yesterday in a new round of talks to see what could be salvaged of all the shattered hopes of higher wages and earlier retirement.

Strikes and confrontation? With over a million unemployed, with only one worker in three belonging to a union, it seemed unlikely.

Thousands were in the streets as scamen considered a 'order from more than Luton Airport meeting with strike action.

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THE GUARDIAN Saturday March 23 1978

A deadly remedy for the beaches of Brittany?

PHILIP JORDAN, Brest, on the weight of local concern over the use of chemical dispersants on the Amoco Cadiz oil slick

EVERY WINDOW in the French part of Brest, which is the centre of the oil slicked area, is black with smoke. After the black night of yesterday, the streets are today a grey, sooty mess. And then we will see the oil slicked area from the sea. The people are angry that oil slicked areas have been spilled in Brittany, and they are equally as angry that the French have given in to British pressure to use chemical dispersants.

While the mayor of the local towns and villages are keen to see the beaches clean and the sea clear, the fishermen, oyster and lobster growers are a different matter. They are concerned that it is their own best interests to have the sea clear of oil slicked areas. They are concerned that it is their own best interests to have the sea clear of oil slicked areas. They are concerned that it is their own best interests to have the sea clear of oil slicked areas.

But something had to be done. The British boats in the area were spraying a chemical dispersant. The British boats in the area were spraying a chemical dispersant. The British boats in the area were spraying a chemical dispersant.

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Today CND lives again through a renewed campaign. Guardian writers trace the movement's history and describe its purpose now.

Still keeping their sanity in the face of the holocaust

"Do you hear the H Bomb's hammer" like the crack of doom... WILL, no, not really, not as much as we used to. Twenty years on, the H Bomb is still a simple, the lyrics were true, but the words and the music were not.



great imagination to grasp... The H Bomb is still a simple, the lyrics were true, but the words and the music were not.

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A demonstrator was engulfed in flames when a petrol bomb he was about to throw spilled over his clothes. The incident happened as anti-airport protesters and riot police clashed violently at the new Tokyo International Airport yesterday

Wreckers invade airport

From Robert Whymant in Tokyo
Opponents of Tokyo's new airport struck at its heart: the control tower yesterday smashing vital equipment. Aviation officials were working through the night to discover whether the damage caused by the raid would force the postponement of next Sunday's first scheduled flight into the airport.

An estimated 20,000 radical students, farmers, and environmentalists gathered on the first day of a series of mass demonstrations scheduled for this week, climaxing a 12-year struggle against the airport at Narita, 38 miles east of Tokyo.

It soon became clear that some of the clashes between demonstrators and riot police were diversionary operations staged to draw police away from the main attack at the control tower building.

There, 15 red helmeted radicals with two trucks smashed into the airport compound. Despite attempts by riot police to drive them back with tear gas grenades and pistols fired in the air, six of the attackers reached the control tower on the sixteenth floor of the airport office building while fighting continued below.

Five air traffic controllers fled to the roof and were rescued by police helicopters. For two hours, the six invaders with steel pipes and hammers smashed radar, and radio equipment, light control systems, and other essential consoles used to guide aircraft on take off and landing.

Finally, armoured police forced their way into the tower and arrested the latter-day Luddites. But by then they had dealt a serious—and possibly crippling—blow to the Japanese Government's plan to open Narita for operations next Sunday.

The airport opening has already been delayed 12 times since the spring of 1971 because four policemen and one demonstrator have lost their lives. And 10,000 people have been injured in fighting which has scarred the £1.3 billions airport's construction.

anish punk

with his imagination than the realm of fact." Finally, like Johnny Rotten and the Sex Pistols, Ramoncin and the Lavatories parted acrimoniously. Ramoncin accused the Lavatories of "an alarming lack of talent" and the Lavatories pointed out that Ramoncin, far from being a hooligan, had only recently left Madrid University.

Now at last, equipped with a new backing group and a recording contract Ramoncin is preparing his first LP. A few days ago he made his literary debut in El Codorniz, Spain's equivalent of Private Eye, telling its readers of a day in his life. Essentially, this consisted of getting dressed, brushing his teeth, combing his hair, wandering the streets by day, and getting drunk at night.

It remains to be seen whether this lifestyle can attract the one thing Ramoncin still lacks — fans.

Kidnapped baron released unharmed in Paris crowd

From Walter Schwarz in Paris
The kidnapped millionaire Belgian industrialist, Baron Edouard-Jean Empain, was freed yesterday. A French Interior Ministry spokesman said that Baron Empain, who was abducted outside Paris home on January 23, was released in central Paris, at the Place de l'Opera.



Alain Caillot

The brilliantly lit square was crowded with tourists visiting Paris for the Easter weekend.

The Baron was freed after an alleged member of the gang, Alain Caillot, was captured in a gun battle with the police on Friday night when he and four other gang members appeared at a rendezvous to pick up the ransom of 17 million Swiss francs (£4.5 million).

Baron Empain telephoned his wife from the Place de l'Opera and she immediately telephoned the police.

The Italian-born Baroness drove quickly to meet her husband, and the police arrived soon after.

The Baron returned home with his wife, telling police that he did not want to go to headquarters on the Quai des

Orfevres for questioning, police said.

Fears for the baron's safety had grown at the weekend after the shootout. The police operation began last Thursday when gang members staged an all-day rehearsal throughout Paris with an Empain family representative who was to hand over the 40 million franc ransom.

The ransom was finally to have been paid on the motorway a few miles south of Paris, in the Friday evening holiday rush. The gang members took possession of the Renault 12 car containing the ransom at the appointed place — but stopped 500 yards further on at a small door in a soundproofing wall through which they planned to escape.

Other gang members waiting there opened fire on the police from this door, through which they escaped, leaving the ransom money, one of the gang dead and another slightly injured.

Saturday, January 21, the convicted prostitute was due court five days later to face soliciting charge. A friend with her at the time on Lumb Lane in Bradford's red light district told police that she had walked away saying she would be back in a matter of minutes.

Her friends were convinced that she had not run away because of her devotion to her children. But Mr Lapsley said last night: "I am pretty certain she had been dead for some time—weeks."

Last night a post-mortem examination was carried out. Professor David Gee, the pathologist who has examined all the previous "Yorkshire Ripper" victims.

Mr Lapsley said: "We are treating this as a homicide at the moment, because a post-mortem examination is still going on, I cannot give a cause of death or give the nature of her injuries. Because of this I cannot connect this with any other murders."

Many of the detectives on the case last night travelled from the incident room at Huddersfield where they were investigating the murder of a teenage prostitute, Helen Rytko.

The murders began in October, 1975, and a reward of £15,000 has been offered.

Despite the reward the police have been unable to find any significant clues since men will associate with prostitutes have been reluctant to come forward.

Jersey waits on the wind as oil spreads

From Philip Jordan in Jersey
North-west winds were yesterday pushing the giant oil slick from the Amoco Cadiz along the Brittany coast for the tenth day. But while the international emergency team waited for the first of two days of high spring tides which might shift the wreck of the tanker and send another 35,000 tonnes of oil spilling into the sea, a change of wind to the south-west was being forecast for last night. This was bad news for the island of Jersey now in the slick's path.

The high tides were last night pushing the broken ship around on the jagged rocks. An Oil company executive said: "I think you can take it that a lot of oil is coming out and there is not much left to salvage." The bow section includes a tank which Amoco experts say contains the last 35,000 tonnes of oil. They hope to pump it out if the weather improves, but any movement of the wreck might lead to the whole operation being abandoned. The remaining oil would then join the 185,000 tonnes already in the sea.

If the hulk survives the emergency clean-up operation will start a new phase tomorrow. Although the Bretons are still angry with their government for its handling of the crisis—one of the biggest protest rallies so far has been called for today in Brest by the Left—sympathy for the region's problems has been sweeping France over the weekend.

Encouraged by promises of fresh men, equipment and supplies, the French authorities plan a renewed attack on the oil. Offers of help are now pouring in. The French ministry of defence says it is ready to make 4,000 more men available if needed, including 2,000 marines, 1,000 infantry and 1,000 gendarmes. New supplies of pumps and other equipment are expected in Brittany today, and an appeal by a commercial radio station for help from the public has brought promises of 2,000 trucks and thousands of spades, buckets, oilskins and other clothing.

The Paris city government has sent 500,000 francs. Mr Jean-Marie Pangam, Mayor of the port of Brest, said: "All is not yet lost. The spraying may go on for a month. But if we are working together we can bring this coast back to health and beauty."

However, Mr Louis Cabioc'h, deputy director of the town's marine biology station, said: "It will take a long time to recover in spite of all the ecological rhetoric. Everything at the moment is a choice between very bad solutions."

In Britain, Mr Stanley Clinton-Davis, the junior Trade Minister, who has been to Brest to see the damage for himself, said the British had done everything they conceivably could to aid the French and also protect the Channel Islands: "We acted with commendable speed. We arranged a large armada of metal, undertaken at very short notice. We have an operations room in London cooperating with one in Guernsey and with those of the French at both Brest and Cherbourg, and we have given every kind of assistance to the French from the beginning. I have been in touch with them. I do not know what more could be done."

He refused to be drawn on stories of an inter-government upset with the French over their handling of the oil slick. He commented: "I am not going to get involved in blaming anybody at this stage. The right thing to do now is to tackle the slick as quickly as we can. There will be a time for a turn to back page, col. 1

Children slept in rubble as mothers worked on construction site.

Up to fifty percent of the construction site labourers in India's cities are women.

They flock to Delhi and Bombay from the poor rural areas of Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

Those who are lucky enough to find employment in the cities may have to leave their children to sleep or play in the rubble of the worksite.

It was to provide shelter for these neglected children that the mobile crèches for working mothers' children was set up in 1969.

Lunches and Lessons

This Oxfam-backed voluntary organisation erects temporary shelters on building sites taking in children up to the age of 12. Each centre teaches reading and writing and provides recreational and creative activities and medical attention if needed.

The children get a mid-day meal and milk twice a day. There are also regular vaccination and immunisation programmes carried out in conjunction with the civic authorities.

At first mothers were nervous to leave their children with strangers and acceptance was slow. But by 1976 thirty two centres were in operation caring for several thousand children.

The running cost of one centre is just £16 a week. This is only one of the worthwhile projects which Oxfam helps to finance.



Details of Oxfam's current activities are available from Oxfam, Room G13, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DZ. Contributions, large or small are always gratefully received.



Give us this day our daily bread.
Here is my donation for £ to help Oxfam's work around the poor.
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Address _____

Please send now to Oxfam, Room G13 Oxfam, Freeport, Oxford OX2 7DZ.

MONDAY March 27, 1978

FRONT PAGE

GOLO

THE GUARDIAN

London and Manchester

Tuesday March 28 1978

15p

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Picture by Denis Thorpe

MOBBED by seagulls, the steeple-
chaser Red Rum (left) exercises on
the tideline at Southport beach.
The Grand National favourite was
taken bathing yesterday in an anxious
attempt to get him fit for the race at
Aintree on Saturday.

Red Rum bruised his left hind leg
last week when he trod on a stone
while exercising. His trainer, Don
"Ginger" McCain, said yesterday
that his chances of running were
only 50-50.
The bay gelding is the only horse
to have won the National three

times and has twice finished second.
Part of a veteran combination —
his owner, a retired Southport
builder, Noel Le Mare, is 91 this
year — Red Rum is due to retire
after the National at the age of 13.
Thousands will be disappointed if
he fails to run as his triumphs in

the National have made him almost
as famous as the race. His following
brings him Christmas cards from all
over the world while his caning of
the bookies, who lost hundreds of
thousands when he won last year,
has an even wider appeal.
Chris Hawkins, page 21

Lloyd quits in new Test row



Clive Lloyd

From Henry Blotfeld
in Georgetown

CLIVE LLOYD, the West
Indies cricket captain, yester-
day resigned the captaincy
for the remainder of the
series against Australia and
a close friend said that he
had also retired from Test
cricket. His decision comes
at the end of three days of
rumour and speculation about
the future of the Kerry

French navy opens tanker hatches

From Philip Jordan
in Brest
Hatch covers on the wreck of
the tanker Amoco Cadiz, lying
on the rocks off Brittany, have
been deliberately opened to
allow the thousands of tons of
oil left in the bow of the ship to
pour into the sea.

The Amoco oil company,
owners of the ship which is now
broken in two and almost
covered by heavy seas, revealed
yesterday that it had agreed to
let French navy men go on
board the wreck on Sunday to
open the hatches, access plates
and a ballast valve.

The operation, which was un-
announced, was intended to let
out what was left of 35,000
tonnes of oil still in the tanker
on Saturday. It came only hours
before a high spring tide on
Sunday night, which would
have sent water pouring in to
the bow tank holding the oil,
and must have been timed to
coincide with it.

The French navy still plans
to dynamite the wreck of the
tanker, but is waiting for better
weather. They aim to open up
the wreck so that wind and
tide can get through it to wash
the last of the oil away.

The growing oil slick was
said to have been halted by the
wind yesterday. During the day

it was said to have hardly
moved at all, and there is some
doubt that it will reach the
Channel Islands in any dan-
gerous form. Yesterday most of
the oil moving near Jersey was
said to be a "sheen" at which
stage the oil is less than one
thousandth of a millimetre
thick.

The decision to go ahead with
the plan to open the ship's
hatches was apparently taken
by the Amoco company under
pressure from the French Navy,
who said they wanted to stop
the pollution caused by oil from
the wreck as soon as possible.

Marine biologist Dr Molly Spooner said yesterday that large-
scale pollution of the Channel Islands was now extremely
remote. Report, back page. France counts the cost, page 17.

Releasing the remaining oil
on board quickly would permit
prompt and effective clean-up
by crews and equipment
already mobilised in place," the
company said in a statement.

It also meant that Amoco has
finally been forced by the bad
weather to abandon its plan to
pump the remaining oil out of
the wreck into a smaller tanker.

Meetings on Saturday and
Sunday between Amoco, Shell
contractors and the French
Navy were told that the condi-
tion of the wreck had deterio-

ated rapidly over the weekend.
Amoco said that the hoists
already washed in the tank by
the rocks had meant that a
good deal of the 35,000 tonnes
measured in it on Saturday
would already have leaked in
any case.

This morning the inter-
national emergency team will
start a renewed attack on the
oil with extra men and equip-
ment pledged over the week-
end. The release of the oil from
the wreck means that the clean-
up squad will now be in com-
mand of the operation to get
rid of all the oil pollution: a

task which is estimated to have
cost \$30 millions so far.

As the news of the deliberate
release of the oil was made
public yesterday the biggest
demonstration march organised
against the oil pollution was fil-
ling through the rain-swept
streets of Brest more than
15,000 banner-waving workers,
students and children marched
10 to 15 abreast down the main
Rue de Siam from the marine
administration headquarters
towards the town hall.

Teachers, fishermen, factory
hands, lorry drivers, municipal

workers and civilian workers
from the Brest naval yard all
shouted the slogan: "The pol-
luters must pay."

The French Government has
given permission for navigation
control of shipping off the Brit-
tany coast to be stepped up. A
24-hour watch on the shipping
lanes has been mounted from
two signalling stations using
portable radar sets with a good
weather range of 15 to 17 nauti-
cal miles.

A National Marine Organisa-
tion boat will be on permanent
patrol, as from today, in the
area where ships began to move
into the Channel "separation
lanes." This was where the
Amoco Cadiz first got into
trouble when her steering
failed.

From Saturday a new control
centre for shipping off Ushant
will begin operating from a
signalling station at Siff. It will
be equipped with sophisticated
radar equipment to watch ships
as they near the French coast.

In a new government order
ships approaching the area will
have to radio their position,
route, destination and cargo.

Israel may act to



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Pellier!
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Tuesday March 28, 1978

G04

PHILIP JORDAN, in Brest, on the 'real cost to tourism and industry of the world's worst oil spill'
France counts the cost of Black Easter

IN THE middle of what has been known here as Black Easter the cost of the Amoco Cadiz disaster was being reckoned up by the people of Brittany yesterday. Each little community was looking to the effects in its own area, and the question marks were being put over jobs in the fishing industry, tourism, and the country of the region, particularly oyster and marine life.

The cost to the oyster industry is so far estimated at 4940,000, and the picture is repeated elsewhere in Brittany. Unions have been arranging in the past few days for an emergency payment of £138, representing that 470 fishermen, fishing from 272 boats, had been hit. The fishermen, who catch shellfish, fresh fish and other sea food, stand to lose all

a million people come to Brittany each year and stay in hotels, self-catering flats and houses, camp sites and caravans, and as owners of second homes. One hotel syndicate chief, Mr Augustin Lombard, said that there had not yet been a flood of cancellation calls, although independent hoteliers have admitted listing and cancelling sites are said to be booked to capacity, particularly for April and July. And at least some agencies are counting on the "ecological effect of the spillage to bring people to Brittany, particularly early in the season. But there is still worry in the trade, for this year's season has generally got off to

a little start, with most people awaiting the outcome of the general election before going away on holiday. For one of the worst hit coastal villages there will be no tourists this year. In the north, the main villages to be affected are those on the coast, and a major road, the N10, has been closed for a mile or two. Troops and pumping equipment with police road blocks on either side, and a closed road, says: "A catastrophe has befallen our village. A disaster. The sea is in the air." Typical of the ill's impact on the ecology is the fate of the Sept Iles bird sanctuary near "Trégastel". When the Amoco Cadiz's cargo of light crude oil is said to be assimilated, the birds in the granite rocks was determined. Current work by ornithologists and conservationists brought the colony back to life and made it a home for about 30,000 birds of 12 species, including guillemots and gulls.

Now the birds are dying from the Amoco Cadiz oil and the reason is beginning to emerge. Hundreds of thousands of birds are being taken part in a "recus of thousands of" oil-covered birds. Special centres at marine biology stations, coast-guard points, veterinary surgeries and in ordinary homes have been set up where the birds can be taken. The Amoco Cadiz's cargo of light crude oil is said to be assimilated, the birds in the granite rocks was determined. Current work by ornithologists and conservationists brought the colony back to life and made it a home for about 30,000 birds of 12 species, including guillemots and gulls.

The plankton is eaten by fish, which are in turn eaten by sea birds and thus the entire food chain on the coast has been disrupted. In addition the oil has come into the sea at the beginning of the breeding season. Against all this is the cash compensation which could be available. The French Government is to give 20 million francs, particularly for the fishing industry, and there is the prospect of as much as 130 million from the tanker owners' liability.

But already in Brittany they are saying "It is not enough: how much does it cost to be out of work for 10 years? And what price can you put on wildlife and that which lives in our seas?"

Guardian Labour Correspondent, KEITH HARPER, bids Jack Jones farewell
The House that Jack built



JAMES LARKIN JONES actually retires tomorrow and that is final. As it happens, many people think he has already stepped down from the leadership of the TGWU. Several newspaper reports mistakenly referred to him as "retired" when he popped round to Buckingham Palace for half an hour recently to get his C.B. from the Queen. This confusion of numbers must have been fuelled by the impressive Festival Hall extravaganza last month when the union threw a huge party centred on Jack Jones's departure and, oh yes, to welcome Moss Evans, the new man. TGWU followers, however, knew full well that their leaders invariably go on to their sixty-fifth birthdays, and have to be pushed.

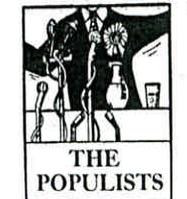
So it will be tomorrow evening at 3 o'clock or thereabouts that Jack Jones will formally hand the keys of the union to Moss Evans and go back to his council flat in South-east London, thus joining the ranks of the oldest pensioners for whom he has so energetically fought. His diary is being kept a close secret by his devoted personal secretary, Vera. All we are allowed to know is that Jack is residing in situ at Transport House throughout the day while a long procession of old friends and colleagues come to bid him a fond farewell. It is only when the door of Transport House closes for the last time on Jack Jones that Moss Evans will know he is his own man at last. He has been under Jack's shadow ever since he was elected.

TGWU leaders are powerful people. Arthur Deakin and Frank Cousins, Jones's immediate predecessors, held their influence on the union firmly. Jack has done the same. His remarks, however mild, are sufficient to get him reported by the media. That cannot necessarily be said for all politicians, football managers, film stars, and other people in public life. Several years ago, for instance, Jones managed to get the press and television to turn up for an interview. A Southampton shop steward who had been offered an unusually coarse and worthy but hardly riveting staff, yet Jones made excellent use of the occasion by afterwards providing the assembled journalists with his latest thoughts on the current political situation.

He does speak with the authority of nearly one-fifth of the total trade union movement. To that extent, even a gross incompetence would be a national scandal. But Jones has done more than simply act as the mouthpiece of the union. He has shown the way to the position and the access it gives to great effect, although it has not been entirely. Despite all the claims for democracy which are made for the TGWU, it has run it for the past nine years as an autocrat.

Of all union leaders in this country, the person who could trouble the TGWU could wield tremendous influence and Jones has been no exception. The 10 pay policy is often quoted but it bears repeating. Jones saw the need for a radical change in the TGWU document, seized on its potential and did advantage of it in his own way. He used the name of the TGWU to convince the members of the trade union movement of its legitimacy.

While Jones has been at the centre of the TGWU stage a Labour Government has introduced a union as he was able to lead. The story of how, more by luck than by judgement, the unions have united to defeat the legislation has never been properly recorded. Jones's part in the story was illuminating. Unlike Hugh Scanlon, whose union brought about the crucial collapse of the Act, the TGWU paid the fines it was ordered to by the National Industrial Relations Court. Registration, the method by which the unions were supposed to acknowledge the Act, was the stigma and centrepiece of the legislation and Jones insisted that, if the TGWU's position in the Labour market was ever threatened by the registration of another union, then it would have to know one as well. Fortunately, the situation never arrived but the £10,000 cheque collected for him by the union was a typical gesture. He genuinely felt that he is a servant of the union, but he has been the servant who has decided the main dishes and what furniture should be used to decorate the house. His wife Evelyn has been a source of political strength evoking his thoughts and providing many of his own. Evelyn's blue stocking Jack does the "free society". It was how one of the TGWU's most successful partnerships the other day. His departure leaves a considerable vacuum in the trade union movement but probably



The chairwoman says: 'And now, I give you Doctor Boyson—if he'd only stop chattering for a minute.' David Leigh examines the second populist politician in our series, Rhodes Boyson (right)

POPULISTS like Rhodes Boyson can be fun. Throwing steak and liebfraumich on the train heading north, he seizes delighted on the printed apology card in the restaurant car. It explains that "acute operational difficulties" ensure only a limited menu is on offer, thoughtfully listed on the back. In no time, he is elaborating a theory by which restaurant cars could be franchised off to the stewards, who would ensure them, at least, they gave people what they wanted. This is part of his version of the free society, along with education and welfare vouchers, wholesale denationalisation and a copy of Milton Friedman by every bedside.

This boundless, bouncy phrase-making continues through the weekend in Pudding and in Pontefract. Boyson believes, and presumably Mrs Thatcher with him, that these appeals to the "instincts of the people" in his self-confident broad language, offer a unique chance for the Tories to make it where they have always been weakest among the working-class of the North and Midlands. By the time we get to Pontefract, visions of some latter-day Mussolini whipping up the populace, have begun to recede. These North of England Tories are too grubby, insufficiently deferential ever to be taken seriously.

