

Culture shock and moral panic:

**An analysis of three mainstream Australian newspapers' response
to the Bali bombings in October 2002 and the arrest of 'smiling
Amrozi' in November 2002.**

Variya Lulitanond

Submitted in partial requirement for the degree of Masters of Journalism and Media

Studies at the University of Tasmania 2004

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr Pam Allen and Lindsay Simpson, for their continuous assistance, support and positive outlook throughout the semester. I would also like to thank Ben Lacey for his support the time he spent proof reading this thesis. Finally, thanks to all the staff at the Tasmanian State Library for their assistance.

Contents

Table of Figures	iv
Introduction.....	1
Literature Review.....	3
Methodology	13
Australian pain	15
Australia owns Bali.....	27
Indonesian pain	36
Cultural difference, ‘smiling Amrozi’	43
Media and Islam.....	54
Conclusion	59
<i>Works cited</i>	61

Table of Figures

Figure 1: <i>Aus</i> 's coverage of the Bali bombing grouped by article theme.....	18
Figure 2: <i>SMH</i> 's coverage of the Bali bombing grouped by article theme	18
Figure 3: <i>AFR</i> 's coverage of the Bali bombing grouped by article theme.....	19
Figure 4: Stories of Australian casualties by article type during the first week of coverage of the Bali bombing in <i>Aus</i>	21
Figure 5: Stories of Australian casualties by article type during the first week of coverage of the Bali bombing in <i>SMH</i>	22
Figure 6: Primary definers in <i>Aus</i> during the coverage of the Bali Bombing.....	32
Figure 7: Primary definers in <i>SMH</i> during the coverage of the Bali Bombing.....	33
Figure 8: Primary definers in <i>AFR</i> during the coverage of the Bali Bombing.....	33

Introduction

On the night of 12 October 2002, two bombs exploded in Bali, killing more than 200 people. The first bomb exploded in Paddy's bar, a well known Irish pub in Kuta and was followed by a bigger explosion less than a minute later at the Sari Club. Both were popular venues for Australian tourists. 88 Australians were killed and 196 were injured. The 'Bali bombing', as it came to be known in the media, became a tragedy for all Australians. The Australian media reported this tragedy by covering the stories of victims, the investigation into the bombing, political negotiations between the Indonesian and Australian governments and the capture of some of those allegedly responsible, including the man dubbed 'smiling Amrozi' by the media.

This thesis will examine the way three mainstream Australian newspapers reported on the Bali bombing. The three publications, *The Australian*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Australian Financial Review*¹ were chosen. The analysis will concentrate on the first seven days of coverage of the Bali bombing and the first four days of coverage after the interrogation of Amrozi. This thesis will focus on five different topics: Australian pain, 'Australia owns Bali', Indonesian pain, 'smiling Amrozi' and the way the three selected Australian newspapers reported on Islam.

The coverage of the Bali bombing during the first week after the blast emphasised Australian pain and devastation. The press concentrated on the idea that the Bali bombing was an Australian tragedy and implied a sense of ownership over Bali. Bali had

¹ Hereafter the publications will be refer to as, *The Australian: Aus*, *The Sydney Morning Herald: SMH* and *The Australian Financial Review: AFR*

been one of Australia's most popular tourist destinations for decades, and after the event, the press reported that 'Terror hits home', and that Australians had lost their paradise. The focus of reporting was on the Australians affected and little room was left for the Indonesians who, especially the Balinese, also lost people in the bombing. The bombing was an economic disaster for the Balinese who lost a large part of their tourist industry, Bali's main income.

The coverage, particularly the reporting of the arrest of Amrozi and his reaction, revealed a cultural divide between Australia and Indonesia. Amrozi's smiling created confusion and anger throughout the Australian community. Confusion also occurred during the reporting of the Bali bombing, with some members of the Australian Muslim community being mistreated by Australians who wrongly believed that Islam has an inherent connection to terrorism.

