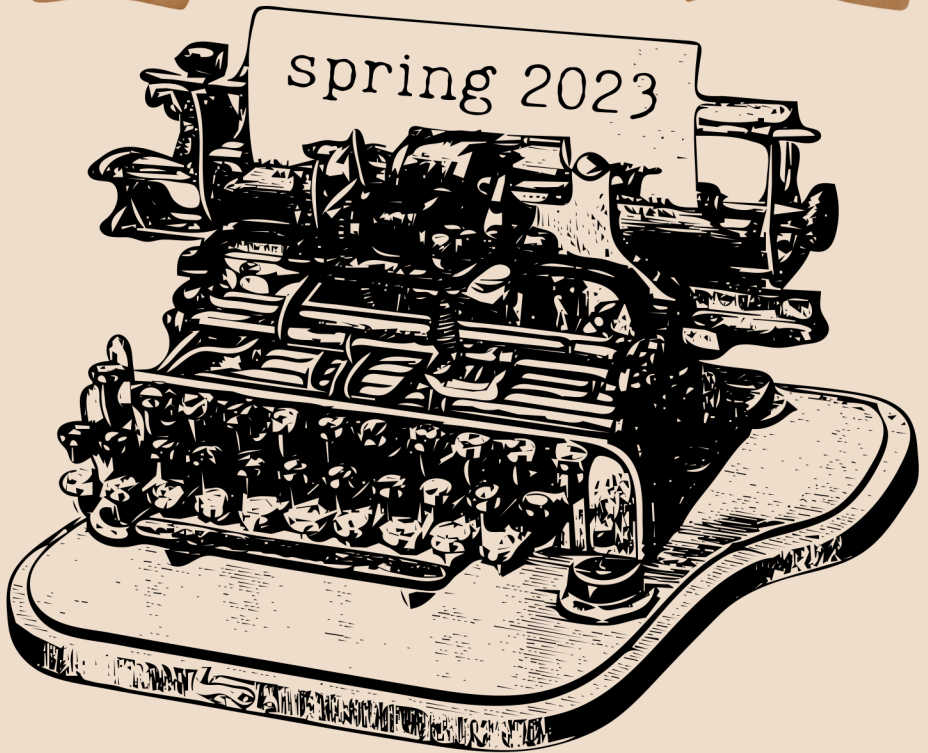


lowercase



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cover art: Delaina Walley

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The History of Jennings Oil and Gas Park

a historical research essay
by Leah Colson Ardoin

Economy drives every state in America, and, in Louisiana, industry is an essential part of the economy. Louisiana has various industries: food, clothing, music, art – all of which makes Louisiana an important part of the American economy. Louisiana is host to many celebratory and educational festivals, exhibiting the importance of each of the industries. Such festivals are held in most of Louisiana's parishes. One of these festivals is known as the Shrimp and Petroleum Festival, which recognizes the oil companies and fishermen who helped extract the first offshore well. This festival is culturally and historically appropriate, as it celebrates one of the most important industries in Louisiana: oil. The oil industry began in 1901 in the small town of Jennings, Louisiana. Oil is such an important part of Louisiana's history that a historical site has been erected to commemorate the entire industry. The Louisiana Oil and Gas Park, located in Jennings, Louisiana memorializes the first oil well in Louisiana.

The Louisiana Oil and Gas Park is a beautiful park located off Interstate 10 along the Jennings exit. The park was established in 1975 to serve as an attested place for Louisiana's oil industry. The park features a lovely pond and is filled with natural greenery; the pond includes a fountain that mimics an oil gusher. Additionally, the park contains a playground complete with an oil well structure, offering a thematic experience for visiting children. A pondside gazebo is a nice place for visitors to sit and discuss the history of the park. The Gator Chateau is perhaps the biggest tourist attraction of the park, recently redesigned and currently the home of several relocated alligators. Inside the Gator Chateau visitors can peruse a giftshop, which includes free brochures and other resources that tell the history of Louisiana's oil industry.

Although each of the aforementioned features are important to the park, the main historical feature is the replica of the first Louisiana oil well. The replica is found next to the Gator Chateau. Unfortunately, the replica was destroyed by Hurricane Delta in

October of 2020. Although it was struck over a year ago, the damage is still noticeable today. The park assistants have kept pictures of the original well and its replica, and a historical marker still stands in front of the replica site. The park assistants hope to recreate the replica in January of 2022.