They abuse him in Pudding: "Doctor Boyson is a man of guts and strength. We need more of them by the party," Boyson says. "I'll start breeding right away." A young Tory with a residual boukhalite conscience asks whether his complaints about aid to Mozambique do not conflict with his neutral stance over South Africa. Boyson says briskly: "No, Mozambique is Marxist and would be allied to South Africa. I am not committing suicide for principles 10,000 miles away."

By the time we get to Pontefract, visions of some latter-day Mussolini whipping up the populace, have begun to recede. These North of England Tories are too grubby, insufficiently deferential ever to be taken seriously. The task of a politician is to

then so it is if they believe immigration is a threat, then so it is. "Man is still tribal," he tells his audience. "He still likes a way of life with a dominant culture." To a low groan of approval, he goes on: "Margaret Thatcher was right to talk about immigration."

He rapidly qualifies it: "We must allow political and religious refugees in"; his Brent constituency and Norman, he has a great many Jews, and Boyson makes something him a great approval, he goes on. Then back to the great theme: "It is to the instincts of the people that we must look. Socialism is reversible. He fetches out another topical metaphor of the right-wing economist Hayek, that Conservatism should be

behalf of the little man. But he is a romantic. He has something of the delight of the self-made, self-educated man in finding he can handle him. "The free society," he says over and over again as if to himself. Evelyn looks slightly like the Mayor of Trowbridge in his deliberately chosen make-up. He plans to buy a Victorian travelling case for his many thousands of money than they could at home. Then he will tell another audience that income policy will be the real

Pg. 13 wed. May 10, 1978

DIAL TORGERSON explains the strategic role of the FIS

G025

Sense of emergency, respect, sincerity

rate of tax has added one of £21 billion to the economic outlook which is manufacturing industry does not think they will boost output.

Chancellor's Budget tax cuts due to be paid shortly, yet not think they will boost output.

workers cannot always be Healey's options are circumscribed.

does not exceed a ceiling of financial year in the current year.

terry response to the budget is that Mr. Healey decides that he cannot stand aside and do nothing then he must recoup the lost tax revenue in another way.

ten in an A.A. would not apply to exports but would also be applied to imports - though the CBI admits it would add to the price index at a time when a rise in import costs is already threatening a fresh autumn of inflation in the autumn.

At the same time, it is flexibility and provides the spectre of a large Tory-induced backslide in the price index at a time when an October election might take place. It remains to be seen whether this position will be preferred by the Conservatives - or whether the departure from monetary purism implied by forcing tax cuts which could government reboumds on them, adds up to an elaborate can of pre-electoral poison with Mr Healey to make the next

SIX WEEKS after one of the world's biggest tankers, the Amoco Cadiz, ran on to the rocks off the coast of Brittany, could oil washing 200 miles along their coastline the people of Brittany are on their feet to clean up the mess.

Philip Jordan learns that pollution is not the only hazard facing the French tourist areas affected by the Amoco Cadiz disaster.

Britains fight on the beaches

Open says 15 per cent of Britons are furious not only with the environmental oil spill but with the Government's efforts to clean up the mess.

ment restrictions on clean-up operations are back, still oil wash. At every change of tide the oil washes back in again.

Some trees had time to be cut away from the top end of the beach before the oil tankers' two anchors was out. They will be spreading it, but soon they will be hoping to see the beach in the hope

much out of consultants that the fishing would be improved.

the French have done well. As many as 10,000 people, including children, are expected to be on the beaches and the rocks in time for the summer holiday season.

water itself appears different. But the standards remain the same and there is oil seeping up from the rocks.

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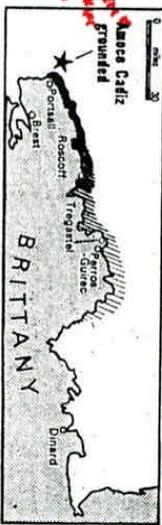
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THE GUARDIAN

Wednesday, June 21 1978

Inter. source. theme's Captains' dispute

Amoco Cadiz had hit reef by time salvage dispute was settled

Tanker captains' row lost vital hours

By David Fairhall, Shipping Correspondent. As the crippled tanker Amoco Cadiz drifted off Brittany, one-and-a-half vital hours were lost while her captain argued about the salvage...

Handwritten notes: 1645 It was assumed that the tug had stopped pulling. Tug requested Lloyd's open agreement... 1555 Open agreement proposed by Chicago tug refused to be confirmed by telegram... 1615 Tug pulled started tug was not waiting at time...

An extract from the log of a safety consultant on the bridge of the Amoco Cadiz. The figures on the left show the times of entries—from the request for an open Lloyd's contract to the breaking of the tow rope 1hr. 40min later...

The Pacific's second attempt to set up a tow produced a further argument between the two captains, but this time of a technical nature. Captain Bardari maintained yesterday that he wanted the second tow made fast to the tanker's bow...

Thatcher criticism mounts

From Anne Mellardy in Belfast. The Conservative Party Leader, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, said yesterday she still envisaged all-party agreement to any political development in Northern Ireland...



The widow of PC Hugh McConnell being comforted at his funeral in Bessbrook. The Northern Ireland chief constable, Sir Kenneth Newman, chose yesterday to praise Mrs Margaret Turbitt, the widow of the man ambushed with PC McConnell, for "her humanity and generosity" in pleading for the release of a Catholic priest held in retaliation for her husband's abduction.

Army's shooting show scuppered

Continued from page one. The army would reduce the programme for yesterday and tomorrow, with no practice firing today in order to accommodate them. "We feel this was generous because it established something of a precedent..."

Woman hired to have a child

Continued from page one. "That is an eventuality that I only contemplate in the most exceptional change of circumstances," he said. In law, he said, nobody had any rights to the child. He declared the agreement with Miss C void...

Builders toe pay line

Building workers yesterday would split the unions and accepted a pay deal of just under 10 per cent, so keeping in line with the Government's policy. The threat of industrial trouble receded when the Transport and General Workers' Union, which had previously rejected the offer...

#10 - Disproportionately Large Breaking Story Photo, Headline

Dow Jones: 768.71
up 5.89
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Washington's largest newspaper

90 Pages
Friday, March 17, 1978
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MARCH 17, 1978
5001

Smelt quit Cowlitz for Lewis — E 6

Norton to be champ at midnight — E 1

Mercer Island, Kent-Meridian prep winners — E 1

Giant tanker splits off France



The American supertanker Amoco Cadiz was on the rocks off the coast of France. — A.P. photo.

Compiled from news services

BREST, France — The American supertanker Amoco Cadiz, carrying 63 million gallons of oil, broke in two on rocks off the French coast today and was polluting beaches and fishing grounds with oil.

The wreck has the potential to be the worst tanker spill on record.

Even before the 233,000-ton ship broke up 3 miles offshore, leaking oil had reached more than a mile of coastline.

Authorities acted to save the lobster-rich coastline but navy ships loaded with chalk and detergent were unable to navigate between the supertanker and the shore until late today because of rocks.

This is the fourth time the Brittany coast has been polluted by a tanker spill since 1967 when the Torrey Canyon broke up 100 miles to the northwest.

Authorities said that the front section of the ship, listing sharply, was drifting toward the summer resort of Fortsall.

French navy helicopters rescued 42 of the 44 crewmen from the Liberian-registered tanker during the night. The last two men aboard, the master and mate, were rescued at dawn. Nobody was hurt.

The Amoco Cadiz, owned by the Chicago-based Standard Oil Co. of Indiana, was on lease to the Shell International Petroleum Co. of London. It was en route from the Middle East to Rotterdam.

The ship ran aground on the Porsall Rocks, 25 miles north of Brest, after the steering mechanism failed in a storm yesterday, authorities said. The West German tug Pacific, based in Brest, tried to keep the ship off the rocks but the tow line snapped.

The Amoco Cadiz broke just forward of its superstructure. Oil was seeping from the engine room and from one of its cargo compartments. However, the danger grew hourly that more compartments would break on the sharp reef and add to the spill.

Carter warns Russ, Cubans to use restraint

Associated Press and United Press International
WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — President Carter today couped a call for a strong defense program with a warning to the Soviet Union and Cuba that military restraint is a two-way street.

In his first major defense policy address since taking office, Mr. Carter said the United States stands ready to cooperate with the Russians on social, scientific and economic programs. Then he declared:

"But if they fail to demonstrate

restraint in missile programs and other force levels and in the projection of Soviet or proxy forces into other lands and continents, then popular support in the United States for such cooperation will erode."

Mr. Carter made no direct mention of Soviet and Cuban forces in Africa, but his meaning was clear. The Soviet Union today branded President Carter's defense policy as "alarming" and incompatible with his earlier expressions of peaceful aims.

In an unusually quick response, the official Tass news agency said

Mr. Carter's speech showed that he is moving from a policy of détente to one based on "threats and a buildup of tension."

As justification for increased United States defense spending, Mr. Carter referred to an "excessive Soviet buildup" in Europe and a modernization of expanding forces "beyond a level necessary for defense."

The President's statement, in a campus appearance at Wake Forest University, was the latest in a series suggesting a link between restraint by the Soviet Union, in particular, and progress toward

goals sought by Moscow.

Besides greater strategic arms, he said, the Russians also have built up "massive" nonnuclear forces which "could be used for political blackmail and could threaten our vital interests" unless the United States and its allies maintain their own conventional military strength.

As President Carter began to speak, a man, identified as Joe Felmet, shouted: "Human rights begin at home. Free the Wilmington 10" — a reference to a group convicted in North Carolina for fire-bombing a store. Mr. Carter

sent an aide to take a petition.

Mr. Carter made the address before boarding a nuclear aircraft carrier for a demonstration cruise off the Georgia coast, where he will spend the weekend.

The President said the view that the present defense budget is too burdensome was a myth.

St. Pat's 'spirits'

Dunphy's Irish rises to occasion

by STEPHEN H. DUNPHY
Business editor

This is a St. Patrick's Day story I've always wanted to do — in spirits, at least.

It's about Irish whiskey — specifically Dunphy's Irish Whiskey. In case you didn't notice the byline up there at the beginning of this piece, I have a certain affinity for Dunphy's Irish.

Today, many others will have an affinity for a wee drop of the Irish, albeit a one-day affair that will boost Irish-whiskey sales to heights that would test the blarney in an average Irishman.

"This place will be wild on Friday," said a bartender at Jake O'Shaughnessy's. "What do you think we're closing the next day



Panama Canal debate shifts to second pact

WASHINGTON — (AP) — Senate leaders are confident the ratification fight on the second Panama Canal treaty will be won more easily than the first. But opponents say the battle has just begun.

The Senate's 68-to-32 vote approving the neutrality treaty yesterday saved President Carter from a major political defeat.

"This was the most difficult vote I have cast in the Senate in my 20 years here," said Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd. "The pressure was intense. This was not popular vote back home."

Asked if the second pact would be ratified, Byrd said, "We have established good momentum."

But Senator Paul Laxalt, Nevada Republican, a major opponent of the pact, said earlier

will force enough senators to switch to block ratification.

Byrd said three or four senators who voted "No" would have voted "Yes" if their votes had been needed. "We had votes to spare," he said.

All 100 senators were on the floor for the vote. Standing at the rear of the chamber were about two-dozen members of the House of Representatives who will get their own chance to vote on the Panama issue later.

The House must approve legislation providing funds for the canal transfer, and there are some congressional leaders who believe Mr. Carter may face a bigger fight there than in the Senate.

(Panama reaction and the roll

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maritime

Navy pact to provide work for 300 at Todd

A \$20.9 million Navy contract to Todd Shipyards here is "signed and on the way," a Todd spokesman said today.

The contract was announced yesterday in Washington, D.C., by Senators Warren G. Magnuson and Henry M. Jackson.

"We're gearing up for it now," said Don Gilbride, Todd vice president and assistant general manager. Major overhauls on two destroyer escorts, the Marvin Shields and the Gray, will mean work for about 300 employees for 15 months, beginning in May.

The Shields will go into the yard May 1 and is due out March 16 of next year. The Gray is due in September 18 and out the following July 27, Gilbride said.

Both ships were built at Todd. The Gray was commissioned in 1970 and the Shields in 1971. The so-called "baseline overhauls" are

intended to extend the warships' lives for 15 to 20 years, Gilbride said.

Todd is "delighted," not only because of the size of the job, but because work on these two frigates could lead to more work, Gilbride said. There are more than 40 Knox Class destroyer escorts, a few of which will be overhauled each year.

"We anticipate about a dozen more may be available for work in West Coast yards in the future," he said.

Ranger is leaving empty apartments in its wake

BREMERTON — (AP) — When the aircraft carrier Ranger pulls out of town today after more than a year's overhaul, some of the saddest people in town will be the apartment owners.

"I have five people leaving the first of the month out of 30 apartments," Dan Cainan, an apartment-building owner, said.

"I know apartment owners are running ads because 20 percent of their units are leaving this month," he said.

Apartment owners have been given a temporary boost by the presence of the crews and families of both the Ranger and the carrier Coral Sea, which arrived on March 11 for overhaul.

About 2,700 crewmen and their families will be aboard the Ranger when it departs for San Diego.

Crewman killed fuel-barge explosion

DELAWARE CITY, Del. — (AP) — One man was killed and another is presumed dead, but officials say the toll might have been much higher in the explosion of a fuel barge at the Getty Oil Co. docks here.

The barge Interstate 19, with the tug Roanoke alongside, was taking on JP4 fuel, and was about half full, when the explosion and fire ripped across the loading dock yesterday. The barge had a capacity

Captain to go on trial for oil spill

Now a spill is worse!

BREST, France — (UPI) — The captain of the wrecked supertanker Amoco Cadiz is going on trial for polluting the sea with more than 24 million gallons of oil in the biggest oil spill in history.

A Brest court yesterday indicted Pasquale Bardari, 36, master of the American-owned vessel leased by a British firm, of polluting French waters. If convicted, he could be fined \$20,500 and sentenced to two years in prison.

The Amoco Cadiz, which ran aground off the North Brittany coast four days ago, has spilled out at least 100,000 tons — 29.3 million gallons — of crude oil that already has polluted miles of French fishing beds, tourist beaches and seaside farmland.

The mass of sludge has killed uncounted birds, oysters, fish and other wildlife and now appears to be drifting toward England.

The Center for Shoreland Phenomena in Boston said it was the biggest oil spill in history.

Crippled freighter due in B.C.

ANCHORAGE — (AP) — A water-logged Panamanian freighter carrying a shipload of wheat was expected to reach Prince Rupert, B.C., by noon tomorrow, a Coast Guard spokesman says.

The Coast Guard cutter Morgenthau reached the freighter Adriatic last night and began escorting the ship the 450 miles to port, a Coast Guard spokesman in Juneau said.

The China-bound freighter, carrying a crew of 24, called for help after its holds filled with water in the stormy Gulf of Alaska.

Coast Guard officials had feared that if the vessel's cargo of wheat got wet it "would expand and rupture the hull." But the Coast Guard said the water hadn't reached the wheat in the 646-foot vessel, which picked up its cargo in Prince Rupert.

The Coast Guard said the vessel

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we're building your bank for our free booklet, "Concrete About Your Bank."

Or better stop by the branch near you for your copy. We'd like to hear from

Because the more we know about what you want in your bank, the better we can build your bank.



5012

Sunday

maritime

Wires crossed on Amoco Cadiz

Most Times readers of maritime news were aware that the Amoco Cadiz tanker that hit rocks and caused the worst oil spill in European history was not American-flag.

But many of America's readers and television watchers were misinformed when the wire services kept calling her "American."

She was in no way an American tanker, except for the Chicago-based outfit that had controlling financial interest.

Even as recently as Friday, wire-service reports from the East Coast were calling her an American ship while editors who knew better struck the word and grinded their teeth in disgust.

A newsletter from the Transportation Institute states it well:

"Notwithstanding press reports that refer to this ship as the 'American vessel Amoco Cadiz,' this vessel is not American. It does not fly the American flag, is not manned by American workers, does not pay American taxes and is not required to incorporate American environmental and safety standards."

The Amoco Cadiz is a Liberian-registered vessel which happens to be American-owned.

"It is no more an American vessel than any other foreign-flag vessel."

GHASTLY CARGO: The remains of an American was found yesterday in a cargo container of pulp rolls that arrived in Japan by ship from Oakland, the Associated Press reported.

The container arrived March 19 at Seattle's sister port of Kobe on the Japanese freighter, Queens Way Bridge, and was delivered to a plant at Aboshi, where the body was discovered.

Police said the victim had been dead about a month and may have suffocated. Extra clothes and food near the body indicated he may have been a stowaway.

Found on the body was a San Francisco driver's license issued



by **Glen Carter**
Maritime Editor

to Thomas Harold Smith, 21, the report said.

A COUPLE of sea captains we know were into sports in their younger years. They're two of the Soriano brothers, Rupe and Dewey - captains nowadays.

Dewey, as sports readers know, was at the helm of the Seattle baseball Pilots some years ago until the franchise was sold. Now he's president of the Puget Sound (Vassel) Pilots Association.

Rupe, the business agent of the offshore Masters, Mates & Pilots, once hawked Coney Island-Red Hots, soda and ice cream as a younger man in Sicks Stadium. All of which is described in a vignette, "And Other Baseball Recollections," by Vince O'Keefe, in today's Times Magazine.

BOATERS USING Citizens-Band radios are assured by the Coast Guard of a Channel 9 distress frequency beginning in early May.

Coast Guard shore stations will monitor the channel at nine Washington State points: Bellingham, Seattle, Port Angeles, Neah Bay, Quillayute River, Willapa Bay, Gray's Harbor, Cape Disappointment and Kennewick.

Eight shore stations will be monitored in Oregon: Astoria, Tillamook, Depoe Bay, Yaquina Bay, Siuslaw River, Umpqua River, Coos Bay and Chetco River.

But the Coast Guard still recommends Very High Frequency (V.H.F.) equipment as more dependable than the low-power, short-range C-B. equipment.

A FLEA MARKET is set for next Saturday at Fishermen's Terminal, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., in the area used for net tending. This is the time-of-year fishermen-clear-out lockers and boats for the season ahead. It's an all-fishermen's affair (gillnetters, trollers, longliners, crabbers, seiners, etc.), but it ought to be fun to watch for browsers. An auction-type market, we're told.

SIXTY-ONE YEARS ago 500 Navy militiamen, mostly from the Pacific Northwest, joined 700 regulars aboard the U.S.S. South Dakota, a cruiser, and prepared to depart Bremerton to go to war in the Atlantic.

On April 12, they finally sailed for the Panama Canal and headed for the Atlantic Patrol.

Each year since then, those former militiamen have held reunions to retell yarns. They'll do it again next Saturday, this time in the Mallory Hotel in Portland.

C. Hinman Harris of Seattle will be among them again as the

Newark and operated by Sea-Land.

I mentioned that she had been built as a troop transport in 1946, named the General H.B. Freeman. Several persons have written or phoned to say they had known the ship one way or another when she was working for the military.

One was Mrs. Vernon Draper, of Zenith, who wrote:

"My family and I often wondered what became of the ship. My three children and I were among dependents destined for Kodiak and other parts of Alaska who were aboard the Freeman in July, 1953.

"We were berthed below several decks. Accommodations were pleasant for the many children aboard. A playground for the little

ones was provided, and movies were shown for all two-or-three times a day. The food was excellent. We were Civil Service dependents, going to Kodiak. Thank you for your series of stories about the Freeman. Glad to oblige, Ma'am.

PHYSICIANS

The Medical Administration Resource Center Serving the U. S. Health Care System announces the Opening of its Physician Placement Bureau. The Objective of the Service: The placement of Physicians Entering Medical Practice or those working to relocate in Practice Settings Strong in Administration Organization and Physician Incentives. For further information contact: Medical Administration Resource Center Suite 2220 36 South State Street Salt Lake City, Utah 84111 Tel - 801-533-8675

shipping

VESSELS IN PORT
(Following the name of each vessel & its flag of registry, type, master's name, sailing date if scheduled, destination and agent.)

AKITSUSSIMA MARU - Japanese freighter, Everett, April 3, For East, Wms. Diamond.

ALASKA - Liberian freighter, Tacoma Star Waterway, Irvoy, Alaska Hydro. Train.

AMOCO BALTIMORE - Liberian tanker, Anacortes, April 24, Jabel Phoenix, Wms. Diamond/Teacsa.

ATLANTIC - Liberian freighter, Elliott Bay, April 10, Karen, Furrer.

BRIILLIANCY - Singapore tanker, Elliott Bay, Orient, Teacsa.

COURT LADY - Liberian freighter, Everett, Japan, International.

DILIGENCE - Japan freighter, Tacoma Star Waterway, April 3, For East, Olympe.

E. L. BARTLETT - United States passenger, Terminal 48, Irvoy, Alaska Marine Highway.

EASTERN PACIFIC - Liberian freighter, Tacoma Star Waterway, April 5, Japan, International.

ENIHE MARU - Japanese freighter, Olympia, Japan, Wms. Diamond.

ELISE - Liberian freighter, Port Angeles, April 4, Japan, General.

FRONTIER - Panama freighter, Port Angeles, April 3, Korea, Freighters.

GARDEN STAR - Liberian freighter, Everett, April 4, Japan, Olympe.

HOBBS-MUSKETEER - Northwest freighter, Everett, Mediterranean, Westcoast/Norton Line.

IVORY - Liberian freighter, Tacoma Star Waterway, April 3, Japan, International.

JAPAN WISTERIA - Japanese tanker, Port

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Narr. Details 5. biol. effects

Anger, frustration in Valdez

Residents, environmentalists criticize delays in cleanup; human error blamed for spill

by Bill Dietrich
Times staff reporter

VALDEZ, Alaska - Angry residents and environmentalists yesterday criticized delays in the cleanup of the 11.1 million-gallon oil spill here that has been blamed on human navigational error and could get worse.

The tanker Exxon Valdez remained punctured and crippled late yesterday on a reef in Prince William Sound as 240,000 barrels of crude oil spread through the intricate environment and workers got frustrated in attempts to off-load remaining oil.

The stricken tanker, as long as three football fields, is tilted at a slight angle about two miles from the nearest land.

As the sun set yesterday, airplanes spewed a dispersant agent on the oil in hopes of breaking it up, and oil skimmers were at work around the ship like waterbugs, trying to round up what they could. But the spill is so vast that the oil booms available could not begin to deal with the mess.

WHAT 'COULDN'T HAPPEN' DID

■ An Alaskan fisherman who fought against an oil port at Valdez said: "They told us it couldn't happen." Friday, his worst fears came true, and the biggest oil spill in U.S. history threatens one of Alaska's prime marine habitats. A.B.

Residents of this community are peppering oil company officials with questions after watching what seemed to them a slow and sometimes hapless effort to corral the oil before it harms wildlife and fisheries.

Among the most frustrated observers was Alaska's Gov. Steve Cowper, who called the cleanup efforts "slow and inadequate."

The spill already ranks as the worst oil spill in U.S. history, and

observers are bracing for its potentially devastating effects on the environment and a multimillion-dollar-fishing industry.

"It's a major disaster I consider as dangerous as the 1964 earthquake" that wiped out Valdez, said Stan Stephens, a tour boat operator in this spectacular, mountain-ringed fjord.

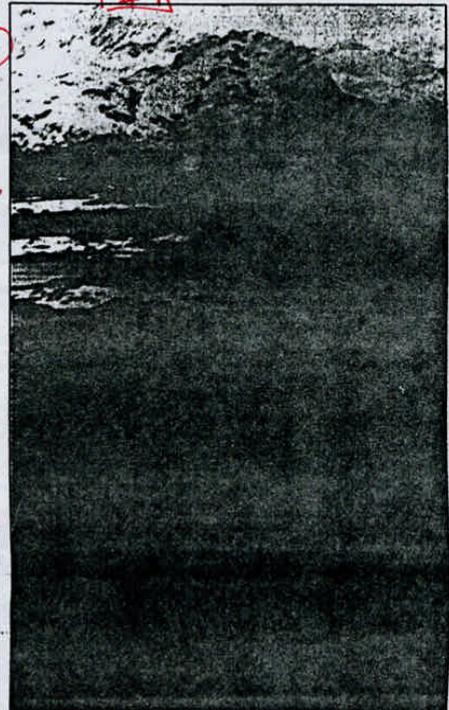
The spill struck on the 25th anniversary of Alaska's Good Friday earthquake.

"I'm so sick about it I couldn't sleep last night after 20 straight hours of work. The oil companies take \$13 billion out of our state and then don't have the equipment to clean up their mess."

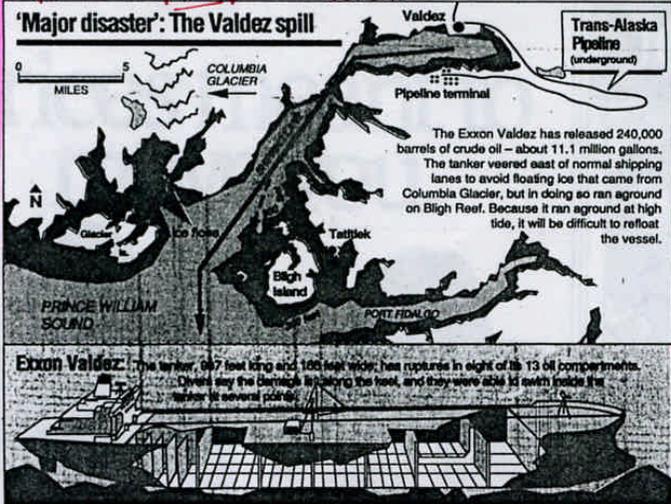
At a news conference, oil industry and Coast Guard spokesmen acknowledged several apparent errors contributing to the disaster:

■ The tanker's equipment was working perfectly when it strayed at least a mile and a half outside its approved shipping lane and crashed into a reef marked by a

Please see OIL on A 7



Crab Fuel / Seattle Times
A massive oil spill from the grounded tanker Exxon Valdez, left, is fouling the scenic splendor of the Prince William Sound area.



Worst oil spills

Here are five of the worst oil spills in U.S. history, according to Golob's Oil Pollution Bulletin, which has kept records since 1976.

- Nov. 1, 1979. Burmah Agate tanker, Galveston Bay, Texas; 10.7 million gallons of oil burned or spilled when two ships collided.
- Dec. 15, 1976. Argo Merchant tanker, off Massachusetts coast; 7.6 million gallons of crude spilled when the ship ran aground.
- Nov. 6, 1985. Exploratory well, Ranger, Texas; 6.3 million gallons of oil spilled after a blowout.
- Jan. 2, 1988. Ashland Oil Co. storage tank, Jefferson Borough, Pa.; 3.8 million gallons of oil spilled when a tank ruptured.
- July 30, 1984. Avenus tanker, Cameron, La.; 2.8 million gallons of oil spilled after a ship ran aground.

Associated Press

Three tell how it is when a criminal is hanged

Anger, frustration in Valdez

OIL

continued from Page 1

lighted buoy on a calm, clear night early Friday. "There is no excuse" for such an error, Stephens charged.

The Coast Guard administered blood alcohol tests to at least two crew members after the accident, Coast Guard Cmdr. Steve McCall confirmed.

Coast Guard Lt. Ed Wieliczkievicz said the blood was still being analyzed, but because the tests came hours after the tanker left Valdez, officials were unsure whether the tests would produce evidence they were seeking.

Although the Coast Guard gave verbal permission for the outbound tanker to shift to an inbound shipping lane to avoid ice from nearby Columbia Glacier, it did not monitor the vessel's course with available radar as the nearly 1,000-foot vessel ran even farther east up onto the reef, rupturing eight of 13 oil compartments. When Jack Lamb, representing Cordova District Fishermen United, asked why, McCall simply said such monitoring was not required by Coast Guard regulation.

There was insufficient oil spill cleanup equipment in Valdez Harbor despite the heavy tanker traffic from the terminus of the Alaska pipeline, and some of what was available had been removed from a barge damaged in a storm two weeks before and had not been replaced. That, coupled with the fact that Good Friday was an Alyeska Pipeline Co. holiday, meant it took 10 hours for the first cleanup crews to reach the tanker, said Chuck O'Donnell, Alyeska terminal manager.

"We simply don't have enough equipment to contain it," Governor Cowper said after touring the spill site. "No one does. You couldn't contain it with all the equipment in North America."

Because of the need to fly in equipment from around the globe, it took 34 hours to get the first oil boom around the tanker to contain leaking oil. At midday yesterday, 36 hours after the spill, 12,700 feet of additional boom had been placed at the leading edge of the spill.

"We recognize time is critical," said Frank Iarossi, president of Exxon Shipping Co., but he said equipment was still being gathered.

But Cowper and Valdez City Manager Doug Griffin used the same words to describe the oil spill response: "Slow and inadequate." "It's like using a BB gun on an elephant," Griffin said.

The accident occurred at high tide under a full moon, so there is little chance that higher tides will help lift the crippled tanker from the reef.

Wieliczkievicz said aerial test bombing of water with dispersants failed to produce any effect, partially because of calm seas, throwing into doubt Exxon plans for more aerial bombing of the spill.

The calm seas and light winds were keeping the slick, about 50 square miles, from immediately fouling most nearby shorelines. But the response time left many local fishermen livid.

"We should have been out there yesterday (Friday)," said Pat Day, a salmon purse seiner who offered his boat to lay oil boom but as of yesterday morning had yet to hear anything.

"They can't perform when it comes down to the nitty-gritty," said Tim Lopez, harbormaster of the city marina. "Some feel, like the rest of the community, that they could have done a hell of a lot better job a hell of a lot sooner."

"They say this was bound to happen someday," said Jim Lethecoe, who operates sailboat cruises for tourists. "So if it's going to happen, why not be better prepared? They just didn't want to spend any money."

Iarossi said Exxon will accept



A Coast Guard engineer holds a duck covered with oil from the slick created by the spill from the tanker Exxon Valdez.

full financial responsibility for the spill, including compensating fishermen for "legitimate claims" of damage caused by the oil.

Spill problems may be just beginning, Exxon brought its tank-er Exxon Baton Rouge alongside to begin removing some of the 1 million remaining barrels before they spill as well, but when pumping started yesterday morning, more oil began gushing into Prince William Sound.

Iarossi said that may mean

ity was to offload the remaining oil before it also leaks into the water; the second is to clean up oil already spilled; and the third is to investigate the cause of the accident.

The National Transportation Safety Board was expected to begin investigating the cause today.

The spill has temporarily closed the port at Valdez to both tankers and other vessels. As a result, the flow from the Alaska pipeline has been cut from 2 million barrels a day to 800,000 barrels, with the impact of that on oil markets or Alaska state revenues still unknown.

Valdez was crisscrossed with oil company officials, biologists, journalists and public officials.

British Columbia officials expressed concern that the oil might flow southward toward their province, and Fred Olsen, deputy director of Washington state's Department of Ecology, flew over the site and expressed similar concerns.

"We just want to keep an eye on it and if it has the potential to move south, we want to control it," Olsen said.

The oil has only spread a few miles southward, however, and is many miles from breaking into the open sea.

"I think we have a good chance of recovering large parts of the oil spilled at this time," said the Coast Guard's McCall.

Stephens reported seeing sea lions coated in oil from the spill, but the seriousness of biological damage was still unknown yesterday. It may take days, or even weeks, before it becomes apparent how much oil can be cleaned up and how much will wash ashore or kill marine life.

The massive spill posed an environmental nightmare for emergency cleanup crews, primarily because the scene is easily accessible only from the air and sea and Prince William Sound is a complex environment of pristine islands, channels, bays and icebergs.

After recent spills in Hawaii and off the coast of Washington, 1989 is becoming the "year of the

Tanker aground



The oil spill in Prince Sound is considered particularly hazardous because the area is surrounded by islands, oil is not likely to be washed to the open sea.

oil spill," said Kelly Quirk, ecology coordinator for peace in San Francisco, perceived as an energy co-ordinator just beginning to environmental costs.

The sound supports a birds and marine animal include whales, seals and porpoises.

"It's kind of like sailing a zoo," said Lethecoe, who a boat in the sound.

"There's a high concentration of sea otter, waterfowl, and pink salmon in that area," said Steve Goldstein, a spokesman for the Interior Department in Washington. "Some birds have died, and we are doing our best to save the fish by cleaning up the oil in the area where it is and by trying to kill marine life."

The herring fishery almost totaled, said Lt. Marina harbormaster. "I'm spending a lot of time about its ship and and about the oil spill. I know be doing if it was a fisherman get a lawyer. Somebody's pay."

Times staff reporter Iarossi, United Press International and Reuters contribute report.

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Valdez drowning in the oil that feeds it

by Bill Dietrich
Times staff reporter

VALDEZ, Alaska - For John Devens, mayor of this oil and fishing community of 3,600, the fact that the one oil tanker he has christened is the one that spilled 10.1 million gallons near his town is just one more bitter-sweet reminder of Valdez's love-hate relationship with Big Oil.

Property taxes on the tank farm and loading docks that mark the southern terminus of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline supply 94 percent of Valdez's revenues, and oil salaries contribute a major part of its economy.

But the threat of spills has hung over the community's biggest employers, fishing and tourism, since the Alaska pipeline was completed.

Devens recalled that last Thursday evening, Cordova biologist Rick Orr warned a Valdez City Council committee that it was not a question of if, but when a big oil spill would occur in Prince William Sound.

Three hours later, on the 25th Good Friday since the 1984 Good Friday earthquake that devastated this town, the supertanker Exxon Valdez went aground on the well-charted and marked Bligh Reef just 25 water miles from Valdez.

It was the same tanker Devens had helped christen three years before, taking pride in having his city's name on one of the newest, most sophisticated tankers in the world.

"We're pretty unhappy this has happened, but it is also a reality we knew could happen," said Devens, who is also president of Prince William Sound Community College.

On a typical day, two to three loaded oil tankers per day leave Valdez for the Lower 48. More than 6,000 tanker trips had been made before this disastrous grounding.

Valdez is at the head of a spectacular inlet into the ice-white Chugach Mountains. In winter, the town can get up to 200 inches of snow; in summer its population jumps to 6,000 and it receives 1,000 tourists a day.

Valdez itself takes its name from a one-time Spanish admiralty minister, but pronunciation has been changed by locals to Valdez for reasons no one can remember, Devens said.

The grounded tanker originally swerved off course to avoid drifting ice from nearby Columbia Glacier, a popular stop of cruise ships and ferry boats in the summertime.

Sprawling Prince William Sound itself is a cornucopia of wildlife, with rich fisheries, thousands of birds, an estimated 7,500 sea lions, 100 killer whales and hundreds of sea otters.

The oil terminal across Valdez Inlet from the town has three docks, a major tank farm, and nearly 300 employees.

Devens said concern was growing that Alyeska Pipeline Co., which runs the terminal, was ill-prepared for a major spill.

Small spills at the loading docks have roused concern about the slow polluting of Valdez Inlet. And cracks have begun appearing in older tankers repeatedly pounded by storms in the Gulf of Alaska after leaving Valdez.

Three years ago, Valdez earmarked a part of the property tax collected on the terminal for a fund to buy oil-spill cleanup equipment. But the state of Alaska

objected because some of the taxes so marked came from the state's share.

Accordingly, the \$16 million collected to date sits in a bank account while state and city wrangle about its legality. And when the spill hit, inadequate oil-company equipment was dwarfed by its 106-square-mile immensity.

"The lesson is, we need better preparedness," said Devens. "We can't count on flying things-in from England. We need a stockpile here in Valdez. We thought it was stockpiled."

The mood in Valdez is one of anger and disillusionment. Alyeska's emergency plan called for cleanup equipment to reach a 200,000-barrel spill from 1 1/2 to 5 hours after it occurs. Instead, the first response took more than 12 hours, and concerted cleanup efforts did not begin for more than two days, squandering unusually calm weather that made rapid oil recovery at least a theoretical possibility.

Why wasn't Valdez better prepared? "We asked the oil companies if

they were prepared," said Devens. "They assured us they were."

Yesterday, Devens flew in an Alyeska helicopter to view the rolling spill, with oil booms and cleanup craft called skimmers lost in its immensity like a gardener trying to mow a field with tweezers.

Devens concluded that complete cleanup was a remote hope. "I think there should have been more equipment," he said. But, he added, neither Valdez nor the world at large is going to give up oil.

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The Seattle Times

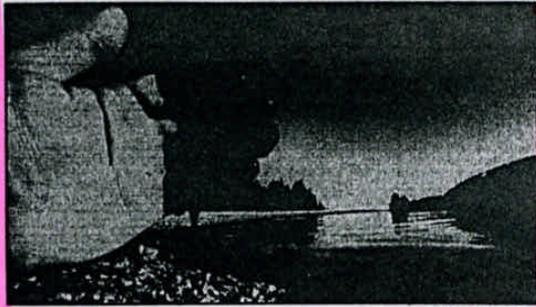
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Thick oil drips from the hand of a cleanup worker in Prince William Sound. Craig Fuku / Seattle Times

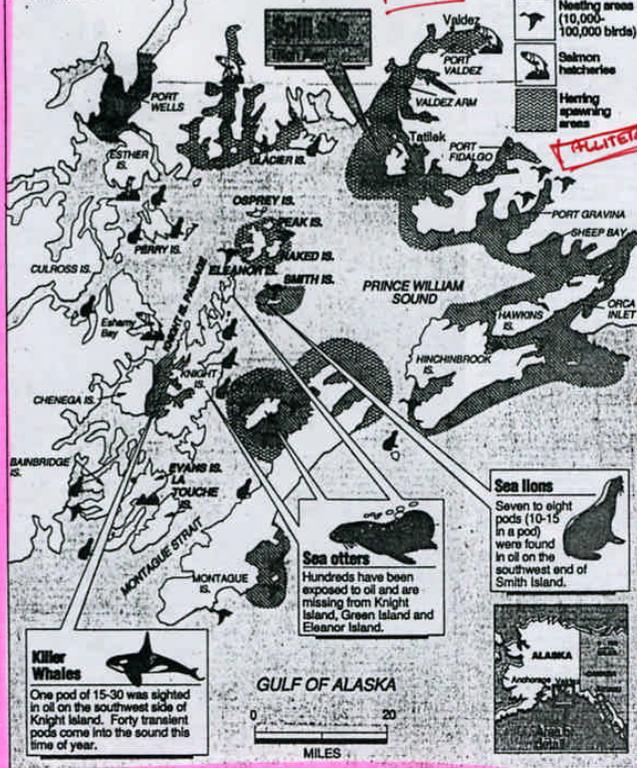
Oil spill: one week of frenzy

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Oil threatens fish, mammals, birds and plants

Spilled crude oil continues to spread south in Alaska's Prince William Sound, one of the world's richest environments for fish, sea mammals and birds. This map shows some of the areas most vulnerable to damage from oil.

Details of the oil's effects on animals, A 6.



#17

ALUTIAN

Best effort inadequate

by Bill Dietrich
Times staff reporter

VALDEZ, Alaska - Oil-industry experts and government officials say they have done their frantic best to cope with America's biggest oil spill. A week after the spill in Prince William Sound, it is clear their best has been woefully inadequate.

Of the 240,000 barrels - 10.1 million gallons - of crude oil spilled from the tanker Exxon Valdez early last Friday, fewer than 7,000 had been mopped up a week later.

Errors, hesitation and folly have illustrated how poorly prepared the petroleum industry is to respond to a super-spill in a scenic and sensitive environment.

The feebleness of the human cleanup is in odd contrast to the sudden bustle of Valdez, where cars jam a town with no streetlights, phone lines are jammed and planes lumber in with experts and supplies from around the world. Exxon Corp. has brought in 160 spill experts and managers, hired nearly 400 workers and flown in 37 cargo planes of equipment. The skies buzz with the company's 10 helicopters and four planes.

All this shore-side frenzy has produced little tangible effect at sea, with the spill running 50 miles across Prince William Sound to slap against a series of wilderness islands.

Exxon officials have conceded here that technology can't really cope with a spill of this magnitude. Environmentalists readily agree.

"We cannot afford to drill in sensitive areas," said

Please see MESS on A 6

Valdez spill spreads

Times news services

VALDEZ, Alaska - The captain of the oil tanker Exxon Valdez is out of a job today because a federal investigation showed he was legally drunk after his ship ran aground, causing the nation's biggest oil spill.



Capt. Joseph Hazelwood

The spill now stretches beyond Prince William Sound and threatens additional fishing communities and more of Alaska's scenic coastline - including Kenai Fjords National Park, southwest of the once-pristine sound.

Capt. Joseph Hazelwood was fired yesterday for violating company rules that ban alcohol on its ships. The Coast Guard has initiated proceedings to revoke his license.

Hazelwood's blood-alcohol level was 0.061 - 50 percent higher than the legal intoxication limit of 0.04 for operating a vessel, reported William Woody, investigator for the National Transportation Safety

Please see DRUNK on A 8

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Much frenzy, few results



Fisherman in Cordova, a fishing village of 2,000 in Prince William Sound, listened to officials from Exxon, Alyeska and the Coast Guard explain the accident that caused the oil spill.

MESS

continued from Page 1

Karen Jeffries, Alaska representative of the Wilderness Society, "is anxious" of preparation can alienate human error.

Exxon, conceding early that an oiled trail of seven skimmers and four miles of boom was inadequate in the task, chose to employ two relatively untried and controversial technologies: burning and chemical dispersants.

Neither has made a significant dent, despite unusually favorable weather, because of delays in their use. The oil has now emulsified enough so that neither is very effective.

But behind the physical dimensions of this calamity are a series of human errors and miscalculations with no excuse. Consider:

Exxon has yet to explain why the skipper of its largest and newest tanker was Capt. Joe Hazelwood, who had three drunken-driving convictions in his home state of New York. Hazelwood, who has since been fired, Exxon had a 100,000-second record of 101 when measured nine hours after the ship rammed Bigfoe Reef, according to National Transportation Safety Board investigators.

While a Coast Guard warrant officer says he smelled alcohol on Hazelwood's breath two hours after the accident, the Coast Guard did not test Hazelwood and two crew members for seven more hours - by which time much of the alcohol would have dissipated. Availability was not a problem: An alcohol testing kit was on board to help enforce both government and company regulations against drinking on oil tankers.

Hazelwood turned over command of his tanker to Third Mate Greg Cousins eight miles north of Bigfoe Reef and retired to his cabin - even though Cousins didn't have the pilot's certificate required by the Coast Guard to master a ship through those waters. The tanker subsequently ran up onto the reef.

The contingency plan prepared by Alaska Pipeline Service Co. for a 200,000-barrel oil spill states: "It is highly unlikely a spill of this magnitude would occur (because) tankers calling on Port Valdez are of American registry and 99% of those are visited by licensed masters or pilots."

Alyeska is a consortium of eight oil companies. It operates the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and is responsible for emergency response to spills near Valdez.

The Coast Guard gave permission for the outbound Exxon Valdez to shift to an inbound shipping lane to avoid ice floes but then failed to use radar to discover the tanker was steering 20 degrees off the approved course before striking into the reef. The Coast Guard is now saying a newer, weaker radar station installed at Potomac Point in 1984 does not have the range to pick up a supertanker past Bushy Island, a dozen miles away. Local fishermen have risen at press conferences to challenge this.

Most oil tankers first began leaving Valdez in 1977, local pilots accompanied them not just to Rocky Point 15 miles down the inlet as is done today, but all the way to Hitchcock Entrance at the edge of Prince William Sound, more than 80 miles. The practice was stopped in the early 1980s.



All of the beaches on Eleanor Island have the heavy covering of oil that cleanup experts call "chocolate mousse."

Coast Guard Cmdr Steve McCall said he doesn't know why the change was made before he came to his Valdez job.

The Exxon Valdez, just 2 1/2 years old and one of the two biggest ships in the company fleet, was built with only a single instead of a double hull, despite the fact it traveled some of the most environmentally sensitive areas in the world.

Asked why Exxon Shipping Co. President George W. Mitchell said only "We need an assessment to see if a double hull would have made a difference."

The oil-spill contingency plan lists 13 oil skimmers as the equipment to be stockpiled to cope with a big spill, but only seven were on hand, according to Charles O'Donnell, the terminal superintendent for Alyeska.

The plan also called for 22,000 feet of boom to corral spilled oil.

ther the dispersant or the C-130 cargo planes needed to deliver boom and then set afire. The first test burn was limited near the beach, and the second, without warning, frightened the inhabitants and chased them away.

When initial results seemed encouraging, however, and permission to use burning was approved, a high wind that night disrupted the operation. By the time an attempt was resumed Tuesday, the oil had coagulated enough that it would not burn.

The contingency plan states that "private commercial vessels from the Valdez small-boat harbor would be employed to assist boating and logistical support." The lack of transport to the remote spill response took so long. The Coast Guard had closed the marina, and fishermen's offers to employ their boats were mostly ignored for the first three days after the spill.

Cordova fishermen finally organized their own flotilla to try to attack the spill.

Of immediate importance was draining the remaining 1 million barrels of crude oil from the grounded tanker so that a ship would not spill that into the water as well. But when attempts showed internal tanker piping was apparently ruptured, Exxon was forced to bring in portable and mountable pumps.

These pumps were not stockpiled in Valdez, and the need to fly them in meant the transfer of oil to a new tanker was a trickle until Tuesday.

In some Exxon and the Coast Guard's first 100 days of the spill, the lack of necessary equipment and second by high winds Sunday night and Monday. In that period, the opportunity to possibly corral the spilled oil by deep, open waters around the ship were lost. The simple act of putting an oil boom around the ship took three days.

In response to this record, Alaska state officials have been chastising Exxon's performance inexcusable and initiating a criminal investigation into the grounding itself.

The company's record is not all bad. It immediately accepted full financial responsibility for the spill and cleanup, promised to reimburse fishermen for any lost income and mounted a frantic effort to airlift people and equipment in.

Officials wanted for tests to be completed, delaying approval until Sunday - too late to use them before high winds drove the oil into the surrounding islands.

The contingency plan states: "It becomes very apparent how important it is to have dispersants approved so they can be used very effectively to prevent the continuing input of oil into the small bays and shorelines in Prince William Sound."