Although the replica is in Jennings, Louisiana, the actual well was built six miles northeast in Evangeline, Louisiana – and is known as the Jennings No.1. The well was built on a rice field in Mamou Prairie. “The location selected was on the Jules Clement farm in the middle of a rice field. The derrick was erected, the machinery moved in and drilling was started on June 15, 1901”. The event that sparked this discovery happened just before the oil was found. The account written by Jeff A. Spencer and Byron Miller, recognizes that “Just nine months earlier, oil had been discovered near Beaumont, Texas, at Spindletop Field” [1]. People did not realize the domino effect taking place at the time, but it is recognized today that these two events were vital to the future of Louisiana. “It was only natural that the ‘oil fever’ spread over all of the surrounding country, and Jennings was one of the first to do something about it” [2]. It is easy to note that this is not far from the truth, and Louisiana’s economy would never be the same because of this significant discovery.

Louisiana’s economy experienced drastic changes because of the discovery made by Jules Clement, the owner of the rice field where the oil well was placed, and several other. Once oil was found in Jennings, oil wells emerged all over the Jennings area. “By early 1904 there were 35 producing wells in the field.” [3] In only three years, thirty-four more wells were developed in Jennings Field, which is in Acadia Parish, a neighboring parish to Evangeline. Based on this information, one can imagine how much change has

[1] Jeff Spencer and Byron Miller, “Jennings Oil Field: The Start Of Louisiana’s Oil Industry,” (Oil Industry History, 2003), 13.

[2] Jack Giovo, “Jefferson Davis Parish: An Oral History,” Louisiana’s Oil Industry Born in Evangeline, Jennings, (Jeff Davis Arts Council), 84.

[3] Spencer and Miller, “Jennings Oil Field: The Start of Louisiana’s Oil Industry,” 16.

occurred in these 120 years. Even though it has been such a long time since the beginning of the oil journey in Louisiana, oil continues to be a great part of Louisiana's economy.

One way that Jennings Oil No.1 shaped the economy in Louisiana was by creating many new job opportunities. Once oil struck, many new jobs started appearing in Louisiana. The reason for this was because oil is such a precious natural resource, and it is necessary to continue learning more about how to obtain and sustain the out-pour of such a natural resource. Every day that people work with oil opportunity is created for them as well as others to learn more about oil. One can observe how much researchers and oil workers have learned about the production of oil when he/she visits the Jennings Oil and Gas Park because there are people there who are researchers themselves, and those people can provide further information on the development of oil in Louisiana. Not only so, but he/she can visit the small town of Evangeline and see the marks left by Jennings Oil No.1. There is a monument in Evangeline that commemorates the old well and field in which it stood. There are also wells that are currently in use near the monument, and people who are familiar with the history of the town. This is because that history is relevant to many of the families of Evangeline and Jennings today.

The effects of the discovery of oil in Louisiana are still occurring today. The families of the area surrounding Jennings are not the only families who experience the mark of change that was brought about in the small town. It is logical to imply that all of Louisiana has experience with the economic aspects of oil.

"The flat, water-covered topography of coastal Louisiana facilitated the movement of petroleum exploration and extraction activities, allowing gradual movement from shallow marsh lakes to deeper bays to offshore (Freudenburg and Gramling, 1994). As a result, the majority of the world's coastal and offshore oil technology was developed in the Louisiana Deltaic Plain." [4]

[4] Robert Grambling and Ronald Hangelman, "A Working Coast: People in Louisiana Wetlands." 121, April 2005.

People did not stop finding out more about oil and the occupational opportunities it provided once it was unearthed in Jennings. Instead, they did more searching and observing, and found out that oil could be drilled offshore, and sense then, the lives of many Louisiana people face the economic advancements and profits that it brings about.

Offshore oil work is common in Louisiana, and many families have been impacted by the work done offshore. Offshore oil drilling did not begin when Jennings No.1 was established, but it is only done today because of the discovery made then. This occupation is necessary today as it helps drive Louisiana's economy. "Local fishing captains supplied knowledge of navigation routes for early offshore oil activities, and some of these fishermen became crew and supply boat captains." [5] This demonstrates how jobs began to come about to discover more about oil. One can imagine the population growth that occurs because of the uprising of the oil industry in Louisiana. Louisiana has become more diverse in its culture due to this as well. The oil industry is one of the great reasons why Louisiana is prosperous today, and it is important to recognize the impression it has on America's economy.