Even if approval had been obtained immediately, however, nei-

Endangered animals

The oil spill has a variety of effects on the marine life and plants of Prince William Sound.

Whales and dolphins
Sea otters are present in great numbers in the sound and can be found at any time of the year. They are sensitive to oil spills and may be especially vulnerable to oil spills and may be especially vulnerable to oil spills and may be especially vulnerable to oil spills.

Seals and sea lions
Green Sturgeon and Puget Sound Chinook salmon are the most important species of which head counts are kept. They are also important to the commercial fishery.

Sea otters
Sea otters are present in great numbers in the sound and can be found at any time of the year. They are sensitive to oil spills and may be especially vulnerable to oil spills and may be especially vulnerable to oil spills.

Seabirds
Common Murrelets, Marbled Murrelets, murres and puffins are the most important species of which head counts are kept. They are also important to the commercial fishery.

Shorebirds
Marbled Murrelets, murres and puffins are the most important species of which head counts are kept. They are also important to the commercial fishery.

Waterfowl
Common Murrelets, Marbled Murrelets, murres and puffins are the most important species of which head counts are kept. They are also important to the commercial fishery.

Bald eagle
The peak of the spawning season for Bald Eagles is usually about the second week in April, when the fish have been spawned and are in the water. Oil in the water can be deadly to the young.

Herring
The peak of the spawning season for Herring is usually about the second week in April, when the fish have been spawned and are in the water. Oil in the water can be deadly to the young.

Salmon
About every five and a half years, the salmon population of the sound is reduced by a factor of two. This is due to the fact that the sound is a semi-enclosed body of water.

Habitats
The sound is a semi-enclosed body of water and is home to a variety of marine life. The oil spill has had a significant impact on these habitats.

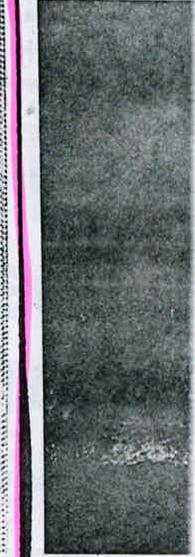
Recouping
The sound is a semi-enclosed body of water and is home to a variety of marine life. The oil spill has had a significant impact on these habitats.

Oil spill
The oil spill has had a significant impact on the marine life and plants of Prince William Sound.

Exxon
Exxon is the company responsible for the oil spill. It has been criticized for its handling of the spill.

Alaska Pipeline Service Co.
The Alaska Pipeline Service Co. is the company responsible for the oil spill. It has been criticized for its handling of the spill.

Coast Guard
The Coast Guard is the agency responsible for the oil spill. It has been criticized for its handling of the spill.



The listing Exxon Valdez is visible

Clean Experts say turned down of equipm

by Eric Nelder Times staff reporter

A weary crew of skimming machines and equipment to Alaska has declined and even ignored offers for some of the equipment that could have blunted the impact of the spill on the environment, according to officials with oil-spill cleanup contractors in Seattle and Vancouver, B.C.

Exxon Corp. the giant oil company that accepted responsibility for the spill near Valdez, has declined and even ignored offers for some of the equipment that could have blunted the impact of the spill on the environment, according to officials with oil-spill cleanup contractors in Seattle and Vancouver, B.C.

Exxon officials counter that it is time necessary to ship the skimmers and equipment to Alaska has rendered their use impractical. They say moving the equipment to Alaska would have other areas of the coast vulnerable to spills.

But Leitch, vice president of Seattle company that builds oil skimming boats, compared oil-fighting tactics to the technique used by firefighters. In his view, firefighters do it better. He said his fire department sends more than enough equipment to a fire incident, and then it sends back what isn't needed.

SOB Another doubt, scrutiny on inept handling of spill

Times = very analytical = prov, fact to consider, then presents researched details to reader.

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THE VALDEZ DISASTER

Tough lesson: 'To prepare for the worst'

* Lead
* (7-1)
* *

by Ross Anderson
Times staff reporter

CORDOVA, Alaska - "Sea otters have to be approached very quietly," Kelly Weatherling advises his motley crew of volunteers.

"Pick them up by the tail and watch out for the front claws. They'll hiss at you. Get them into the cage as quickly as you can. They'll settle down."

Weatherling, clearly exhausted after four days on the oil-soaked shores of Prince William Sound, is planted in the middle of a small circle of fishermen, seated on folding chairs at the storefront office of the local fishermen's association.

The former graphic artist, veteran kayaker and outdoorsman speaks softly, but with authority.

"I run a bookstore," he says. "What I know about animal rescue I've learned in the last four days. Now I'm supposed to be an expert."

There are no real experts at dealing with the consequences of the nation's worst oil spill. So it is up to Weatherling to instruct new volunteers.

'It's horrible out there - more horrible than you think... You're stepping into oil up to your ankles, picking up birds that are so coated with oil you can't distinguish them from the rocks.'

Volunteer Kelly Weatherling



An oil-soaked murre struggles on the beach of Green Island in Prince William Sound.

Clay Fapp / Seattle Times

There are lessons to be learned about the curious tools used to collect and treat oil-soaked wildlife. Across one wall are stacked thousands of absorbent, diaperlike pads for cleaning animals, folded cardboard boxes and more specialized equipment.

The Exxon Corp. has instructed the cleanup crews to put all the equipment on the company's tab. But the huge corporation has little or no advice about what to do with the stuff.

Technique, Weatherling says, comes only with experience. And what works for one creature may not work for the next.

The toughest lessons, he says, may be emotional.

"Prepare yourself for the worst," he warns. "It's horrible out there - more horrible than you think. You're walking rough, rocky beaches. You're stepping into oil up to your ankles, picking up birds that are so coated with oil you can't distinguish them from the rocks."

He points toward a cardboard box containing the blackened carcasses of two or three birds - it's tough to tell amid the blackened mass.

"It's one of the most stressful things I've ever done," he said. "And it's one of the best."

The wildlife-rescue effort on Prince William Sound is a makeshift affair, staffed by volunteers coping with seemingly impossible obstacles - hundreds of miles of remote, rocky shorelines that 10 days ago were some of the most idyllic in Alaska.

several years, he and his wife spent their summers kayaking the complex archipelago of Prince William Sound.

"I didn't move here by accident," he says. "I've paddled all over Alaska, and I came to what I found to be the most beautiful area. We thought we were safe here - no road, no heavy tourism. Nobody's going to find us."

"Except we always had this fear of the tankers."

Now he finds himself earning \$300 a day, promised by Exxon, to revisit those shores, newly saturated with oil from the Exxon Valdez.

The process, he says, is not simple. Despite Exxon's promise of dollars, rescuers are working on their own, eight hours or more by boat from the closest towns of Valdez and Cordova.

"But nobody is better equipped for this than you guys," Weatherling tells the fishermen. "You know these waters; you know how to take care of yourselves and your gear."

Teams are dispatched in small fleets, several boats to a fleet, assigned to portions of beach.

When rescuers find live birds, they are instructed to wrap them in the absorbent pads, try to feed them a little of a glucose-like fluid, then place them in boxes.

From there they are taken by skiff to waiting purse-seine boats offshore, then to higher-speed boats that transfer them to a specialized animal clinic set up in Valdez.

"There's no way you can clean them yourselves. You've got to transfer them to Valdez, where they have lots and lots of hot water and people who have done this

before" → **Amok - in the (S.T.) beach**

What is the mortality rate? a fisherman asks.

"Not too bad, if you work fast," says Gary Lehman, a Canadian volunteer who learned his skills on the beaches of Vancouver Island after the major spill off Washing-

ton's coast in January. "They die of hypothermia or of the effects of ingesting the oil."

How do we communicate?

"Don't depend on the radio," Weatherling says. "It's total chaos out there - everybody cutting in on everybody else. The only solution is to stay together, solve your own problems, make your own solutions."

What if the weather turns on us?

"Lie low. As long as the weather stays good, we're working on the heavy weather side of Knight

Island and Green Island... When it turns on us, we'll move to the other side."

What if we have questions?

"You're on your own," he says. "I've told you what I know. We're winging it. And we're doing better because of it."

→ **NATURE VS. HUMANITY**

→ **EXXON**

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→ **Exxon... broken promise; assistant... unconcerned**

→ **Tells story through Weatherling's words - prim. quotes**

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 3. **Enlist others in the "War on Obesity."** Talk to your family, friends, and neighbors about this important national problem and join the thousands of Americans who will observe National Weight Loss Month during April.
 4. **Call for a national health policy on**

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National Weight Loss Month

The 1,100 Nutri/System Weight Loss Centers salute these efforts to inform the American public of the dangers of obesity. And we applaud the 43 million adults waging their own personal "War on Obesity" by actively attempting to lose weight and control their weight.

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Pg. B1

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oil spill life cycle

Thursday April 06, 1989

Thursday, April 6, 1989 The Seattle Times B 1

THE VALDEZ DISASTER

Nature may help to mitigate spill

Oil is already breaking up, breaking down

By Bill Dietrich
Times staff reporter

What humans have so far failed to do, nature is beginning to do.

Even as the animal death toll mounts from the 11 million gallons of oil spilled in Alaska's Prince William Sound, the natural breakdown and cleanup of the goo has started.

As a result, scientists give a mixed picture of just how disastrous the wreck of the Exxon Valdez will prove.

Rocky shores, cold water, bad weather and an abundance of marine life in the sound make the spill a nightmare for clean and restorer.

The water's five fish hatcheries, for example, are scheduled to release 60 million young salmon this year. The waters are also home to endangered species such as sea otters, which freeze to death when oil destroys the insulating ability of their fur.

Yet more than a third of the spilled oil, including some of its most toxic chemicals, is believed to have already evaporated, dispersed or been eaten by bacteria.

The tar balls and penicakes that

Immediate lethal effects," said Bruce Topp, a researcher at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts. "It will persist for decades, but months or years."

Others confess uncertainty. "The oil is going to be there when the young salmon begin emerging from the ground and out-migrate," said Maria Kowalski, a habitat biologist for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Some will surely die, but "whether the rate will be severely depressed we can't say. For the long-term effect, no one knows. This is a laboratory situation."

How critical the oil spill is depends on the criteria. Examples: ■ Any animals dependent on the water surface are likely to be hard-hit, with sea birds and otters

the most likely and viable victims. Marine mammals with fat to keep them warm are more likely to survive.

"Marine mammals will get away if they can," said NOAA's Kowalski. "They won't be in the oil unless trapped. Marine birds are another story. They're too stupid to stay away. They are the helpless victims."

Scientists are worried about otters not only because of their vulnerability, but also because populations of higher animals such as mammals, with their slower reproductive rates, take longer to recover.

Animals in the intertidal zone, such as crabs, oysters, mussels, limpets and worms, will be hard-hit, but will come where they can be policed by the toxic

properties of the oil or they can smother. But many mollusks can absorb and excrete a certain amount of oil and survive, and some such as mussels and clams survive for several days in hope currents and waves will push the oil on. Once the oil dries and clumps, the zone will be repoliced - but it will probably take a decade to fully recover, said Kowalski.

Also in danger are animals, such as bald eagles, that feed on carcasses. As they eat oiled fish, they may themselves be killed. Unknown is whether bears will avoid oiled food.

Salmon fry are sensitive to oil and feed near the surface, but they may be protected by the toxic



A floatplane waits to leave an oily beach in Prince William Sound.

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#18 (pg. 2) – Mention Plankton, Food Chain

refinery activity at all," Libbey said.

Exxon in Houston said it could not immediately provide information on whether it has a similar

Oil begins breakdown

DAMAGE

continued from B 1

where oil concentrations are thickest. They are expected to be devastated.

■ Adult fish, in contrast, are not expected to be hard-hit. While their flesh could be tainted, particularly by oily nets, "I would be surprised if there was a major kill of adult fish," said Keister. The oil is simply not concentrated enough in the water to be lethal, he explained.

■ Plankton, tiny creatures at the base of the marine food chain, eat oil droplets because they are the same size as their food. Some is excreted and some absorbed, with the plankton in turn consumed by larger creatures. Riki Ott, a Cordova fisherman with a doctorate from the University of Washington in marine science and oil spills, said the oil can affect reproduction of the tiny creatures. It can also impair reproduction of crabs and shrimp, she said.

On a positive note, NOAA has noted, the oil spill has moved mostly in areas where it is most likely to dissipate. The oil is least likely to dissipate rapidly in protected estuaries and most likely to disperse on beaches exposed to pounding waves. This spill has moved southwest, away from the bulk of the estuaries on the east side of Prince William Sound and toward rocky islands, where the oil is more likely to be hit by storms.

On the negative side, the oil spilled at Prince William Sound has unusually high levels of heavier hydrocarbons such as naphthalene, a more persistent toxin. And the cold may have slowed evaporation of toxins such as benzene, toluene and xylene.

Accordingly, this spill is a biological tragedy that will be played out over many months.

"Eventually all the oil will go away," said Jacqui Michel, a NOAA scientist at the scene. "But it may be a long time."

■ Material from Reuters and the Associated Press was included in this report.

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Job tax

"It's a total public-relations play," Sheehan said. McDonald originally proposed the tax as part of a massive war-on-drugs bill, but partly because he anticipates a court challenge that could tie up his process.

The bill now returns to the House, where Revenue Committee Chairman Art Wray, D-Texas, said he would review it and decide whether to hold a hearing.

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THE VALDEZ DISASTER

Exxon executives shouldn't resign, chairman says

By David S. Gelles, Exxon



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people in Alaska will have to go to court to sue Exxon. "I don't think you should sue Exxon," Miller said. "I don't think you should sue Exxon."

my presence that we don't need your help. In this instance, we feel you have let us down. A Cordova, Alaska, fisherman told the House committee that the people of his area were disappointed as they waited for Exxon to clean up the spill.

Coalition will open special line on oil spill

'People want to know what they can do' by Jack Broom. Times Staff Reporter. A coalition of Washington state groups concerned about the Alaska oil spill is setting up a telephone hotline for inquiries from state residents who want to know how they can help.

Callers to the hotline, 821-8110, will hear a recorded announcement of information about the cleanup and related efforts and can leave their telephone numbers if they are offering assistance.

Callers will also be asked to do what they can to prevent oil drifting off the Washington coast and in an Alaskan wildlife refuge.

The coalition is also planning a May 7 observance at the Seattle Center as a "Day of Mourning" for the 11 million birds killed in the spill.

The coalition is urging people to contact members of Congress and demand that the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge on Alaska's North Slope not be opened to oil and gas exploration.

The spill is a tragic example of the serious risks and environmental damage inherent in oil-industry activity. This catastrophe strongly supports arguments in favor of designating the coastal-planning wilderness," East said.

Oil companies are pressing for federal approval to drill in the area, located east of the Prudhoe Bay oil fields.

Alaska's oil-slicked beaches sound a requiem for sea otters

by Russ Anderson. Times Staff Reporter. VALDEZ, Alaska - The word has gone out: "No more sea otters."

It originated in the temporary animal clinic at Valdez, and was broadcast last to boat on Prince William Sound, from Eganor Island to Knight Island to Sawmill Bay and beyond.

"Yeah, I know," Gorton responded. "We have five otters on board, and a bunch of dead ones."

"I still think they'd be better off in town than out here. It's easier to keep 'em warm. What you hear?"

"We've got mixed reports. Somebody told us we're supposed to let 'em go, but they'll just die out here in that open. At least they have a chance on board."

The first white explorers - British, Russian and American - were mostly traders seeking sea-otter furs, which brought exorbitant prices in the Far East.

On Tuesday, four dead otters were found on the rocky beach at Hogan Bay near the south tip of Knight Island, the heart of the spill.

Captain covered up 1985 DWI conviction

by Kinsey Wilson. Times Staff Reporter. WASHINGTON - Federal officials confirmed yesterday that Exxon tanker captain Joseph Hazelwood failed to note a 1985 drunken-driving conviction when he applied to renew his maritime license a year later.

A stone-faced Hazelwood walked past reporters without comment and left in a car with his attorney.

Failure to answer the questionnaire honestly is a violation of federal law and carries a maximum penalty of \$10,000 and 5 years in prison.

Hazelwood was absent from the bridge when the supertanker Exxon Valdez hit a reef in Prince William Sound March 24, causing the nation's worst oil spill.

Officials also said there is no system that would have alerted the Coast Guard to either Hazelwood's 1985 conviction or a drunk-driving conviction in New Hampshire last September that led to the revocation of his New York driver's license.

Exxon officials have said they became aware in early 1985 that Hazelwood might have a problem with alcohol abuse.

Exxon officials have said they became aware in early 1985 that Hazelwood might have a problem with alcohol abuse.

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Seattle



Capes holding sea otters stand outside the Animal Rescue Center in Valdez.

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Rescue workers gather dead, oiled sea otters on Green Island in Prince William Sound.

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SANTA FE CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL IN SEATTLE IN THE SPRING APRIL 12, 1989

Replaying the Valdez disaster

Federal hearings on Valdez spill to begin Tuesday in Anchorage

By Bill Dietrich

For 12 years, a fleet of about 70 oil tankers had streamed in and out of Alaska's Port Valdez without serious mishap, making the voyage 2,548 times.

So there was no special attention paid March 23 as the tanker Exxon Valdez settled low in the water as it was pumped full with 52 million gallons of Alaska crude.

Less than three years before, the tanker, pride of Exxon's fleet, had been christened by the mayor of Valdez. It was a monument to modern transport: At 210,000 tons, it has 2 1/2 times the displacement of the aircraft carrier Nimitz, and its 987-foot length is only about 100 feet shorter than the carrier's flight deck.

Exxon had decided to save about 10 percent in construction costs by skipping a double hull on the 112 million vessel. And why not? An oil spill contingency plan had concluded the chance of a major oil spill in Prince William Sound was remote, because the ships calling there were manned by American crews with skippers certified to navigate past the reefs and rocks.

Over the past 12 years, the worries of environmental alarmists had proved groundless. Besides, the ship had collision-avoidance radar, satellite navigation aids and depth finders.

But in a few hours, the Exxon

Hazelwood's brief shore leave was short. It was routine for tanker skippers to leave the job of leading oil to their first 10-minute break during the 16 to 20 hours required to take on oil. For anyone wanting a drink, Valdez recommended the advance before the five-day voyage to refueling at Long Beach, Calif.

At Hazelwood boarded his ship, an emergency oil-spill response barge sat moored nearby, still awaiting a fire command in the event of a spill.

Crucial boom and oil-skimmer equipment had been unloaded from the barge to ease repairs, but no patch had been made. Meanwhile, a newer, bigger barge to hold more spilled oil was still docked in Seattle.

Twenty-five miles to the southwest, Columbia Glacier was following its annual course, warmed by the summer's lengthening days, it was calving ice floes that drift each spring into the Prince William Sound shipping lanes.

The stage was set for a spill into some of the cleanest, richest and most scenic waters in the world.

The NTSB hearing will not begin to answer all the questions posed by this spill. Hazelwood, who faces criminal charges, is not scheduled to testify.

Nor will the NTSB — an independent agency of 320 employees created in 1967 to investigate air and marine accidents — try to pass judgment on the cleanup response of Alyeska and Exxon.

"We will not be assessing the environmental issues raised by the accident," cautions Lee Dickinson, chairman of the board of inquiry.

What the NTSB will try to do is explore a host of unanswered questions about the accident itself. How could one of the world's newest tankers on a familiar route in calm seas and in excellent mechanical condition, strike a marked reef 2 miles from a lighted buoy, having wandered 2 miles from the nearest shipping lane?

Sometime last week, the Coast Guard and the NTSB.

About 9:30 p.m. March 23, the tanker pulled away from the oil terminal with Hazelwood and the local pilot, William Murphy, on board.

After guiding the ship through Valdez Narrows to Tongue Point, Murphy left the ship to Hazelwood's command at 11 p.m. and disembarked. The ship was 12 miles north of where it would go aground.

According to investigators, after Murphy left the ship Hazelwood turned over command to Third Mate Gregory Cousins left the helm and went below to his cabin — even though Cousins did not have the navigational certificate required by the Coast Guard for the passage past Bligh Reef.

With ice floes in the outbound ship channel past Valdez Narrows, the ship rolled to starboard, request to the Coast Guard refueling station at nearby Potato Point to swerve east into the inbound lanes to avoid the ice. Permission was granted.

It was a routine maneuver. Five hours earlier, another tanker, the ARCO Juneau, had made the same switch without mishap.

But the Exxon Valdez inexplicably steered 10 degrees farther to port than the Coast Guard recommended, an early investigation by the NTSB indicated. That put the tanker on a due-south heading that slipped it inside Bligh Reef.

As the tanker curved toward Bligh Island at 12 knots, the clock ticked past midnight and into Good Friday, 20th anniversary of the massive earthquake that leveled the old town of Valdez.

Shortly after midnight, there was a bump as the tanker's right side grazed the reef, followed by a confusion of orders as Hazelwood ran up to the bridge. "Right rudder 10. Rudder 15. Rudder 20!" Who was shouting the orders remains unclear. "Hard right rudder" swung due west back toward the shipping lanes it had strayed from, crossing the reef at a right angle.

The move was disastrous. The Exxon Valdez' loaded hull crashed 65 feet down into the water.

In what crewmen later described to investigators as "a very bumpy ride," the bottom of the single-hulled ship ran over the reef, like a tank with a saw blade. The hull was ripped with holes, enough to allow a drive car through. At about 4 minutes past midnight,

Seal pups likely to die on oil-fouled beaches

United Press International

VALDEZ, Alaska — Wildlife experts say they are resigned to the fact that seal pups born on beaches fouled by the Exxon oil spill are going to die.

Prince William Sound, where the supertanker Exxon Valdez ran aground March 24 and spilled 11.2 million gallons of crude oil, is home to 10,000 harbor seals, one-third of which haul themselves out of the water every May to give birth on islands in the spill area.

The Coast Guard originally had given Exxon Corp. until May 10 to clean up the spill. But the spill was not contained until the anticipated invasion of pregnant seals next Saturday. But the oil company failed

to meet the deadline, and it was extended until tomorrow.

Observers have said it will be impossible for cleanup crews to remove all the oil by then, and biologists are concerned.

An Oregon firm is mobilizing to clean up oil-soaked pads used in the cleanup. Chemical Waste Management Inc. spokesman Steve Drew said a center in Anchorage will be set up this week to shred the pads and prepare to ship them to Seattle by barge.

The clean-up material, though not considered hazardous, will be buried in at a hazardous waste landfill at Arlington, Ore. Drew said a maximum of 15 trucks a day would haul the waste to Arlington.

The champions of breakfast

United Press International

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — A table for 31,969, please.

That's what it took for Springfield yesterday to reclaim the crown in what has become an annual battle with Battle Creek, Mich., for breakfast capital of the world.

The myriad breakfast devotees devoured pancakes, juice, coffee and milk at a 2,000-foot table that stretched along Main Street. The turnout, part of the central Massachusetts city's 353rd birthday celebration, allowed Springfield to temporarily reclaim the crown in competition that began in 1988.

The challenge began when Springfield fed 24,000 people a 2,500-foot table. The table stretched 3,600 feet in 1988 when the focus shifted to a number of people served.

Their table curved but on was straight because their Main Street isn't long enough, said spokeswoman for the Springfield mayor's office.

Battle Creek gets a chance reclaim the title next month.

Jet with open door lands safely

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The rear stairway door of a TWA jet carrying 59 people opened in midflight yesterday, but the plane flew the remaining 300 miles to its destination and landed safely, an official said.

The incident caused no pressure problems in the cabin of the Boeing 727 en route from New York to Columbus because an inside door separated the cabin from the outside air, said Paul

Long, a control tower supervisor

The door that opened was the emergency exit or occasional maintenance entrance to the plane, he said.

"They're very well trained and dropped open," Long said.

Whatever reason, the latch d

The plane was being re and was expected to leave Columbus airport for St. Louis

'60 Minutes' may report chemical on 38% of crop

ALABAMA

new disclosures, some produced last week had urged the El move more quickly than eventually to remove Alar from market.

The producers said an notice of intent to ban the chemical might discourage growth from using the chemical on year's crop, which is now growth stage at which Alar is could take another year half for the proposed to proceed through the administrative process, EPA spokes

But growers in Washington state, where apples are the top agricultural commodity, say the use of Alar already has declined dramatically.

The EPA's revised estimate preceded by a day a new report taken off the market because been found to cause cancer.

Alar's manufacturer, Uni Chemical Co., has dispute health claims and continued the chemical, which keeps on trees longer and provide a shelf life.

Alar is used to enhance ing and pressure red apples suspected carcinogen.

Times staff reporter Gilmore, Reuters and APSS Press contributed to this re

A STORY MEETING LIKELY

Angry reaction to the Valdez spill is expected to dominate the agenda at Exxon Corp.'s annual meeting Thursday in New Jersey. E

Valdez would smash into a reef, ripping most of its oil compartments and spilling 11.2 million gallons of North Slope crude into the sound — the biggest oil spill in U.S. history.

While little attention was paid to the Exxon Valdez in the evening of March 23, what happened next after midnight is about to be replayed with intense scrutiny.

On Tuesday, investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) will begin four days of hearings in Anchorage, Alaska. They will take sworn testimony from about 20 witnesses to determine how the accident occurred, in turn shedding light on how much crew members, the Exxon Corp., Alyeska Pipeline Service Co., state of Alaska regulators, the Coast Guard or other officials are to blame.

In retrospect, there were some ironies that night. Even as the ship was being filled, Alyeska — the oil company consortium that operates the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and the Valdez terminal — was holding its annual "Safety Dinner" at the Valdez Civic Center across the fjord.

About 30 employees were being recognized for their safety records on this eve of Good Friday, which was scheduled to be a company holiday.

A few blocks away at City Hall, the Valdez City Council was being warned by Cordova resident (K) Oni, who had received a doctorate in oil spill biology and toxicology from the University of Washington and then became a commercial fisherman, that a spill on Prince William Sound was inevitable.

Such talk was becoming more common around town, after newspaper publicity about minor spills polluting the harbor and aging tanks beginning to crack from the stress of Gulf of Alaska storms.

Earlier in the month, city officials had expressed concern to Alyeska officials about excessive drinking by crews of the tankers.

Three years before, the city had earmarked property-tax money for oil-spill cleanup equipment out of concern that Alyeska's stockpile was inadequate. Unfortunately, the \$18 million was tied up in a legal wrangle with the state government and remained unspent.

On a warning that evening only added to the unease.

Down town at the Pipeline Club, a popular restaurant and bar, Capt. Joseph Hazelwood and two crew members reportedly boarded taxis about 8 p.m. for the trip back to their ship.

clear Prince William Sound?

Oil pushed out, boiling up from the side in bubbling waves up to 3 feet high, before the pressure in the half-empty tanks and the sea outside equalized and stanch the flow.

At 12:28 a.m., the Exxon Valdez radioted the Coast Guard to report the ship was hard aground. Two minutes later, Alyeska dispatched the tug Stalwart to the ship to assist in case the crew had to abandon ship — but it would be more than 14 hours before the first response team arrived.

Some questions the NTSB will likely pursue:

Had the responsible crew members been drinking, and did that contribute to the accident? A test of Hazelwood nine hours after the accident revealed a blood-alcohol level that exceeded the level permissible under Coast Guard regulations. But the pilot and Coast Guard personnel are said to have reported that while they smelled alcohol on Hazelwood's breath, he seemed alert. And Hazelwood's attorneys have said they might dispute the blood-test results.

Are the drug and alcohol regulations by the Coast Guard, Exxon and Alyeska adequate? Are they properly enforced?

Did crew fatigue contribute to the accident, and was the fatigue worsened by 20-hour cuts in the size of tanker crews?

Why was Cousins allowed to take command if he was not certified to command in those waters? And why did Hazelwood, who would have had time to rest for the night voyage before the ship left port, leave the bridge long before the Exxon Valdez would

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Sunday June 4, 1989

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\$100



The Ayatollah Khomeini gestures to a crowd of foreign guests in Tehran on the 8th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.

Ayatollah Khomeini dies at 86

Reuters and Associated Press

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini died last night in Tehran after more than 10 years as supreme spiritual and political leader of Islamic revolutionary Iran.

He was 86 and left no recognized successor. His death was announced this morning by Tehran Radio with a statement from his son and chief aide, Ahmad. The radio broadcast was monitored in Nicosia, Cyprus.

Khomeini underwent surgery in Tehran on May 23 to stop bleeding in his digestive tract. He was making a successful recovery until yesterday afternoon, when his office reported a setback and said doctors were struggling to save him.

A 40-day mourning period was declared in Iran, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) and Tehran Radio said.

IRNA said Ahmad would read his father's will to a meeting of the Experts' Assembly to be convened shortly.

The 83-seat assembly, charged by the constitution to choose Iran's supreme leader after Khomeini, is not currently in session.

One copy of Khomeini's will, revised in December 1987 and believed to contain his choice of a successor, was kept in a safe at the parliament in Tehran.

A statement by Khomeini's funeral committee, read on Tehran Radio, said the funeral would not take place today but urged people to go to local mosques for mourning.

Iran's main opposition group, the Mujahedeen Khalq, or People's Holy Warriors, "congratulated" Iranians on Khomeini's death.

A statement by the Mujahedeen Khalq leader Massoud Rajavi sent from Iraq said Khomeini was "the most notorious dictator of recent times."

He predicted the Islamic Republic would not survive the death of its spiritual leader.

A former president of the Islamic republic, Abolhasan Bani-Sadr, said Iran would turn toward democracy. "There is no other solution for Iran," said Bani-Sadr, reached at his home outside Paris.

A former U.S. hostage in Iran said the death of Khomeini ends a nightmare for the former captive.

"I'm not the type to say I'm happy he's dead," said former hostage Barry Rosen, one of the hostages held 444 days by radical Iranian students from 1979 to 1981. "But I do feel, to a certain degree, that that part of the nightmare is over for us and for Iran."

A theology teacher and fiery preacher of the Shiite branch of Islam, Khomeini was a political exile for 15 years before the 1979 revolution that toppled the pro-Western monarchy of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

Under his leadership, Iran, a nation of 50 million and a key Middle East oil producer, became the most militantly Moslem nation on earth, quarreled bitterly with the West and fought an eight-year war with Iraq.

The cause of his death was not announced, but he had suffered at least one episode of heart trouble, during his post-operative treatment and had survived a heart attack in 1980.

Khomeini's designated successor, Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, was dismissed in March in a complex power struggle within Iran's clerical leadership.

Khomeini's death left incomplete a review of the constitution that he ordered in April. No future leader is likely to match the dual authority he carried in political and religious matters.

Iran's president, Ali Khamenei, is due to step down in October and a presidential election is planned in August.

The speaker of parliament, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, 54, has been seen as the likely winner and the man best placed to

Please see **KHOMEINI** on A16

Chinese troops storm square, fire on crowd

Hundreds reported dead in Beijing crackdown

Times news services

BEIJING - Troops backed by tanks and armored cars fought pitched battles with thousands of civilians yesterday and today as a crackdown on the pro-democracy movement exploded into a citywide insurrection, leaving as many as 500 people dead and hundreds injured.

Earlier reports put the death toll at at least 156 dead.

This morning, about 100 soldiers fired machine guns at a group of people on the main street leading to the square, leaving five bodies in the road. Earlier reports said 30 bodies were in the road.

The casualty toll in the clashes between troops using modern weapons and citizens wielding rocks, bricks, iron rods, wooden clubs and bare fists was expected to soar.

A gray, smoke-filled dawn broke today over the blood-covered streets of the city of 10 million while the military continued pouring soldiers, trucks and armored vehicles mounted with machine guns into the center of Beijing.



Beijing citizens yell oaths against the government as they gather around the body of a comrade who was killed in this morning's military crackdown.

REACTION AND CAUSE

- Some "unspeakably angry" Chinese students in Seattle say they will no longer recognize the government in Beijing, A 7.
- The Beijing protesters' call for democracy may also have been a reaction against a two-economy system that has some Chinese driving Mercedes Benzos while others scrimp to buy bicycles, says Tom Brown, The Times Pacific Rim reporter. **Close-up, A 3.**

Intermittent bursts of gunfire persisted, and military helicopters circled the city convulsed by its worst violence since World War II.

Early today, a massive force of tanks and soldiers raked Tiananmen Square with machine-gun fire and wrested control from thousands of students who had occupied the political heart of the capital since May 13 to press demands for greater freedom.

A 33-foot-high replica of the Statue of Liberty, set up by students last week, was torn down.

The troops cut a violent swath through the heart of Beijing to get to the square, rolling through barricades and surging masses on the surrounding streets. They fired their weapons in the air and sometimes directly at crowds of men and women who refused to move out of the way. By 3:30 a.m., soldiers and riot police surrounded Tiananmen, boxing several thousand

Please see **CHINA** on A2

'The citizens have gone crazy'

by Sheryl Wu Dunn New York Times

BEIJING - As the crackle of automatic weapons filled the air last night and early today on Changan Avenue, tens of thousands of Beijing residents, even elderly men and women, rushed out to see what they could do to turn back the troops.

"The citizens have gone crazy," said one

man watching as a tank plowed its way down the main thoroughfare. "They throw themselves in front of the tank, and only when they see it won't stop, they scatter."

The driver himself was shaken by what he had seen: A tank had rammed into an army truck used as a barricade. As the truck turned over, it crushed a man to death. Elsewhere, he had seen three bloodied bodies lying in the street. Several soldiers still standing in their

trucks were crying. Students and workers threw beer bottles, gasoline bombs, lead pipes, whatever they could find, at the tanks and armed persons.

Trucks, which nevertheless continued rumbling down the avenue.

One truck drove back and forth along the

Please see **SCENE** on A 2

Spill hurting tourism in Alaska

Officials insist oil hasn't touched thousands of miles of grandeur

by Bill Dietrich Times staff reporter

KENAI FJORDS, Alaska - High on a rock ridge above the turquoise glow of Holgate Glacier, a mother bear and two cubs saunter across a snow bank, one cub dragging with its mouth a limp help mountain goat. Its mama had killed moments before.

On the other side of the ice-studded waters of Holgate Arm, goats scramble and feed on a cliff wall with natural nonchalance.

Farther down the fjord, a pod of killer whales swims toward the glacier, hissing spray into the spring air.

And at the 200-foot-high glacier wall itself, chunks of ice calve off with rifle-shot cracks and smash into the green water.

Once more, Alaska proves breathtaking.

But for the reporters cruising Kenai Fjords National Park with Alaska tourism officials, it is not what they see that is most striking.

It is what they don't see.

"People have the impression that all of Alaska has been well with natural nonchalance. It is not what they see that is most striking."

John Krellkamp of Alaska Sight

Please see **TOURISM** on A 15

IN PACIFIC MAGAZINE: DARK WATERS

From the beginning, even experienced journalists found it almost too much to grasp. The broken oil tanker seemed no more than a speck in the immensity of Prince William Sound. Yet somewhere from it had flowed a foul-smelling waste that curdled water, blackened beaches and left creatures helplessly dying.

"I am embarrassed for my profession," a reporter remembers feeling. For three Times reporters and a photographer, stark images and strong images of some remains of these dark days.

In today's Pacific Magazine, they reflect on their experiences.

INDEX

Page	Section
A1	Local News
A2	China
A3	Close-up
A4	Opinion
A5	Arts
A6	Business
A7	Education
A8	Environment
A9	Health
A10	History
A11	International
A12	Law
A13	Life
A14	Local News
A15	Tourism
A16	Khomeini

S100

Alaska fears spill has smeared its image

TOURISM

continued from Page 1

seeing Tours. "It's a perception Alaska has had a Nagasaki bomb dropped on it."

That perception, Alaska officials insist, is wrong.

Accordingly, Gov. Steve Cowper will be in Seattle Tuesday to explain that most of his state remains untouched by the March 24 spill of 11.2 million gallons of crude oil from the supertanker Exxon Valdez.

And the state is using \$4 million contributed by Exxon for an advertising and public-relations campaign to tell tourists that most of Alaska remains unmarred.

The campaign, which began last month on television and newspapers in the Lower 48, compares the contamination of approximately 700 miles of shoreline to losing the beauty mark on the cheek of Marilyn Monroe: With or without the mark, she remains lovely.

The Anchorage Daily News editorialized that comparing Monroe to Alaska seems bizarre. But Bob Miller of the Alaska Tourism Marketing Council says the analogy makes sense, because Alaska has 33,904 miles of coastal shoreline in all, more than the other 49 states combined.

The stakes in this effort are large. Alaska's biggest private industry, oil, is threatening its second- and third-biggest industries, fishing and tourism.

Tourism in Alaska employs 20,000 people in the summer and generates \$1 billion in revenue - about \$450 million of that spent in the state and about \$550 million spent on planes and cruise-ship lines. About 780,000 people visited the state last year, 8 percent of them from foreign countries. By comparison, Alaska's population is only 547,000.

Because of Alaska's reputation as a place unspoiled, pollution strikes at the core of the state's image of itself and its world reputation.

Even as they work to save that reputation, no one in the tourism industry is trying to minimize the tragedy of the oil spill.

"My husband had some tears over it," said Pam Oldow, whose tour boat Kenai Fjords makes the trip daily to Holgate Arm from Seward. "In his lifetime, Prince William Sound will never be the same."

But while more than 20,000 dead birds and 700 dead sea otters have been counted, the spill area boasts millions of birds in the summer, and there are an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 sea otters year-round in Prince William Sound alone, according to Gary Sonnevill of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The oiled beaches are remote from tourist routes and difficult to reach. But even tourist spots hundreds of miles from the spill have been adversely affected by public misperceptions.

Pete Gherini, an owner of Waterfall Lodge on Prince of Wales Island near Ketchikan, said he has already lost \$60,000 to \$100,000 in bookings from tourists backing out because of the oil spill.

Gherini's lodge is 650 miles southeast of the spill area. Avoiding his lodge because of a spill near Valdez is like avoiding Seattle because of a disaster in Sacramento, Calif. "Unfortunately, many people are naive about the geography," he said.

"There has been a significant number of cancellations," said June Green of the Kenai River Lodge in Soldotna, an unaffected area on the other side of the Kenai Peninsula from the spill. One party of 28 canceled a two-day fishing vacation because of news of the spill, which meant the loss of about \$10,000, said Green.

The only oil to reach the tourist town of Homer, also on the west side of the Kenai Peninsula, has been in the form of tar balls that have drifted ashore on the spit but are picked up as quickly as they appear.

Yet bookings at Jack Montgomery's sports-fishing lodge near Homer are off one-third from last year, while his sightseeing vessel has been leased to Exxon. "We'll be happy to get our expenses out of the lodge," he said.

"As far as profit goes, that's shot."

Tourists who do come to Alaska may wonder what all the fuss has been about.

Even in Prince William Sound, the route of cruise ships and tour boats is east and north of the beaches smeared with oil.

For example, it was popular Columbia Glacier that produced the ice floes the wayward tanker was trying to avoid when it hit a reef. But the winds sent the slick away from the tourist attraction.

The ports of Valdez and Whittier and glacier-draped College Fjord - all on the route of the

half-dozen Valdez tour boats that cruise Prince William Sound - remain untouched by oil.

South of Prince William Sound, heavy winds pushed millions of gallons of crude past the rocky coast of Kenai Fjords, killing birds and sea otters.

But the Chiswell Islands near here, ringed with oil in April, have been washed clean again by storms. The granite pinnacles rear out of a misty sea like a scene from a Japanese painting and are thronged with screaming bird life.

Passengers on one recent tour through those islands watched as young bald eagles dived for prey and clouds of white kittiwakes exploded from the island cliffs, wheeling out to settle on a clean sea. Hundreds of sea lions lolled lazily, grunting and barking at the tourists lining the railings of the tour boat Kenai Fjords.

The routes of the tour boats operating out of Seward are north of the concentrations of oil. On the 12-hour boat tour of Kenai Fjords, no oil could be seen.

That was fine with passengers Jim and Leah Schuller of Santa Barbara, Calif.

"We haven't seen it and we don't want to," said Jim Schuller. "When we heard about this, we were totally irate. The one pristine place in America was here, and here we go, 11 million gallons of oil. If we can wreck Alaska, we'll wreck anything."

Still, the spill hasn't interfered with their travel plans.

Others aboard who said they had been undeterred by news of the oil spill included a party of French mountain climbers who had scaled Mount McKinley, a couple from Holland spending two months in Alaska, a grandmother from Anchorage and a sightseer from Fairbanks.

"This is great!" said Dean Richardson of Houston, peering at the gleaming white Columbia Glacier and the peaks beyond. "This is our first time to Alaska, and anything with mountains to us is fascinating."

"The oil didn't discourage us," said Tami Hirsch of Sacramento, who came to Alaska on a honeymoon. In fact, she noted, as a water-quality scientist, "I would like to go out and see it."

■ Tips on planning a cruise to Alaska this summer. Travel, J 12.

"I can see now that the NUTRI/SYSTEM lost"

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#22 - Large Photo of Native Alaskan, Smaller Story w/ British Sources

10 INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Fishermen want action as America's worst spill covers 100 square miles

Experts divided on how to treat Alaska superslick

Christopher Reed - Valdez, Alaska

AS an expert-kidnaping patch of spilled oil... Alaska crude on board. The small town of Valdez at the end of the Alaskan pipeline... still have 12 million gallons of Alaska crude on board. The small town of Valdez at the end of the Alaskan pipeline... Experts are divided on how to treat to one of the world's most fertile fishing areas. Since the supertanker... The tanker's estimated to... still have 12 million gallons of Alaska crude on board. The small town of Valdez at the end of the Alaskan pipeline... Experts are divided on how to treat to one of the world's most fertile fishing areas. Since the supertanker... The tanker's estimated to...

Bush tax cuts under threat

11 - Seville

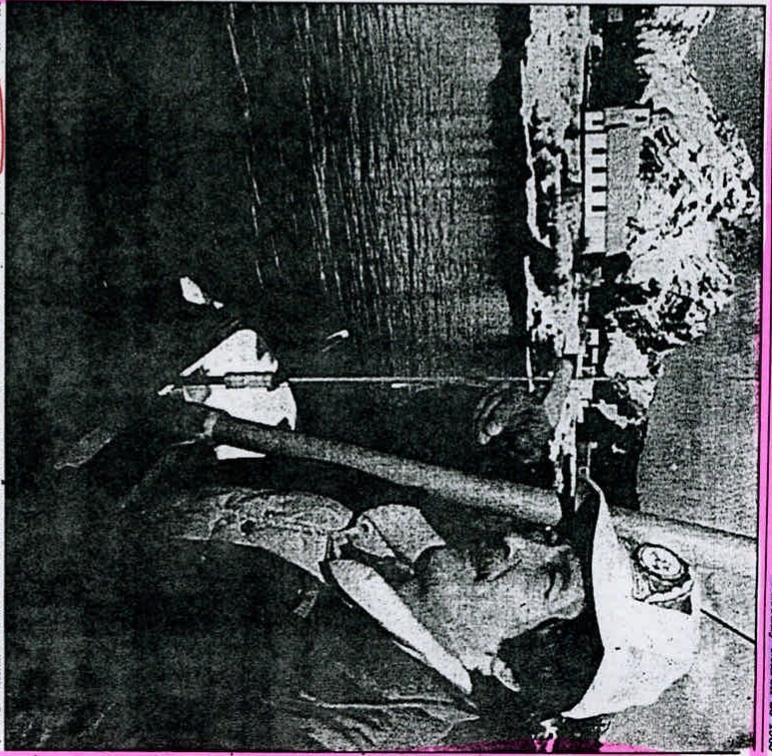
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Guatemalan prison riot leaves 10 dead

Scott Wallace - Guatemala City

REBELLIOUS inmates at Guatemala's largest... riot began when prisoners... Guatemala's largest... riot began when prisoners... Guatemala's largest... riot began when prisoners...

G003



THE GUARDIAN Tuesday March 28 1989

News in brief

- Israeli troops shoot child... Space shot... Belfast shelling... Jumbo forced back... Jordan asks for help... Gondollers protest... Burmese army triumph... Reagan ruling... British Council blast

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High award . . . A three-storey model of the Oscar receives its finishing touches outside the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles where the Academy Awards will be announced tonight. Dustin Hoffman and Rain Man are tipped as winners.

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Pipeline group 'not prepared'
for Alaska oil spill disaster

Christopher Reed in Valdez, Alaska, and Gareth Parry

EVIDENCE is growing that a corporation serving the Alaska pipeline was unprepared to cope with Friday's 12-million gallon oil spill off the Alaskan coast that is threatening one of the world's richest fishing grounds. American news-media interest is focusing on Mr Joe Hazlewood, aged 34, skipper of the stricken tanker. He was in his cabin at the time of the disaster, leaving the ship in the charge of an unqualified helmsman. Mr Hazlewood and two members of the crew have been tested for alcohol and drugs amid reports that Mr Hazlewood is disqualified from driving a car because of drinking convictions.

That is diverting attention from why four days have now gone by without an attempt to disperse the oil. Mr Frank Larossi, president of the Exxon Shipping Company, owners of the 967-foot tanker,

Exxon Valdez, admitted that the 100-square-mile slick had been "galloping" down Prince William Sound.

Oil spill experts from Britain have taken a leading role in the vast operation. Five members of the Oil Spill Service Centre in Southampton, which is sponsored by the leading oil companies, arrived in Alaska 48 hours after the first appeal for help arrived in Britain at noon on Friday. They took with them 15 tons of equipment, which included skimmers which remove surface oil, surface booms which gather the oil for collection, ten 10-ton storage tanks for salvaged oil, and radio and satellite communications sets.

A Boeing 707 freighter with 7,500 gallons of dispersant took off last night from Stansted for Anchorage.

Although only a small number of dead animals and birds have so far been found, a high toll of marine life seems inevitable in the next few days.

Monday's weather, with winds gusting at 73 knots, prevented the first mass assault on

the spreading slick. Skimmer boats that scoop up the glutinous oil could not put to sea, and booms deployed to contain the spread were blown aside. The wind grounded spraying aircraft.

Had weather was to have been allowed for in a contingency cleanup plan devised by Alyeska, the consortium of oil companies responsible for the pipeline.