The history of Louisiana is forever being shaped by the exceptional moment which took place in Evangeline Louisiana in 1901. A great reason why one should visit the Oil and Gas Park in Jennings Louisiana is because it acclaims this historical event. Many people acknowledge the impact that one oil well has today because oil has become one of Louisiana's greatest sources of revenue. The discovery of oil in Louisiana provided many job opportunities which grew Louisiana's economy and population. It is because of this historical event that many tourists stop at the lovely Oil and Gas Park alongside of the Jennings exit on Interstate 10. Well, that, and the chance to hold baby alligators on their way to Texas. Out of the 400 festivals held all over Louisiana, only one celebrates the significance of the oil industry, which is disheartening considering the history of this industry. One of the best ways to experience Louisiana is to visit the historical sites that molded it, and the Oil and Gas Park is a delightful site to visit.

[5] Gramling and Hangelman, "A Working Coast: People in Louisiana Wetlands," 123.

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Snow

a creative piece
by Leona Marks

It's snowing. I watch each snowflake fall and hit the ground. I catch one in my glove and can see the divots on each side of the snowflake. **Beautiful.** The snow around me is so white, white as a lamb. It covers the discolored grass and every hole that you can see. It **covers** it.

I kept repeating that in my head. It **covers** it. The whitest of snow covers the darkest of dirt. It's so clean. **Beautiful.** I remember seeing the ground full of discoloration and holes but now it **covers** it. I looked up again. It's still snowing and continues to cover the ground.

I don't want to step on the snow. For then it wouldn't be beautiful anymore. I do anyway. I walk into the snow because I am curious. But, the snow turns brown from the dirt on the bottom of my shoes. It is so ugly. Why did I walk into the snow?

I walk back up to the porch and look at the snow in despair. You can see my steps. Why did I step in the snow? It's brown and ugly. I can see the holes now and the discolored grass underneath. Oh my. It's so ugly.

It's snowing. The snow is falling still. I watch as it descends and then look down at the snow. Discoloration. Holes in the snow. Oh. Oh! The snow keeps falling flake after flake. It's beginning to disappear again. I destroyed the snow with my steps, yet the snow falls **again** covering each little step I took. The ugliness was gone. The mistake I made was gone. **It covers it. Beautiful.**

The Drought

a short story
by Bethany Nichols

ONCE UPON A TIME there was a poison dart frog named Mr. Lepew, and he lived with his wife in a cozy little leaf house in a rainforest where they were enjoying their quiet days of retirement alone together. Alone because the last of their two hundred and fifteen tadpoles had moved out last spring. However, their days were growing increasingly less enjoyable because of the breath-stealingly dry drought that had attacked the rainforest several months before.

One hot dry morning, Mr. Lepew was sitting on his front porch, rocking and reading, while Mrs. Lepew was sweeping the porch. They were very unhappy with each other because they never could agree on how clean to keep the house or what activities to do in their free time. So, Mrs. Lepew spent most of her miserable days cleaning the house exactly the way she wanted but with only limited cleaning supplies, no water, of course, and Mr. Lepew spent most of his time reading the paper, guessing at sudoku, and scornfully enjoying himself.

After a few furious strokes of her broom, Mrs. Lepew cried, "How can you juth thit there?! The humidity ith completely gone, and I am mitherable!" Mrs. Lepew spoke with a lisp now because the lack of saliva in her mouth prevented her from saying the letter S. "I have got to have thom water or my beautiful blue thkin is going to thwivel up and turn brown!" When she realized her husband wasn't paying attention, she added, "And then I'll die!" Mr. Lepew only grunted without looking up from his newspaper. Mrs. Lepew's eyes bulged, and she said, "Get up right thith minute and go fetch me thom water! Go check the well, the water tree, or – or even Timeleth Hollow! I don't care where, juth go, or I won't bother to cook your termiteth for thupper!"

"I don't like your fried termites anyway," he humphed. Mrs. Lepew carelessly

dropped her broom, which fell with a thump on the dirt floor, and entered their little hut made of banana leaves. A moment later, she returned with a jar of freshly collected fireflies (1) and three golden carrots, which was her inheritance from her father.

"If you go to Timeleth Hollow, you'll need thith," she said without looking at Mr. Lepew. He took the jar but said he couldn't carry as much water as the carrots would buy. She returned to her sweeping without another word, and eventually the frustrated frog leaned over out of his chair and slowly hopped away, the morning sun glinting off the black speckles on his blue back.