Yet even booms, the most basic anti-spill equipment, were not deployed immediately because of a crippled carrier barge that had remained unseaworthy for months.

Only five skimmer boats were available, a puny fleet for cleaning up 12 million gallons. Despite promises in 1972 when the pipeline was under debate that Valdez tankers would have double hull bottoms for extra protection, the Exxon Valdez, the corporation's second newest-tanker, was not so equipped.

Mr Larossi dismissed a question about that, saying he could not vouch for such a promise. It

was made during formal evidence to a congressional committee in Washington.

Only a few days before the tanker hit Bligh Reef, a hazard well known to local fishermen, the American Department of the Interior's regional superintendent wrote to the Alaskan branch of Greenpeace giving assurances.

The letter of March 20 said the oil industry "has demonstrated its ability to respond to oil spills during Arctic conditions through oil-spill response trials and training exercises".

Greenpeace's regional director, Ms Cindy Lower said: "Alyeska and Exxon ignored their promises to store the necessary spill equipment here. It would have cost them less than \$1 million a year - peanuts for Exxon. It's pure arrogance and insensitivity."

Lisa Buckingham writes: Insurance experts predict that the costs of the Exxon Valdez catastrophe will top £100 million - most of which will find its way back to the London underwriting market.

Trade
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Mark Milner

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John Ezard

WHEN the brewery asked Gaston Berle-
mont if he would
kindly leave by June 30, he
said the English equivalent
of "merde" and pointed out
that a somewhat apter date
would arise only two weeks
later.

So on this *quatorze juillet*,
bicentenary of the French
revolution, the tenant of the
most famous French pub in
Britain, the French House in
Soho, will go out on a tide of
wine-scented tears from all
the revelry-worm spirits of
Soho, living and dead; among
the later Augustus John,

Dylan Thomas and the artist
Nina Hamnett.

Gaston was born in the lit-
tle bar at 49 Dean Street
shortly before his father,
Victor, a head waiter from
the Pas de Calais, took it over
in 1914. It had been a Ger-
man pub. But, with the first
world war breaking out, Victor
smartly turned it into
what it has been ever since, a
strange jewel in Watney's
crown, a refuge for spiritual
Parisians, emphasising fine
wines and sprits, serving
beer in half-pint glasses only.

Berleumont *fitz* took over in
1948. A brewery rep once
said in his upstairs office:
"Excuse me, your back-
ground music seems to be

turned down." Gaston's roar
could be heard in the bar two
storeys down. There is no
muzak, no juke box. What
does burst into the street is
the unadorned clamour of
human voices.

This was what drew the
boxer Georges Carpentier,
Maurice Chevalier and Gen-
eral de Gaulle, who made it
his Free French social head-
quarters.

But its lure, above all, has
been the variety of clientele.
You can see an old man with
long orange hair; a young
scruff, without collar and tie,
ordering pink champagne; a
drinker whose breath or
spittle mysteriously causes
white wine to foam in his

glass; and the character
whom staff have nicknamed,
in awe, the Man Who Mixes
Campari and vodka.

Gaston would like to see
the service gently enlarged,
with croissants and café Cal-
vados introduced but isn't
yet entirely confident that
this will happen.

Another brewery rep once
urged him to turn it into a
French theme pub, with plas-
tic onions. The reply was:
"You can't create atmo-
sphere or ambience. You
can't paint them into a place.
But you could put me down
in a corrugated hut in the
middle of the Sahara and
there would soon be
atmosphere."

other trader at the Wall Street
broking firm of Drexel Burn-
ham were also indicted in New
York late yesterday, on 98
charges of stock market crimes.
Milken, aged 42, who was head
of Drexel's junk bond opera-
tions, faces a prison sentence if
convicted.

The move by the US attor-
ney's office is the culmination
of a two-and-a-half year in-
vestigation of some of Wall Street's
most powerful figures and of
Drexel Burnham.

The charges stem from Mil-
ken's association with the take-
over speculator, Ivan Boesky,
who is serving a prison sen-
tence for insider trading.

Milken, the modest million-
aire from Beverley Hills, was
dubbed America's junk bond

Alaskan fishermen angry at oilmen's bombast



Eyewitness
Christopher Reed
in Valdez, Alaska

A MAN with a gun, dark
blue uniform, helmet,
and paramilitary shoul-
der badge marked Emergency
Trauma Training, blocks the
"Command Centre" at the
Westmark Hotel in Valdez. No
unauthorised person may pass
into what is usually the Top
Deck banqueting room. Sharon,
the press person, will have to
be called.

Five times he summons her
on his walkie-talkie before a di-
fident young woman appears to
confirm that she has no knowl-
edge of a dispute between the
Exxon Oil Corporation and the
state's Department of Environ-
mental Conservation.

The department is outraged
about Big Oil's failure to con-
tain Friday's 12-million gallon
spill in the pristine waters of
Prince William Sound. But
three days of local newspaper
headlines of such criticisms
does not upset Sharon, who
does not read the press. "I've
been too busy working an 18-
hour day," she said.

The incident encapsulates
events here since the Exxon
tanker hit a reef and ruined a
fisher's livelihood, perhaps for
ever. The oil industry's bomb-
ast, its strutting presence of

power, conceal an only too vis-
ible inefficiency. This combines
with what many regard as oil
carelessness not only about oil
leaks, but with the truth.

Valdez is named after a Span-
ish explorer but determinedly
pronounced Valdeez by the
3,500 locals. No jewel, it is
placed nevertheless in a bril-
liant setting amid sharp,
snow-capped mountains over-
looking the turquoise channel.

For 11 years Valdez has
served as the southern end of
the Alaska pipeline's 800-mile
journey from the Arctic Ocean.
Oil brought a richer tax base
but not much work. That has
long been fishing and, more
recently, tourism.

Both work sources are now
threatened by the glutinous
mess spreading over inlets and
islands in the sound. Much of it
has been churned by high
winds from a greenish-black to
a foamy substance the consis-
tency — and colour — of choco-
late mousse.

The deadly tide will kill thou-
sands of fish, birds and mam-
mals, including the enchanting
sea otter, the animal whose fur
brought Russian trappers to
Alaska. Even if fishing sur-
vives, fishermen worry that
worldwide publicity about the
spill will harm sales of Valdez
salmon, crab, and black cod.

Meanwhile, the oil industry's
main crisis production consists
of bulletins on the oil stain
which grows ever wider. The
impression of inaction in-
creases because so few have ac-
tually seen the oil slick, or the
Exxon tanker impaled upon
Bligh Reef, 25 miles beyond the
white ring of mountains.

Hundreds of journalists shuffle
daily from one press con-
ference to another can spend a
day — and about \$3,000 — char-
tering a small boat to the site.
Fishing is banned until Tues-
day and the idle men have been
venting their frustration at the
press conferences in the spaci-
ous civic centre.

As Exxon officials drone
through statistics there are
sheets of "hopwash" and "bull-
shit". One fisherman shouts:
"Money! All you think of is
money and profit. You don't
care about Alaska or its
people." The Exxonite quails
visibly.

The men have a point. A con-
tingency plan devised a decade
ago has been flouted.

Exxon and Alyeska, the British
Petroleum-headed oil con-
sortium that runs the pipeline,
were late, slow, poorly
equipped, confused and ineffi-
cient. Missing their chance to
contain the spill on Sunday,
they have now lost control.

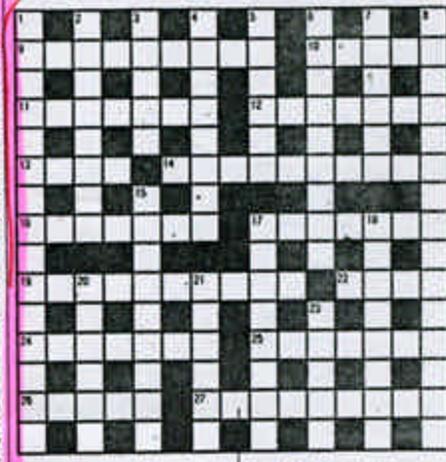
After years of accommodat-
ing the oil firms, on the Friday
morning of the spill the mayor,
Mr DeVera, heard about it from
a radio station. He spent from
1am to 9am trying to reach
Exxon and Alyeska executives
on the telephone to offer
assistance.

Exxon provided only a
recorded message and Alyeska
never returned his calls.

Defending the decision to
renew tanker deliveries at Val-
dez immediately, an Exxon ex-
ecutive reminded us that a
quarter of US oil comes from
Alaska. Deadpan, he asserted:
"They need it for those Mer-
cedes Benzes in California."

Guardian Crossword 18,435

Set by Janus



- Across**
- 9 Go on a la U.S., or something very like it (9).
 - 10 Yell as soon as cow-catcher is spotted (5).
 - 11 Felt sorrow for girl involved in network (7).
 - 12 Ousts from places at United Nations (7).
 - 13 Turn over list (4).
 - 14 Make poor child above his setting (10).
 - 16 Soiled article taken to powerbreaker (7).
 - 17 No model employer's garment (7).
 - 19 Opposed to orchestra having smuggled goods (10).
 - 22 Part of quite amazing side (4).

- Down**
- 1 Play at hazardous road junction? (9, 6).
 - 2 Vehicle used to get Mohammedan judge to call-over (8).
 - 3 Find an answer to love's riddle (5).
 - 4 Slave or valet to OOT (8).
 - 5 Cooper does change outside of coin (6).

#25 – Subtle Captain Support Suggested via Description

INTERNATIONAL

6

G007

THE GUARDIAN
Saturday April 1 1989

FBI to launch oil spill inquiry

Mark Tran in Washington

THE FBI yesterday announced that it will launch an investigation into the Alaskan oil spill to determine whether Exxon or its employees committed criminal violations of federal law.

FBI officials said the bureau will focus on whether the spill of 11 million gallons of crude oil constituted "a negligent discharge of a pollutant into navigable waters of the United States" and whether the spill breached the Clean Water Act.

Exxon has had to endure a barrage of criticism for its handling of the spill from the supertanker Valdez and the intervention of the FBI, with possible criminal charges, put further pressure on the oil giant.

The oil company has already thrown to the wolves the tanker captain, Mr. Joseph Hazelwood, after receiving a report from federal investigators that he had failed a blood-alcohol test in the wake of the accident.

Captain Hazelwood was in his cabin when the Exxon Valdez crashed into the well-marked Bligh reef on a calm day after having put an unqualified crewman at the helm.

While Exxon laid blame for the disaster squarely on the shoulders of Capt. Hazelwood, the oil giant continued to be battered by criticism.

Alaska's Commissioner of Environmental Conservation, Mr. Dennis Kelso, directly contradicting White House officials who said Exxon was doing a competent job of cleaning the mess, argued that the company had recovered a mere 3 per cent of the 11 million gallons of oil and was not doing all it could.

Several islands in Prince William Sound are surrounded by oil and thousands of birds have already died.

Pavon maximum security prison after the
Nearly 600 hostages, mainly relatives of
the victims

for Tacky Snow White taken to court

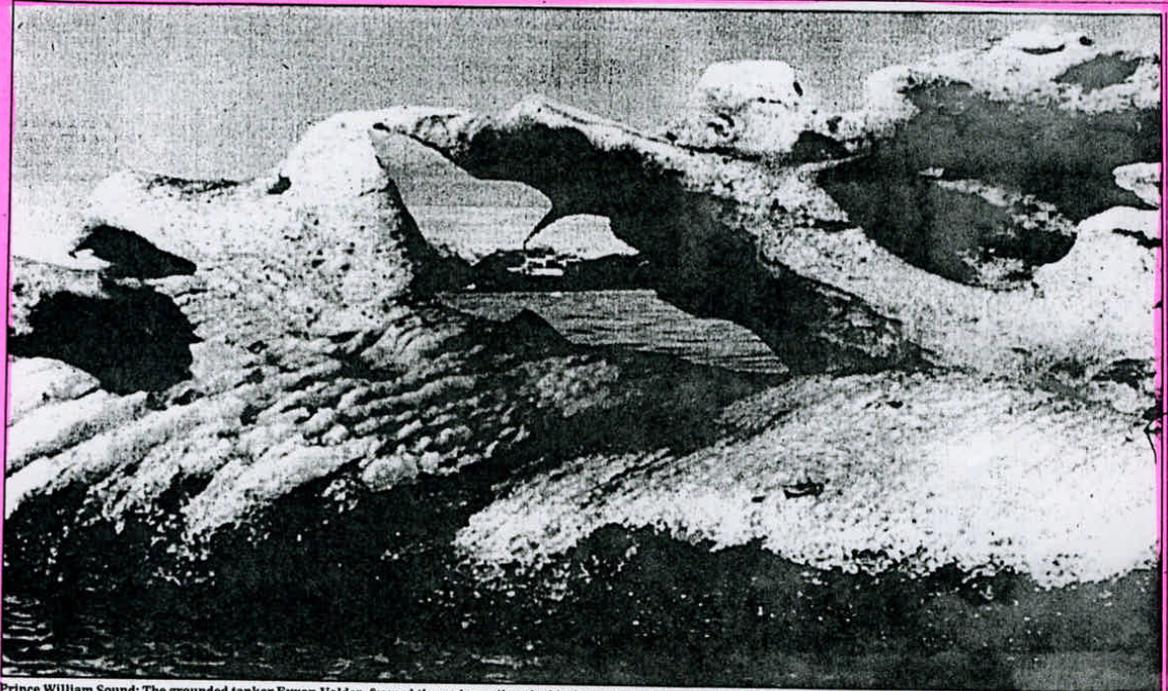
Comment & Analysis pg. 19

THE GUARDIAN
Monday April 3 1989

#27

G009

COMMEI



Prince William Sound: The grounded tanker Exxon Valdez, framed through an oil-soaked iceberg after leaking nearly 240,000 barrels of crude into the once pristine waterway

Crude confrontations

The massive Exxon Valdez oil spill looks set to claim a further victim — the credibility of the oil industry itself. Christopher Reed reports from Alaska as battle brews again between the oil companies and conservationists.

THE OIL SPILL that still spreads its contamination across Prince William Sound in south central Alaska has also inflicted severe damage on the industry at a time when it faces a crucial decision for the future.

For years, oil companies have coveted what is said to be a bonanza in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, known as ANWR. Here, 1.5 million acres of coastal land believed to contain the oil is also home to a herd of 180,000 caribou, polar bears, and tens of thousands of birds. The combination has again posed the classic confrontation of environmentalists and the developers of Big Oil.

The Reagan administration made a determined bid but failed to turn over the coastal plain to the two main contractors, Chevron and British Petroleum USA, for exploratory drilling. President George Bush since has indicated his sympathy, but conservationists continue to fight tenaciously. In January the Sierra Club and 11 other groups petitioned the new Secretary of the Interior, Manuel Lujan, to cease all steps

towards opening up the refuge to oil exploration, and to commission a panel of independent scientists to re-assess the proposal. The petition accused the previous administration of breaking several laws in its eagerness to exploit the refuge.

However, the momentum has recently been moving in favour of the oil industry. Two committees approved drilling last year, and only last month the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee voted 12-7 for exploration. That may all change as the 1,500-square-mile slick of oil continues to ravage the beauty of Prince William Sound and despoil other natural resources: valuable fishing and wildlife.

Estimates of how much oil may lie in the refuge range from a relatively modest 600 million recoverable barrels to an amazing 9.2 billion, with an Interior Department figure of 3.2 billion. Chances of finding the oil are only 19 per cent, but the industry says those are good odds, and that America's priority is to avoid dependence on foreign imports. Conservationists retort that an improvement of just over two miles per

gallon in US vehicle engines would annually save the Department's entire 3.2 billion estimate.

More arctic drilling would "sacrifice forever one of the world's greatest wilderness regions," says Michael McCloskey of the Sierra Club. "The oil industry replies that Alaska's nearby Prudhoe Bay field, supplier of a quarter of America's energy, passes its peak this year or next. The nation's insatiable needs must be met, and the wildlife refuge is the only feasible place."

David Heatwole, a vice-president at Arco, which owns 21 per cent of the Prudhoe Bay oilfield and the pipeline to Valdez where the spill happened, cites economic grounds and "national security" as the overwhelming factors. Arco and the rest of the industry also believe that what they learned at Prudhoe Bay will mean a sensitive and environmentally sound development. Others, examining the deplorable record in Valdez of Exxon and Alyeska, the consortium of oil companies that owns and runs the pipeline and is headed by British Petroleum, strenuously disagree.

Mr Heatwole forecasts that by the year 2000, 60 to 70 per cent of oil coming to the States could be foreign — and mainly from the Middle East. We can have tankers with our own flags bringing it here or tankers with foreign flags approaching the coasts of the United States," he adds ominously.

Questions of America's profitable energy consumption, its recent abandonment of alternative energy development, its unrealistically low petrol prices (compared with the rest of the industrial world), and the fact that Japanese and West German economies seem to thrive on foreign oil, are dismissed.

"We are a market economy and oil is just cheaper," says Mr Heatwole.

A final debate in Congress on whether to permit oil drilling in the refuge is now looming. Undoubtedly the Valdez disaster, and the mounting evidence of negligence, broken promises, inefficiency, deception, and unpreparedness at Valdez are a gift to the industry's critics.

Big Oil's immediate reaction has been to close ranks. Nobody publicly criticises Exxon, although in private some industry executives are disturbed by the giant's go-it-alone cussedness in Valdez. "We believe we could have done a better job," Mr Heatwole cautiously allows. The companies echo their erstwhile comrade in the oil business, President Bush, who said there was "no connection

between Valdez and ANWR. Exxon USA's president William Stevens, visiting Valdez last week, reiterated that the "unfortunate incident" and the refuge drilling issue should be kept apart. Then, with the facility for choosing the inept word that has typified Exxon in Valdez, he said his company would "profit" from the oil spill experience.

If oil is ever pumped from the Arctic Refuge, it will be sent down the 800-mile pipeline to Valdez. Alyeska boasts that of nearly seven billion barrels transferred through the pipe for nearly 12 years, only a few hundred have been spilt. Historically, say the companies, the record is excellent. (It is

only at the moment that it's so rotten.)

Drilling in the refuge would continue the pipeline's use for several decades. The oil would be carried by tankers from Valdez. Although shipping represents a much greater risk of spillage than drilling, the fact that the oil industry has done what it said would never happen — ruined a pristine marine environment — surely means that ANWR drilling and the Valdez disaster are inseparable topics.

The industry will continue to deploy its considerable power and money in support of opening the refuge. But the events at Valdez may have ruined its credibility forever.



Black death: an oil-coated seabird in Prince William Sound

Today sees Parliament's last chance to amend the Official Secrets Bill, Richard Norton-Taylor reports

that it has ceased and we have some evidence that it is still continuing," he said.

Mr Fitzwater coupled his scepticism about Soviet intentions in Nicaragua with blunt talk about recent arms proposals from the Kremlin.

Mr Gorbachev, who last week announced plans to remove 500 nuclear warheads from Eastern Europe, was "throwing out in a kind of drugstore cowboy fashion one arms control proposal after another," he said.

He said Mr Gorbachev's proposals, which have divided the Western alliance, proved on examination to represent little change in Soviet policy.

Mr Bush, in an interview published in the Washington Times yesterday, emphasised

stationed in Europe.

"It might be time to give some thought to how we can reduce along with the Soviets, provided we do not leave our allies in an imbalance and provided one side not be able to respond more rapidly than the other in case something did break out", he said.

But he stressed that the full US commitment to Nato's European front would remain "as long as there is an unacceptable imbalance" of forces.

Mr Bush also said that he could be prepared in the future to negotiate with Moscow on modernising short-range nuclear weapons, the issue at the heart of the latest row in Nato.

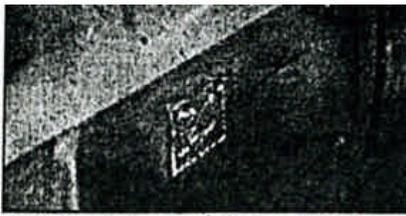
But "as long as we have these tremendous conventional force

suggested, in a vague remark which has sparked a flurry of diplomatic speculation.

In a private letter to Mr Bush which was delivered last week, just before the Secretary of State, Mr Jim Baker, left for Moscow, Mr Gorbachev said the arms deliveries to Nicaragua ended last December.

The Soviet leader repeated the assurance during last week's Kremlin talks with Mr Baker.

US intelligence has not so far found independent evidence of an end to the deliveries, which were valued at \$515 million last year, and is warning that even if Soviet deliveries have ended, the supply could be made up by Cuba, which now manufactures Soviet-designed weapons.



All the President's men . . . Infantry sent in by George

War games

Richard Gott in Panama

A CAMOUFLAGED jeep and covered trailer back gingerly down a muddy incline towards the open jaws of a small landing craft moored by the edge of the lake.

The rain falls in elongated drops, as though the already moistened air could not carry anything smaller. Immense jags of lightning, sometimes two or three at a time, illuminate the vast expanse of sky. They light up the anarchic parade of clouds that flash when they bump into each other.

Welcome to the Panama Canal Zone, as dramatic and unexpected in the heavens as in the politics below.

Here at Gatun Lake, through which the canal runs in the middle of its journey, the latest reinforcements thrown into the struggle for freedom and democracy are having their first taste of "low intensity training operations".

They come from Louisiana and Texas and Florida and arrived here at the week (the final flight came in today), sent by President Bush to reassure an unworried crew something was being done.

One is so used to supply that every American policy move has some utility — and usually nefarious — that it comes as quite a surprise to realise that these troops are here to do exactly what has been stated: to protect the (unthreatened) lives of citizens in Panama.

In the foggy television in which most Americans where Tehran and Beirut Panama collide on the evening news, it must have seemed natural to assume that US might be under threat. Hostages? Send in marines!

So here they are, in this patch of canal-side mud, manoeuvring their heavy vehicles on to a cross-canal ferry, seems extremely old-fashioned. Getting troops and

Fish harvest hopes rise as Exxon inquiry opens

local Brit. context?

Martin Walker in Washington

THE official inquiry opened in Anchorage yesterday into the Exxon Valdez oil spill as hopes rose that the fishing harvest might not have been devastated.

The supertanker ran aground on March 24, flooding 11 million gallons of crude oil into Alaskan waters.

Alaska's Fish and Game Department decided yesterday to reopen the halibut fishing season, except for a small area near Kodiak island, after testing of sample catches which were found to be free of oil.

In order to conserve stocks, halibut may be fished only in specific 24 hour periods. After a successful experiment yesterday, with fishermen using special charts issued by the Coastguard which steered them clear of oil, Alaskan officials say there may be another three or four halibut days.

The main source of early sockeye salmon was also opened for test fishing yesterday, and there was no immediate sign of oil. State ecologists said this year's season might prove almost normal.

The US press has been filled with bitter cartoons about "blackened fish" — hitherto a trendy dish of Louisiana Cajun cuisine, but now coming directly from Alaska's Prince William Sound. But the salmon and the halibut,

and even some of the spawning herring smelt, appear to have avoided oil-contaminated water. The Alaskan Seafood Marketing Institute is preparing a nationwide advertising campaign, financed by Exxon, to persuade consumers that they can safely eat the salmon.