Finding water during a drought was no easy task. It was better to just sit still and do nothing, which required less moisture, but Mr. Lepew's wife insisted upon constantly cleaning and talking, and exerting energy in other frivolous ways, all of which required water.

First, the haggard husband checked the well near their house but without expectation. It was a large hole, which had been dug by the Chickney Chimps several years before (2). Realizing they might need another source of drinking water besides the drying River Splatt, Mr. Lepew and his neighboring frogs had lined the bottom of the hole with thick leaves to catch and retain the rain. They had even hired the local tarantula to weave a silken web screen over the top as a filter, but it never rained, and the hole/well was still empty.

-
1. The sloths who ruled Timeless Hollow sold their bountiful resources in exchange for anything light-producing, shiny, or sweet. Since food was scarce outside of the hollow, most customers only had access to bright or shiny items.
 2. Several years earlier, the Chickney Chimps set out on a rampage to find gold in the rainforest. They were completely unsuccessful, and they didn't bother to fill in the holes they dug in the process. The Chimps were unaware that the gold in that area had already been found and hoarded by either the sloths or the greedy gorillas. (Mr. Lepew, however, had managed to save his wife's inheritance of gold carrots, which her father had bartered from a foreign rabbit).

"Well...no water here," humped Mr. Lepew. Realizing that his bright blue complexion was growing dryer and more brittle by the second, he picked up his pace until he made it to the shade where he paused to catch his breath. He had stopped going to the Jungle Gym months ago and could tell a noticeable difference in his fitness level, but his marriage was declining even faster than his physique.

Why was his marriage declining anyway? The first few months after their wedding had been the happiest – all sunshine and mosquitos. Now that their multitude of tad poles had grown up and moved away, Mr. Lepew didn't know what to do with his life. Any entertainment he could scrounge up only made the time pass more slowly, and his wife just cleaned and cleaned and badgered him to go find water and cleaned some more. His friends were all too busy with their own water predicaments to go fly hunting anymore, so his retirement, which was supposed to be the happiest years of his life, was filled with boredom, never ending thirst, and a wife who worked constantly. He was just a grumpy old toad now, deprived of water and motivation. But life moved, and living still required hydration.

After the disappointing dry well, Mr. Lepew hopped toward the river Splat. Instead of a body of water, however, all he found there was a colony of ants playing checkers with the smooth river bottom stones.

Next, the discouraged frog headed toward the Water Tree. The giant tree's armored bark hid a cool stream of liquid, which uniquely flowed out of its base through a spout attached there by the carpenter bees. Mr. Lepew stood on his hind legs and halfheartedly turned the faucet, only to be showered with dust and dry leaves. "Ugh!" he croaked. "And there's no water to wash either." Bodily cleanliness as well as housekeeping was considered a virtue in Mr. Lepew's family.

"What do we have here?" A shrewd, chilling voice asked. Mr. Lepew turned to see the fire bellied snake, Shakanda, gazing down at him with her tongue flicking in and out of her mouth. "A nice, tasty frog for my supper!" she waved her head back and forth, trying to force him to make eye contact. Mr. Lepew was too frustrated even to

be afraid of Shakanda, who was his only predator in the entire rainforest.

"I don't even care," he cried, a dry cry, of course for he didn't even have enough liquid to produce tears. "I'm thirsty and brittle and tired of my life. Just put me out of my misery!" He plopped down in the dirt and waited to feel the snake's sharp fangs in his neck.

Shakanda twitched her tongue, wrinkled her nose, and said, "You are pathetic, Mr. Lepew. You could at least appreciate my new line! I've been waiting weeks to use it, but no one has come for a chase since the tree ran dry. Speaking of which, I haven't had a proper drink in weeks, and I can't eat anything either because all the animals beg for their lives so pitifully that I just don't have the heart to kill them!" Mr. Lepew sat indifferently, listening. Her red, yellow, and black pattern appeared dull, and she seemed thinner since his last flight from her. (3)

"Nothing tastes good either," she went on. "You look like a sack of dirt, yourself. It makes my stomach turn." The frog didn't know whether to be relieved or offended.

"Maybe you should become a vegetarian," he smiled humorlessly.

"You're testing your luck, Mr. Smarty Pants. You may be dry, but I haven't eaten frog legs in quite a while." Shakanda glared at him for a long moment, considering. After an awkward silence, Mr. Lepew sighed. "I guess I'll go to Timeless Hollow then."

"You mean that slow place with the sloths?" asked Shakanda. "I can't stand that place!

The furry gate keeper always insults my scales, so I quit going there weeks ago."

Mr. Lepew shrugged and hopped slowly away, wondering how he had survived the encounter without fighting or fleeing. **This drought is going to destroy all of us,** he thought, shuddering.

3. Mr. Lepew typically encountered Shakanda once a week when he took the risk to check the Water Tree. Sometimes, his fellow frogs would join him, and they would take turns being chased by the snake, so they could all get what they needed. But now it was every frog for himself.

Proceeding through the forest only provided more depressing thoughts – brittle brown leaves, dusty dirt, and worst of all, murky brown animals who had changed to match the scenery. Any social hierarchy that had existed before was now dead in this uncharacteristic desert, and it was about to bury them within itself.

Suddenly, the air changed, and time seemed to slow. Brown leaves shifted to green vegetation, and the scents of fresh fruit floated on the light, refreshing breeze.

Timeless Hollow, the land of the sloths, must be close. Then his movement slowed to a crawl. A healthy sloth with long golden hair lethargically hung upside down from a tree branch. He held a small notepad and pencil in one claw. (4)

“Can I help you?” he asked in a high smooth voice.

“I need water, as much as these are worth,” Mr. Lepew held up his jar of currency. After painstakingly counting the number of fireflies, the gatekeeper wrote something in his notepad and replied, “You may have as much as you can carry, little frog. Just go to the throne room whenever you are ready.” This short exchange took nearly ten minutes, and Mr. Lepew decided to stop by the river on his way to the leafy palace. After an hour or so of sluggish hopping, Mr. Lepew finally made it to the river at the center of Timeless Hollow. Glorious, sparkling water gushed down the twin falls and swept along rocky banks, and a rainbow splashed upon the crystalline surface.

Mr. Lepew looked at everything within range of his eyesight since it took so long to turn his head. The previously glaring sun now smiled through the bright leaves, casting sparkling diamonds upon the river’s face, and the tree trunks shone with



4. The sloths initially took over Timeless Hollow because no other animal could stand the extremely slow-moving time there. Sequentially, the drought could not affect the Hollow as early as it did the rest of the rainforest. And because the other rainforest dwellers ridiculed the sloths for establishing a kingdom there, which none of them respected, the sloths took advantage of their resources after the drought, posting gatekeepers and charging revenue for the smallest amount of water. Now, the respect they gained was out of fear of death by dehydration.

dew and sported healthy bark. Large fish populated the river, swimming about careless of any potential predator besides the folivore sloths. Unable to withhold himself, Mr. Lepew stepped one webbed toe into the river, then another, and then he submerged his entire dry cracking body down into the cool refreshing water. It was glorious. He could feel each pore open wide in anticipation as the rich liquid seeped inside. He could even feel his heart cooling off again. Because his blood had grown so warm, he had almost forgotten that he was a cold-blooded creature.

Oh, it was so worth the time! thought the melting frog. But in addition to relief, he felt a wash of guilt, realizing how thirsty his wife must be this very moment while he basked in delightful wetness. After dragging his soaked self out of the bath, Mr. Lepew hopped with new determination toward the throne room.

The sloth king sat in a shelter made of his favorite flavor of leaves. It was thick enough to keep out the rain, which mercifully still fell here, but sparse enough in places to host the sun's rays. He lounged upon a stone throne and looked at Mr. Lepew with a lazy countenance. Without speaking, the large sloth lifted one hand in the direction of his servant, while munching on nuts out of the other hand. The servant chose a hollow nutshell from the pile strewn across the room and held it under an opening in the rock to the left of the throne, from which flowed a narrow stream of water. He paused once to refill the king's golden goblet before filling the shell completely. Mr. Lepew then covered the shell with a thick leaf, sealed it with some mucus from his newly hydrated skin, and loaded it onto his back for the trip home.

"Wait, there's more!" The servant sloth slowly rushed toward Mr. Lepew. "Would you like some flavoring for your water?" He displayed three small bottles of liquid flavoring. "I have stringy peaches (pulp included), spicy pineapple, and banana peel."

Mr. Lepew paused only briefly as he considered the exotic flavor of spicy pineapple, but remembering that he had no more fireflies, he replied, "No, not today,"

and started for the Hollow exit.

The sky outside the water sanctuary had darkened considerably already, and even once Mr. Lepew was free of the lethargic trance, he moved carefully to preserve every drop of his treasure. The stars twinkled brightly in a dry sky by the time he reached his little house in the brush. It was lit from within by more jars of fireflies (5), but Mrs. Lepew was nowhere to be found. The house was quite clean though, and a supper of grilled termites and wilted salad sat uneaten on the table.