The season's first catches of sockeye are usually flown to gourmet restaurants across the US, rather like August 12 grouse or Beaufort Nouveau. Marketing men in Alaska reported yesterday there was no such interest this year, and that they had been unable to command extra prices for first-of-the-season salmon.

If the markets do recover, the greatest problem may be a shortage of fishermen and fishing boats in the Sound. Exxon is paying \$1,500 a day in charter fees for boats, and a high \$18 hourly wage for some 4,000 beach cleaners.

"A lot of fishermen are being bought. Fishing is a risk, and you can hire out for \$1,500 a day, at no risk", commented Pete Brockert, a gillnet fisherman from Cordova.

The Copper River Delta, near the south-east entry to Prince William Sound where the oil spill took place, is one of the richest sources for wildlife in the Western hemisphere, a huge salmon spawning ground and a feeding site on the bird migration route. The Delta was spared by the oil slick thanks to the prevailing wind and cur-

rents, which instead took the oil towards Kodiak, the richest fishery in Alaskan waters. But the route to Kodiak took the oil through the open sea, which helped break up the slicks and reduce their impact.

"This is not saying that there has been no ecological disaster here," a Fish and Game Dept spokesman said yesterday.

The birds and sea otters and wildlife that depend on the beaches and the land-sea interface have been devastated — but the fishing seems to have been less affected than we feared.

The National Transportation Safety Board hearing into the disaster will hear evidence from Gregory Cousins, the third mate in command of the Exxon Valdez supertanker when she ran aground. Mr Cousins's account of events on the bridge of the stricken ship has not yet been publicly heard.

The hearing has also called the skipper, Captain Joseph Hazelwood, who already faces charges of being drunk in charge of his ship.

Although Capt Hazelwood refused to testify yesterday, he told the Coastguard within hours of the accident that he was responsible, according to evidence filed at the hearings.

"He (Hazelwood) said he was responsible and overestimated the third mate's ship-handling ability," the Coastguard chief warrant officer, Mr Mark Dierzer, said.

Stars flock to defend Patsy's pasta against the critics

Our Correspondent in Washington

THE food critic of the New York Times bit off more than he could chew when he found himself condemned as "sick, sick, sick" yesterday in his own newspaper. Frank Sinatra, Burt Lancaster and a list of New York celebrities signed a £15,000 full-page ad defending their favourite Italian restaurant against his roasting.

The highly critical review by Bryan Miller acknowledged that Patsy's, founded in 1944, is a "theatre district institution". But the "deserts taste like the experiments of a high-school home economics class" and "the hot antipasto resembles something you would get on a paper plate at the San Gennaro festival in Little Italy, but not so tasty."

It was less the comments on the food that aroused patrons and chefs alike, so much as the new law of restaurant-going which Mr Miller identified: "The quality of the food is in inverse proportion to the number of signed ce-

Teach

Paul Webster in Paris

WHEN 20 members of the extremist left organisation, Action Directe, went on trial in Lyon yesterday, the prosecution it would need at least six witnesses to disentangle the activities of the terror movement whose guide was a lycée teacher.

The teacher, Mr André Lacroix, who became fascinated with political extremism in the wake of the 1968 student revolution, was said to have had a powerful hold over both of the main accused — Mr Lacroix's pupil, Mr Jean-François Frerot, one of his pupils, Ms Joëlle Crepot, who became Mr Olivier's mistress.

Yugoslavia Kosovo

Ian Traynor in Ljubljana

YUGOSLAVIA'S Communist Party leaders gathered in Belgrade this morning to discuss the Bos-



#29 (pg. 2) – Fishermen Perspective

the body of controversial magazine editor Mino Pecorelli, who was seven times prime minister and one of the most influential political leaders in postwar Italy, caused sensation and prompted charges that the former Christian Democrat was a victim of political justice.

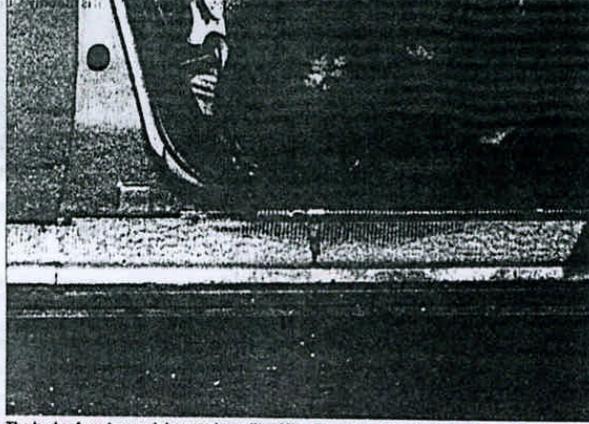
It is likely to have enormous political repercussions, with Silvio Berlusconi, the current prime minister, currently on trial for corruption in Milan. Mr Berlusconi, who accuses the Milan prosecutors of political prejudice against him, said Mr Andreotti's conviction was yet another example of politicised magistrates attempting to rewrite history. The justice system had gone mad, he said, and was dominated by factionalism and persecution.

One of Mr Andreotti's lawyers, Franco Coppi, described the sentence as "disconcerting". He said it appeared to suggest the identity

of the other defendants were in court to hear the verdict read out by Judge Gabriele Verrina.

Mr Andreotti was acquitted of the Pecorelli killing three years ago and was also absolved of collusion with the mafia in a separate trial. The initial hearings drew enormous media interest and were frequently dubbed Italy's trials of the century. In contrast, the Perugia appeal hearing, which began in May, took place in relative obscurity and there were only a handful of reporters and lawyers present court for the verdict last night.

The verdict upholds the evidence provided by mafia supergrasses who were at the origin of Mr Andreotti's two trials and whose reputation was dealt a severe blow by his initial acquittal. The case against the former prime minister, now a life senator, was based on the testimony of the late Tommaso Buscetta, the



The body of controversial magazine editor Mino Pecorelli, shot dead in a Rome street

publish damaging revelations about Mr Andreotti when he was killed. The revelations allegedly concerned the Red Brigades' kidnap and murder of Aldo Moro, the Christian Democrat party chairman, the previous year. The scoop, they suggested, could have cut short Mr Andreotti's political career. Mr Pecorelli was the editor of a weekly magazine called *Osservatore Politico* (Political Observer) and had close contacts with the Italian secret services. He frequently denounced cases of political corruption and had made a particular target of Mr Andreotti.

Mr Andreotti is expected to appeal to the court of cassation and only risks being sent to jail once that avenue has been exhausted. The appeal hearing of his Palermo trial for alleged complicity with *cosca nostra* is also in its final stages and a verdict is expected there before the end of the year.

Spain blames Britain for oil disaster

Page 1 a brush and painted very single rock black," said Fernando Vidal from the fishing port at Corne.

A sense of despair set in among fishermen on this exposed, rugged and wind-battered corner of the Iberian peninsula known as "the coast of death" because of its long history of shipwrecks and other maritime disasters. "It makes our hearts sink,"

said Ramon Bua from the port of Muxia, where some 500 people were reckoned to have been left without employment.

Spanish newspapers unanimously proclaimed "an ecological catastrophe" after the slick, which began forming four days ago, was blown inshore at the weekend.

But authorities insisted that by towing the stricken

tanker 60 miles out to sea they had prevented a repeat of the disaster caused by the grounding of the Aegean Sea tanker near Coruna harbour 11 years ago.

Fisherman and environmentalists warned that, although the amount of oil spilled since the tanker ran into trouble on Thursday was only a 10th of that shed by the Aegean Sea, the impact on

local ecosystems would be worse.

"We are seeing far more birds affected, and a much wider expanse of both sea and coast," said Antonio Sandoval of the Spanish Ornithological Society.

The strong winds that blew the oil on to the coast also hampered attempts by rescue tugs to pull the stricken tanker further out to sea.

The state of the 800ft Prestige, built in 1976, continued to deteriorate as fierce seas reportedly ripped off part of the upper deck and a widened an already gaping hole in its side. Authorities warned that weather conditions would worsen again last night.

A spokesman for Smit Salvage, the Dutch company in charge of the rescue operation, said stormy weather made it

impossible to transfer fuel from the ship.

The Greek captain of the 26-year-old Bahamas-flagged Prestige, Apostolos Magouras, was remanded in custody by a judge in Coruna yesterday on suspicion of disobeying authorities and harming the environment.

The EU has agreed to phase out single-hull tankers by 2015.

Fishers perspec. → effects

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The Guardian

Support for royals plunges to record

Alan Travis
Home affairs editor

The royal family has hit rock bottom in the aftermath of the Burrell affair with popular support falling to its lowest level in modern times, according to this month's Guardian/ICM opinion poll.

Only 43% of people now say Britain would be worse off without the royal family. This is the lowest level of support since the Guardian/ICM

tracker series started in 1987. After recording solid 70% plus support in the late 80s and much of the 90s, backing fell to 48% in August 1997, just before the death of Princess Diana.

The results show that all the work Buckingham Palace has done since then to painstakingly rebuild the royal family's reputation has been wiped out. Public esteem peaked at 59% in May at the time of the Queen Mother's funeral and

celebrations for the golden jubilee.

This month's Guardian/ICM poll shows that a new factor, almost as damaging as the fall in support, has emerged: a sharp rise to a record level of 26% of those who say they don't know whether Britain would be worse or better off without the Windsors. It can be assumed many of the "don't know" are actually "don't cares" who see the royals as irrelevant.

This indifference is even more significant than the sharp rise in republicanism. One in three people now say Britain would be better off without the royals, but this is slightly below the level recorded in April last year.

The only age group which still registers support for the monarchy is the over-65s, and even among the "coronation generation" it stands at just 53%. Among the young, those aged 18 to 24, 45% say Britain

would be better off without them. Among 25- to 34-year-olds, 36% express indifference.

As far as party political allegiances are concerned, Tory voters are on the whole still royalist but their backing is lukewarm at 55%. Labour voters are equally split, with 36% opposed and 36% against.

When ICM asked people how damaging they thought the Burrell affair had been to the royal family's reputation, 60% said they believed it

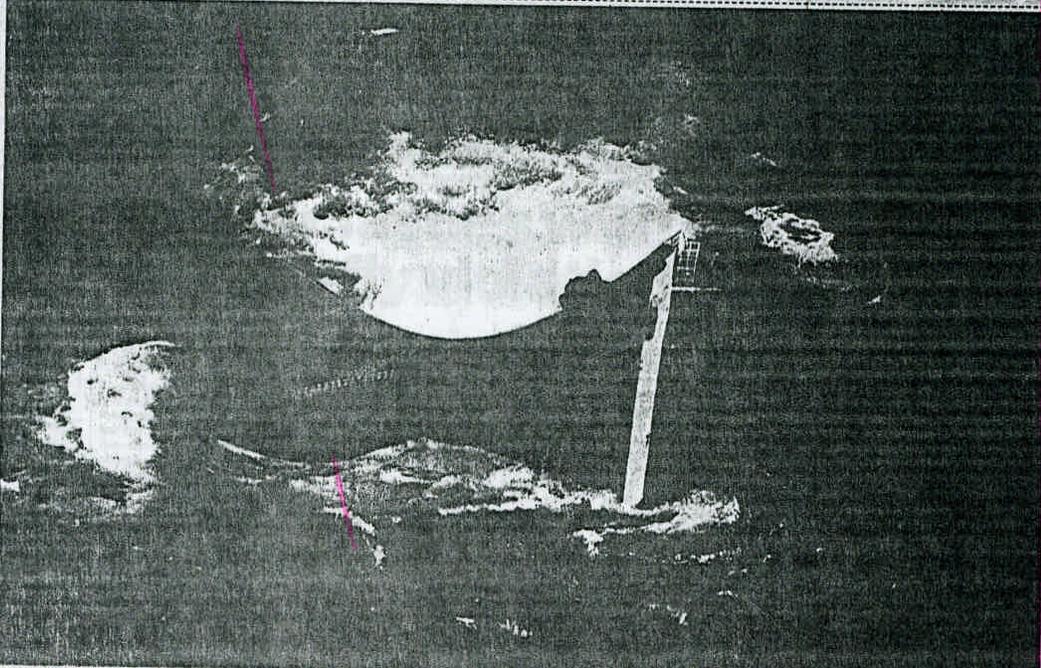
would prove short-term. But 22% believe the events of the past month will leave a long-term stain, and only 12% say they have emerged unscathed.

ICM interviewed a random sample of 1,000 adults by telephone between November 15 and 17. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results have been weighted to the profile of all adults.

Full poll results at guardian.co.uk/politics/polls

Year	Support for royals
1994	70%
1997	48%
2002	43%
Nov 2002	43%

Oil-laden tanker sinks beneath swirling sea as accusations begin to fly



The bow of the oil tanker Prestige, which broke in two early yesterday, floats for a few moments before disappearing off northern Spain. Photograph: Paul Hanna/Reuters

Timebomb under the ocean

ECOLOGICAL DISASTERS

Giles Tremlett in Camboodas, north-west Spain, and Owen Bowcott

The crippled, ageing oil tanker Prestige finally sank 130 miles off the north-west coast of Spain yesterday, taking 70,000 tonnes of highly destructive fuel oil to the ocean floor and threatening Europe's biggest ecological disaster in decades. With environmentalists and some experts warning last night that the tanker's deadly cargo would inevitably leak and rise to the surface, the western coast of Spain and Portugal was gripped by fear and uncertainty.

Many feared that a huge slick of oil, up to 20 times bigger than the one already released by the 26-year-old Prestige at the weekend, would form overnight and be

blown inshore by westerly winds over the coming days. European leaders expressed deep concern at the uncertain future of one of the continent's richest fish-breeding grounds and most unspoilt coasts.

The French president, Jacques Chirac, called for "draconian" measures to prevent similar accidents happening again. His call came as it emerged that the ship might have split apart at a point in its hull which had been previously re-welded. The ship is also believed to have been responsible for another oil spill off Texas in 1993, according to the US coastguard website.

David Osoe, industrial editor of the shipping newspaper Lloyd's List, told the Guardian the Prestige was one of a large number of oil tankers built in Japan during the boom years

of the 1970s which have triggered international disputes over maritime safety. "These tankers were churned out, mass produced using steel turned out to the lowest possible standard," he said. "Out of a global fleet of 1,800 oil tankers, around 300 are pre-1980, Japanese and single-hulled. They are being phased out but some have been given a period of grace until as late as 2015."

The six-day saga of the stricken Prestige ended when the prow of the boat slipped under five-metre Atlantic waves 130 miles west of Spain's Cies Islands yesterday afternoon. Earlier in the day the tanker, which was being dragged south and west by rescue tugs as it leaked its cargo, sank 3,000 metres on to the bed of the fish-rich Galician banks.

Spain and Portugal had refused repeated requests for the Prestige to be taken to a harbour where the fuel could be transferred to another vessel. The Dutch salvage company Smit International had said it would tow the vessel to Africa if necessary.

But the Prestige finally gave up the struggle today amid in the rough Atlantic. "We can't say goodbye to the ship and its cargo," Lara Walder of Smit said shortly after 4pm. Environmentalists immediately warned that the sunken tanker, which had released enough oil to blacken some 100 miles of the rugged stretch of Spain's north-west shore known as the Coast of Death, was a timebomb sitting on the bottom of the sea. "If all that escapes from the hull then this is a disaster which is going to

have twice the effect of the Exxon Valdez, which is one of the worst that we have known," Christopher Hall, WWF warned, referring to the tanker which ran aground in Alaska in 1989.

María José Caballero of Greenpeace said a vessel whose hull had cracked in open sea could not be expected to withstand the high pressures on the ocean floor. "The vessel cracked in the hull because it was very old. Nothing makes us believe it won't finally burst." Before sinking, the Prestige left a 150 by 15-mile slick of oil released over the past two days. That slick, the second released in the tanker's death throes, was already being driven towards the coast last night. Two of Spain's most delicate nature reserves, the Cies and the Ons islands, would be

the first to be destroyed by a tide of black oil.

"These are important habitats for turtles, seals, birds, invertebrates and algae," said tanker Navio of WWF. Fishermen in the Spanish port of Camboodas yesterday confirmed that, despite official claims that all the oil was north of Cape Finisterre, it had already reached coastal areas to the south. "One of the trawlers that was out last night came back with its nets completely covered with oil. All you can do when that happens is throw it away," said trawler skipper Claudio Otero. Benito Gonzalez, chairman of the town's Fishermen's Guild said the whole of page 2 Chirac calls for crackdown, page 5 More on the Prestige at guardian.co.uk/waste

Tough laws crim

Alan Travis and C

David Blunkett, the Home Secretary, last night's more far-reaching expected reform of rape as part of his overhaul of British laws on sex crime. Legislation to be in the new year historic change finally remove from book the 19th-century sexual offences gross indecency and by men, under which figures including were imprisoned. The abolition of tion in the sex law accompanied by new measures against pedophilia, new offences including children for sex stronger powers to child prostitution. The law on sex widely recognised incoherent and out of date, Mr Blunkett of it belongs in an the lightbulb or m we now live in global communities children two click internet porn sites by a multimillion industry.

The tougher laws in rape cases will number of accused walk free by conviction they honestly believe victim had agreed government's plans



Section	Page
Quick Index	
Letters	21
Weather	23
Cryptic Crossword	
Quick Crossword	
Today's TV	22

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breach. "Let me say that I don't think that the council will say this is in contravention of the resolution of the security council," he told reporters during a visit to Kosovo.

After his intervention Washington found itself isolated: no

COMMUNIST PRESS.

He said that so far, the Iraqis were cooperating with the inspectors. "We hope that this oral commitment will be translated into fact when we begin inspections next week."

The advance team is to try to re-establish a headquarters at

had "no legal grounds".

The contentious passage in the resolution says that Iraq shall not take or threaten any hostile acts against any representative or personnel of the UN or any member state.

The US claims this includes attacks on US and British

where no

But oth admitted attacks d violation a not get su

Special rep guardian.co

Timebomb under the ocean

SYSTEMIC COMMENT

Page 1 of the Ria Arousa, a sea loch famed for its shellfish which provides nearly two-thirds of Spain's mussels, was in a state of fear.

Everybody here lives from the sea, he said. "If this gets into this area the mussels will be ruined and thousands of people will suffer. It will cause more than triple the damage already suffered on the Coast of Death."

Although fishermen differed on whether the oil was more

likely to solidify in the cold ocean depths and sink to the bottom, or float up to form a massive slick, they all condemned the Spanish government's handling of the salvage.

They should have taken it into an estuary somewhere and allowed all the fuel to be taken off," said Jose Antonio Dominguez, who cultivates mussels. "If the boat had sunk, at least only one loch would have been affected. Now we will all suffer."

Madrid yesterday insisted it had done the right thing by expelling the Prestige from its waters. But Mr Chirac accused other leaders of failing to tackle the world's ageing tanker fleet, saying the EU had sworn to take urgent measures after the Erika tanker polluted swaths of France's Atlantic coastline in 1999. "I am horrified by the inability of those in charge, politically, nationally and particularly at European level, to take action," he said.

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#32 – Environmental Analysis, Oil Explanation, Giant Convergence Box

threat of dangerous tankers. Mr Chirac criticised the "inability of officials ... in par-

regularly transported oil from Baltic and Russian ports to the far east.

control experts in ship's tanks might ruptured upon in

A sea of troubles

January 1991, the Gulf
Around 1m tonnes of oil dumped by Iraq in the Gulf war, contaminating 400 miles of shore and destroying much of Kuwait's coral reef

July 19 1979, Caribbean
Atlantic Empress and Aegean Captain collide off Tobago, releasing 287,000 tonnes of crude oil into the sea

March 16 1978, Brittany
Liberian-registered Amoco

Cadiz grounded, releasing 223,000 tonnes of crude oil which covers 130 beaches, killing more than 30,000 birds

March 18 1967, Lands End
Liberian-registered Torrey Canyon runs aground in Cornwall, spilling 120,000 tonnes of crude oil and contaminating 140 miles of Cornish coastline.

January 8 1993, Shetlands
The Braer runs aground in storms, releasing 89,000 tonnes of crude oil. Fishing for prawns and mussels in the area banned for years.

December 3 1992, Coruna, Spain
Greek tanker Aegean

Crude oil flows from the crippled tanker last week after it sprang a leak in a storm Photograph: Xurxo Lobato/Voz de Galicia

50 miles

Area of affected coastline

ATLANTIC OCEAN

Galicia

SPAIN

Wreck of the tanker Prestige

Sea loses 74,000 tonnes of crude oil, contaminating 130 miles of coastline

February 15 1998, Wales
The Sea Empress spills 72,000 tonnes of crude oil and 480 tonnes of heavy fuel oil, polluting 125 miles of Pembrokeshire coastline.

March 24 1999, Prince William Sound, Alaska
The Exxon Valdez runs aground, contaminating 1,300 miles of coastline. Clean-up operation costs £3.5bn

Research department
Source: www.bhop.com

Spill will test nature's ability to recover

H.C. to explain diff in temp. + oil type on effects.

Analysis
Paul Brown

Oil-covered seabirds expiring on the shore are the first image of a tanker disaster and often spark frantic rescue efforts.

But apart from the immediate impact on wildlife there are claims that spills cause little lasting damage. The theory goes that nature will break down the oil with or without human intervention.

In some circumstances this is true but the type of oil, the climate and the time of year of the spill have a big impact.

The point is illustrated by perhaps the two most famous oil spills of modern years: the Exxon Valdez, wrecked off Alaska in 1989 in a disaster which killed thousands of seabirds, sea otters and other rare wildlife, and the Gulf oil

spills ordered by Saddam Hussein in 1991. The Iraqi spills, in which untold thousands of tonnes of oil were allowed to pour into the Gulf in an attempt to defend Kuwait, appeared to be an appalling act of environmental crime. Yet six months later, when the war was over, scientists found to their astonishment that the oil had all but disappeared.

The reason is that the Gulf is full of highly active oil-eating bacteria, regular spills mean a permanent population of oil-eating microbes is waiting to pounce. The massive spills of the Gulf war spurred the already numerous bugs to multiply rapidly.

The Exxon Valdez was the other extreme. Although in comparison the spill was tiny – 38,800 tonnes – it happened in freezing conditions in an enclosed area. The oil floated on to the beaches on which most wildlife lived, smothering everything. Unlike the Gulf, Alaska has no resident population of microbes; it was simply too cold for them to survive. The clean-up took many seasons and although the spill was 15 years ago wildlife has still not fully recovered.

A second important factor is the type of oil. Some crude is light and volatile and most of it evaporates harmlessly into the atmosphere. Heavy oils are harder to shift.

In the Braer disaster, off Sumburgh Head in Shetland in 1993, 130,000 tonnes of oil were spilt but most of it evaporated before it made landfall, helped by violent storms which broke up the slicks.

Although this disaster was not as bad as predicted, many salmon farms suffered great losses and were forbidden from selling stock because of fears of hydrocarbons in the fish. Ten years after the event, langoustine, or Norway lobster, an expensive shellfish which burrows in the contaminated sand, is still banned from sale.

The damage from the Spanish spill, the extent of which is still being calculated, was also lost for years. Already there is

enough oil being washed ashore to smother beds of mussels and winkles. These seabirds that survive will be stunted and may not be able to reproduce. Even mussels that appear healthy cannot be eaten because of toxins. Birds like gannets, which are wintering off the Spanish coast after breeding in Britain, are vulnerable as they dive through the slicks hunting for fish.

Sharon Thompson of the RSPB said the tanker was carrying heavy crude, which did not easily evaporate. Cool temperatures mean microbes which might break down the oil are dormant. It will be spring before natural cleaning processes get under way.

"It will be at least six months to a year before the shellfish colonies begin to recover and even longer to be sure they are safe for human consumption," Dr Thompson said, adding that the best way to deal with the oil was to shovel it off sandy beaches. On rocky shores, it was best to leave it alone as cleaning rocks would kill everything.

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on the site today

- Oil spill tragedy: Visit Guardian Unlimited's special report on waste and pollution for the latest news and comment, photographs illustrating the damage the oil has caused to seabirds and beaches, and a Q&A explaining how science can be harnessed to deal with spills
- guardian.co.uk/waste
- Tanker Interactive: Our click-through guide traces the Prestige's journey around the coast of Spain, shows where the vessel began losing oil and looks at the stretch of coastline affected by the slick
- guardian.co.uk/interactive
- Astley report: Giles Terrett reports from northern Spain on the frantic efforts to prevent the tanker from breaking up, and assesses the environmental impact on coastal wildlife and the people of Galicia
- guardian.co.uk/astley

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NOTE: CONVERGENCE

Tanker disaster

Gales threaten to drive slicks inshore

Gilze Tremlett in Santiago de Compostela, north-west Spain and Andrew Oshroff in Brussels

There have been no new oil spills since the boat went down. **Spain's** **Environment** minister, **Antonio Fernandez**, said the **Spanish coast** yesterday, though officials insisted there was no evidence that its tanks had imploded to release a deadly cargo of 60,000 tonnes of fuel oil that went down with it.

change direction overnight and drive the oil towards land at a much faster rate. **Spain's** transport commissioner, **retract statements** claiming Gibraltar had failed to carry out security checks on the vessel. The government **write to Ms Palaco**, whose sister **Anna** is Spain's foreign minister, demanding she admit that she had been wrong to

blame Gibraltar. **Ms de Palaco** not only refused to retract but repeated her criticisms. "If EU legislation had been in place it would have meant subject to a vigorous inspection in Gibraltar this summer," she told reporters.

Ma de Palaco also **annexed Portugal** by claiming the Prestige, which was in that country's air-sea rescue waters when it sank, was a Portuguese problem. But, as tar-covered seabirds began to appear in northern Portugal, environmentalists there criticised Spain for towing the disabled tanker south and closer to their own shores.

logical disaster of unimaginable proportions. **Luís Maceo**, head of **Naturalists** **Expedition** Nature Reserve said. A bitter debate continued to rage over whether the 60,000 tonnes on board the Prestige had sunk to the seabed and frozen into solid, unmovable blocks or would start leaking and float to the surface. Cleanup crews were scooping sludge from the more than

90 Spanish beaches affected so far. The environment minister, **Guillermo Maza**, estimated the damage to be far at £200m. In Madrid, the development ministry said it had started legal action against the Prestige's owners to seek compensation. "The EU yesterday released £80m of funds to pay compensation to the more than 1,000 fishermen forced to stay in port until further notice."

Port at mercy of oil slick prepares for worst

Villagers fear having to abandon home where 6,000 depend on the sea

Gilze Tremlett in O Grove, north-west Spain

Jose Manuel Nunez, wrapped in a blue and white raincoat, pointed out to the sea where gale force winds were churning up the Atlantic ocean beyond the small fishing port of O Grove. "We know there's oil floating out there somewhere. If this storm brings it in, we might as well all emigrate," he said before strapping on board the blue and white painted Navero yesterday afternoon to do a second shift to gather mussels. "Normally we only go out in the morning. But today we want to get as many mussels as we can in before any oil gets here," he said. **Jose Manuel**, son and grandson of O Grove's **mussel** **gatherers**, was not the only one talking of packing his bags if the slicks oil tanker Prestige, lying 130 miles to the west, spilled its deadly cargo into the shellfish-rich waters. Fear and panic continued to spread along the coast, despite the fact that the Prestige appeared to have taken most of its 70,000-tonne load of fuel to the sea bottom. With the storm rolling in off the Atlantic, and mist banks obscuring views of the sea in many areas, rumours of **missile** **oil slicks** in different directions **provoked anger and dismay**. Those slicks



Oil giants still hire cheaper, older ships

Terry Macalister

Big oil companies such as Shell, BP and ExxonMobil are continuing to charter ships of a similar age to the Prestige, according to statistics compiled by the industry with the help of a London broker. While Shell and others are keen to trumpet their commitment to the environment, shipping industry experts say their records suggest they are mainly choosing vessels on the basis of price. Older ships are **cheaper** to hire than modern ones. A review of tankers hired by big oil companies in recent weeks shows that the big three companies, plus others such as Chevron, Texaco of the US, Lukoil of Russia and Repsol of Spain, are all using older, single-hulled ships. Shell alone has more than hired the 24-year-old Enlitos on November 3 to carry 80,000 tonnes of oil from the Baltic to Singapore, while on October 23 it chartered the 24-year-old Apera M to carry a similar cargo to Singapore. Meanwhile BP on November 8 chartered the 22-year-old North Sea to carry 80,000 tonnes from Minna al Bahr in Iraq to the Mediterranean. Shell said last night that it vetted vessels more than 15 years old under a strict regime. This looked in detail at maintenance standards and factors such as steel corrosion. BP and Exxon Mobil also said they chartered tankers only after a rigorous safety process:

had been released before, or while, the tanker went down on Tuesday. "There is a 30-mile-long slick coming up from Portuguese waters. When I saw the pictures on the television I felt absolute panic," said **Francisco Iglesias**, president of the **Union of Fishermen** in Galicia.

Outside the guild's headquarters, the truck was being bent backwards by the force of the winds from the south-west, which were said to be pushing the oil inland at up to four miles an hour. "It is going to come on to the coast somewhere. It could be here within hours. I am really scared about what might happen tonight. If it gets in here, then the whole town will have to close down," said **Diego Iglesias**. Helicopters and spotter planes trying to track the oil spills beached overhead yesterday bringing in reports on the slicks which have already blackened 100-mile stretch of coast to the north. **From his back pocket** Mr Iglesias pulled a **numbered** **handwritten map** given to him by a **French pilot** who had overflown the area where the Prestige went down on Tuesday. "Look, the oil has broken into different slicks and they are all behaving differently," he said. "And there is a whole area of the sea that nobody has even looked at yet." On the quayside, where fishermen were bringing the day's catch into the fish mar-

"My father, my brother and my cousin work with me on the boat. We all have families. If we can't fish, nobody will have anything to eat!" Fisherman Jesus Pineiro

Fishermen hurriedly collect shellfish on the Spanish coast yesterday. Photograph: J.R. Lavandola/EPA

Atlantic Ocean

Shake-up of checks on vessels urged

Terry Macalister

"Some shipowners buy new ships, often built to minimum scantlings [steel content] and without regard to ease of maintenance, and sell them after perhaps 10 years, having carried out minimal maintenance during that time. Because of their construction many of these ships are difficult to inspect and maintain," it explains. It suggests that the IMO should lay down standards as to how new vessels are built and take power away from the class societies. The document, circulated to other IMO members, including Britain, has produced a furious reaction from the leading class societies. Robin Bradley, the IACS permanent secretary, has written to all IMO delegates urging them to

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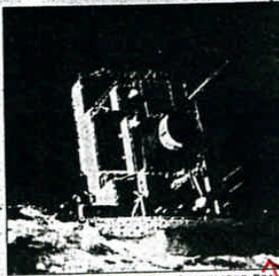
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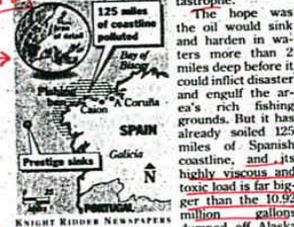
Catastrophic spill feared as oil tanker splits, sinks



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
The tanker Prestige, carrying 20 million gallons of oil, sinks off Spain in the Atlantic.

125 miles of Spanish coast already contaminated

SEATTLE TIMES NEWS SERVICES
MADRID, Spain — A damaged oil tanker broke in two off the craggy northwest coast of Spain and sank yesterday, threatening a spill nearly twice as big as the Exxon Valdez and an environmental catastrophe.



BY MIKE LINDHOLM
Seattle Times staff reporter
Forty years after Seattle built a futuristic one-mile monorail for the 1962 World's Fair, a tiny majority of voters has approved what could become the first crosstown monorail system in the nation.
The proposed 14-mile "Green Line," connecting Ballard, downtown Seattle and West Seattle,

Monorail: It's a

In nail-biter, 'yes' votes finish 868 ahead; opposition



JIM BATES / THE SEAT
Dick Falkenbury, founder of Seattle's monorail movement, speaks to supporters at Westlake Station yesterday. But Falkenbury was particularly festive. "It's just a step," he said of this year's election, the third vote in favor of a new monorail.

Next: neighborhood meetings, organizing board and staff

led by 868 votes as of yesterday afternoon, an approval rate of 50.23 percent. Only about 20 ballots remained to be counted before official totals are certified this afternoon.
Monorail backers rallied at Westlake Center, southern stater for the original monorail. A train pulled into the station, honking. Joel Horn, who is to be confirmed Friday as the first executive director of the new Seattle Popular Monorail Authority, hooted and slapped the sides of the monorail cars as a crowd chanted: "Monorail! Monorail!"
Dick Falkenbury, the cabdriver who founded the monorail movement nearly a decade ago, thundered like a professional wrestler as he addressed the 70 boosters at Westlake.
"We also have to thank the voters of Seattle for put trust and hard-earned our hands to build their system, and we're going to do it."
Henry Aronson, leader of the group, has no in seeking a recount and solve.
"It's not our life to politicians. Our job was to the voters," he said.

How it compares to Exxon Valdez spill

THE OIL: The Prestige carried fuel oil, which is heavier and harder to clean up than the crude oil spilled by the Exxon Valdez. The Prestige carried about 20 million gallons when it sank, nearly double the 10.92 million gallons the Exxon Valdez dumped when it ran aground off the coast of Alaska in 1989.

Most important, thus far the Prestige has leaked only about 2.5 million gallons of its toxic load, though experts said it was only a matter of time before the rest escapes.

THE LOCATION: The Valdez ran aground in the enclosed Prince William Sound; the Prestige sank in the open seas, where dispersal is more rapid.



STEPAN ZARKIN / GETTY IMAGES
Sen. Joe Lieberman, D-Conn., talks of "an historic day" as Sen. Fred Thompson, R-Tenn., looks on yesterday in Washington, D.C.

Dept. of Homeland Security w Bush hails action as 'bold step'

BY HELEN DEWAR
The Washington Post
WASHINGTON — President Bush won congressional approval for his proposal to create a Department of Homeland Security last night as the Senate joined the House in launching the largest government reorganization since the Defense Department was created in 1947.

In one of the final acts of the 107th Congress, the Senate voted 90-9 to fold about 170,000 employees from 22 agencies into a new department

charged with the responsibility of shoring up the nation's defenses against terrorism, Washington Sens. Patty Murray and Marsha Cantwell both voted for the measure.
"This is an historic day in this new age of insecurity that we entered Sept. 11 (2001)," said Sen. Jo-

What it will do
A breakdown of the homeland security legislation. A 12

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Spanish city awaits yet another black tide

Oil spill threatens aquarium at site of earlier disaster

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Dec 11/12

LA CORUÑA, Spain — The seals were the first to sense something wrong, abandoning their contaminated seawater pool for dry land. Now the people who run La Coruña's enchanting aquarium dread the coming of a noxious black tide that has devastated marine life along more than 250 miles of Spain's Atlantic coast.

The aquarium, one of only three in Europe that fill their tanks with seawater, was where the Prestige Sea, a tanker carrying 80,000 tons of fuel, ran aground and caught fire 30 years ago, causing what was until now Galicia's worst environmental disaster.

"We built it here as a homage to the sea in a place where we hurt it the most," said Ramon Nunez, the aquarium's director. "The idea was to make an environmental center where people would fall in love with the sea and never dare to damage it again."

Now La Coruña and its aquarium are threatened by fuel oil slicked in the 36-year-old tanker Prestige along the coast of Galicia for six days before it sank on Tuesday still carrying more than 17 million gallons of oil.

Workers here are charmed by the seals and their neighbors in the Octopus Garden, and by the inhabitants of the main fish tank, an oval room, glassed in around which thousands of fish glide, glowing at the museum mode. The design is 19th century. The idea is that this might be the underwater home of Captain Nemo, in Jules Verne's novel "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea," and it even smells of the sea.

"We are in grave danger," said Nunez as waves crashed against the stone walls around the aquarium's seawater pools, the foam tinged an ominous brown. Valves to the sea are now closed only at high tide when clean water flows in from the deep.

The tanks have not yet been polluted, but the oceans are not good. Yesterday morning, two of the seals, George and Ben, were spotted with oil, probably from contaminated waves that crashed over the 30-foot wall.

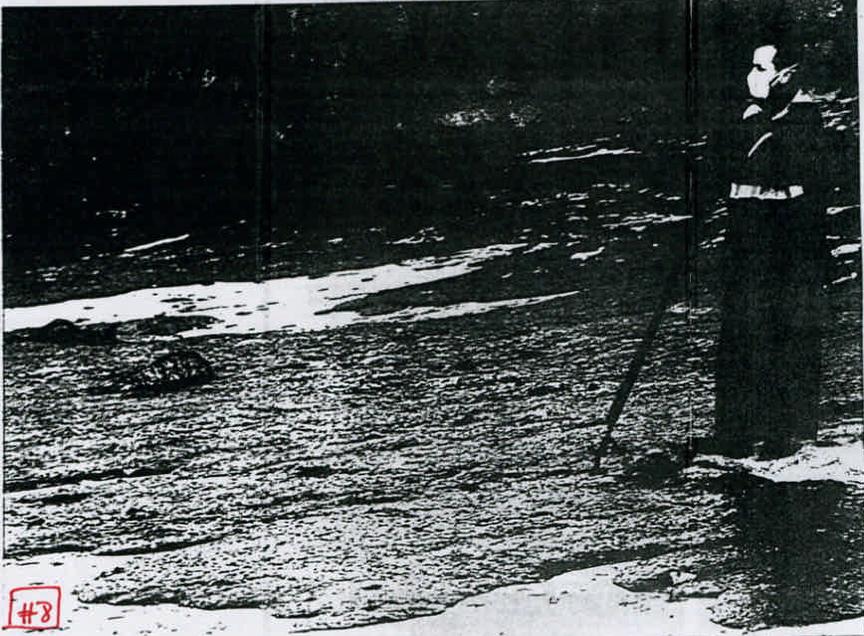
The aquarium could survive for three days without pumping in any seawater; after that, it would have to rely on seawater filtered from saltwater swimming pools, a very temporary solution.

If any of several slicks threatening La Coruña hit the coast here, Nunez will have to evacuate his charges. Many of the 25,000 fish might survive a transfer, but not the 60 species of invertebrates.

Nunez said that 30 years after the Prestige Sea disaster the ecosystem had yet to recover fully. The area has been restocked with commercially valuable species, but other creatures, such as sea urchins, are still missing from this stretch of coast.

The latest disaster threatens birds, fish, shellfish and the livelihoods of at least 7,000 families, banned from harvesting fish or shellfish along Galicia's northern coast. They fear that worse is to come, despite reassuring words from the government in Madrid.

The government has rejected criticism that Spain was wrong to send the crippled tanker out to sea, that it had underestimated the amount of fuel spilled and that it had mismanaged the cleanup. Portuguese officials have reported seeing four new oil



A worker games while cleaning oil from the beach at Muxia in Spain yesterday. An oil spill has devastated marine life along more than 250 miles of Spain's coast. The government puts the spill at 2.9 million gallons, half the estimate of environmental groups such as Greenpeace.

#8
"We thought, naively, that having two tanker accidents here would incite us against this. But it seems that human stupidity is greater than we thought."

RAMON NUNEZ

Aquarium director in La Coruña, Spain

slicks where the bow of the ship sank. "Everything points to continuing small leakages from the area where the bow sank," said Augusto Esquivel, director of the Portuguese Hydrographic Institute. Experts suggest that these are tubules of oil rising from the deep, a theory that appears to contradict the optimistic view of the Spanish government, which has denied the existence of any new spills since the tanker sank.

Spain's deputy prime minister, Mariano Rajoy, said yesterday that the fuel in the Prestige's tanks, now thought to be two miles down, would solidify and remain on the seabed. However, the government has asked a French submarine to examine the wreck and assess the situation.

Four large slicks appear to be still moving the coast. Two are close to shore, one is 170 miles from the city of Vigo and a fourth is 70 miles from Cape Finisterre. The government puts the spill at 2.9



Greenpeace activists prepare a banner reading "Oil bills" as part of a protest in front of the government building in La Coruña, Spain, yesterday. They said the local government had refused to provide them containers in which to collect oil that covers the beaches of the region.

million gallons, half the estimate of environmental groups such as Greenpeace. Rajoy blamed fierce storms off northwestern Spain for some of the problems.

He said a French and a Dutch ship able to scoop up oil from the sea were confined to port because they could not operate in extremely high waves.

"It is not a question of us not having ships available," he said, expressing the hope that the weather would improve enough for the boats to leave port tomorrow. Brushing aside questions over whether Spain was too slow to seek outside help, Rajoy said a German cleanup ship was due tomorrow and others from Britain and Belgium on Tuesday.

Environmentalists have complained that volunteers haven't been allowed to take part in the cleanup. But Rajoy said cleanup teams would be doubled and volunteers would be given work.

This Mack, a marine biologist with Greenpeace, said that even if the fuel seeped on the seabed, toxins would still leach into the water and enter the food chain.

His organization is demanding a swift end to the use of single-hull oil tankers such as the Prestige and a ban on environmentally friendly power sources. The European Union may accede to the first demand next month. Portugal has demanded that shipping lanes be moved far their out to sea.

Nunez, however, fears such measures will fail because they will cost more.

"There will be another disaster," he said. "We thought, naively, that having two tanker accidents here would incite us against this. But it seems that human stupidity is greater than we thought."

Rajoy contributed to this report.

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End of context

* Pull-Quote ab. human stupidity

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Service context

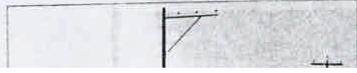
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cycle will be disrupted. Glacier release water in dry seasons and collect it in rainy ones.
"It's a natural fall," said Lonnie Thompson, a research scientist at the Byrd Center who has studied Andean glaciers closely. "Some people refer to these glaciers as the world's water towers, and once they're dry, you lose that water."

Global warming is melting glaciers in Andes

Scientists fear impact of quick demise

By JUAN FERRERO



"Ten years ago I started to see it — and every year it keeps going down and down."

ET CETERA

Update

- The defense began its arguments today in the espionage case against Brian Patrick Regan, with a George Washington University professor testifying that satellite pictures of Iraq, Libya and China could be bought from private companies.
- Chess grandmaster Garry Kasparov and the computer Deep Junior played to a draw in the fifth game of their six-game match in New York. The match is tied at 2½ points each.

Upcoming

A hearing in Oklahoma City will start May 5 to determine whether enough evidence exists to try bombing conspirator Terry Nichols on 160 state counts of murder.

People

Pageant organizers stripped Joseane Oliveira of her Miss Brazil title after discovering that she was married. She was replaced on Tuesday by first runner-up Taiza Thomsen. Oliveira will have to return \$3,360 in prize money but will get to keep the jewels she received for winning.

Sold!

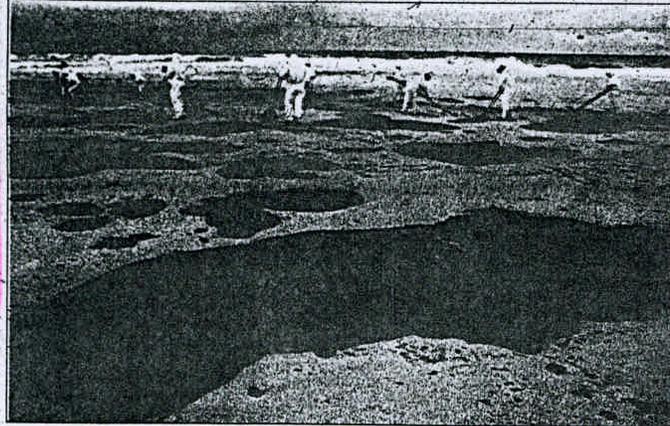
The notebooks of a 20th-century French executioner who sliced off the heads of almost 400 people fetched \$92,000 — more than five times its expected sale price — at Drouot auction house in Paris yesterday. Anatole Deibler noted places, dates, the weather, the names and crimes of the condemned, charting his work on some 2,000 pages.

By the numbers

For the first time since the late 1850s, Hispanic births accounted for more than half the births in California, according to a UCLA study released yesterday. Of the 138,892 babies born from July to September 2001, 69,672 of them — 50.2 percent — were Hispanic.

Critters

- A report by the University of Florida suggests that the number of shark attacks worldwide declined last year, in part because the weak global economy meant fewer people could afford trips to the beach.
- A Patagonian toothfish that usually lives in the icy waters around Antarctica has hitched a ride to the top of the world and turned up off the coast of Greenland. Scientists at the University of Copenhagen yesterday said they believe the fish caught a very deep, cold ocean current to migrate underneath warm tropical waters.



Local workers clean up the beach of Hossegor in southwestern France yesterday. Oil from the sunken tanker Prestige continues to wash ashore on the French Atlantic coast.

Oil spill spreads to Basque coast

BIARRITZ, France — An oil spill is washing up onto one of Europe's best surfing spots, the Basque coast of southwestern France, where cleanup workers in protective suits have replaced the usual crowds of surfers in wet suits.

Until this week, only small patches of oil from the sunken tanker Prestige had washed ashore on the beaches of France's Basque and Landes regions — a stretch of about 90 miles. Most of the damage was in Spain.

But in recent days, the tide has brought in thick sheets of oil. The areas hardest hit were the beach-

es around the resort town of Biarritz and nearby Anglet, close to the border with Spain and known for towering waves that draw surfers from around the world.

With most beaches closed, some surfers spent their days just hanging around.

"We're disgusted by this," said Mike Cameron, a French-American surfer who said he splits his year between California and the Basque coast. "We come here to prepare for spring and summer competitions, but this year we're wondering what we're going to do."

White-suited cleanup crews

worked with shovels to crack apart the large globs of oil and remove them from the beaches.

A slick believed to measure 125 miles in length was spotted in the Atlantic some 30 miles from the coast and could reach shore within the week, LCI television reported.

Traces of oil from the sunken Prestige first hit the French coastline in late December. Along with surfing, another casualty was oyster farming. France temporarily halted sales of oysters in January from the Bay of Arcachon, south of Bordeaux, which harvests 12,000 tons of oysters a year.

Threat to surfing beaches?

#10 ↑

SAVINGS. SIMPLE SAVINGS.

oysters = 2nd case to surfing here



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