"I'm home!" Mr. Lepew called less gruffly now that he felt renewed by his swim. There was no reply. Finally, he returned outside to his bundle, wondering what could have happened to his parched wife! Had Shakanda attacked her in his absence?! Or had she shriveled up and died like she told him she would this morning?

A sound like sandpaper rubbing against dirt emitted from his right. Confused, the blue frog moved cautiously forward.

"It's me," croaked something in the dirt.

"Oh, my dear!" Mr. Lepew was slightly ashamed at how smooth his own voice was, and he immediately scooped up some water in his webbed hand and let it trickle across his wife's thin, dehydrated skin. It dried almost immediately as the water soaked deep inside. So, Mr. Lepew mixed some of the precious liquid with the cooling dirt and made a paste, which he then laid across every inch of his wife's body. Mrs. Lepew was very grateful for the relief, but she refused to go inside her clean house covered in mud, so Mr. Lepew brought their supper outside, and they ate under the stars before drifting off to sleep to dream watery dreams together.

The next morning, the female half of the couple said to her husband, "I feel much better this morning, but I think you ought to go back to Timeless Hollow and bring me back some more water. And anyway, why didn't you come home right away,

5. Poison dart frogs can catch fireflies quite easily, but because of their inability to digest them, they use them instead to light their homes.

rather than making me work myself sick yesterday?”

After a thorough explanation of the previous day’s events, Mr. Lepew apologized. “I’m sorry I’ve been so grumpy throughout this drought, and for the last several years too. I haven’t been the husband you needed, and I almost let you die! Please forgive me. I’ll never put my happiness or hydration before yours again!”

“I’m sorry too,” replied Mrs. Lepew. Her voice sounded much better this morning. “I’ve been so concerned about a clean house, I forgot to appreciate the frog right in front of me! Please forgive me!”

After forgiveness was given on both parts, the couple decided to take a vacation. They packed enough food for a week, and together they hopped to Timeless Hollow for the honeymoon (6) they had always wanted. They caught as many fireflies as possible and even gave up their gold carrots to the sloth king in exchange for a blissful week in his kingdom. For days, the happy couple swam in the river, basked in the sunshine, and feasted on fresh juicy pineapples, mangoes, oranges, and most of all, passion fruit. At the end of the week, they returned home only to decide to permanently move to Timeless Hollow, but it turned out that they didn’t have to because that night it rained.

6. Honeymoons are a favorite dessert in the rainforest. Their primary ingredients are honey, cream of sconk, and juicy poshmelons.

Moby-Dick: Foreshadowing and Symbolism Fuse to Convey Melville's Warning Against Human Intrusion in Nature

a literary research essay
by Samantha Ray

Authors of every genre often use various literary devices to amplify the reading experience. Devices such as foreshadowing and symbolism subtly clue in readers to an upcoming surprise or create a breadcrumb trail of suspense that leads to a cunning twist, a jaw-dropping finale, or an embedded message. Presented as a tale of epic adventure and informative processes, Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* is a sensational saga sailing atop the novel's true and haunting message; Melville masterfully pairs ominous foreshadowing with sinister symbolism to demonstrate the dangers of man versus beast, issuing an eye-opening warning against human intrusion in nature.

The whaling excursion on which the crew embarks is wholly motivated by Captain Ahab's incessant thirst for revenge against the whale who bit off his leg. Ahab is dangerously proud and harbors great anger toward *Moby-Dick*, an anger responsible for his long-burning flame of fury. Upon first seeing Ahab, Ishmael describes the captain's air as seemingly "overbearing" (Melville 107). Author Michael Eric Dyson warns that a disposition such as Ahab's inevitably prompts "many destructive manifestations" (1), often with dire consequences. Ahab believes himself superior in every way to the whale; he believes that he has the power to avenge his loss, but his mentality and recklessness become his undoing. Early establishment of the animosity between Ahab and *Moby-Dick* brings into focus the long-standing enmity between arrogant humans and nature. Additionally, in creating such hostility between his two major characters, Melville sets the story's tone while also forming the moral foundation on which his novel is built.

The ship on which the crew sails is hugely symbolic of susceptibility, as the Pequod is named after an extinct Native American tribe (Melville 66). Though the ship's name implies peril for all aboard, the real warning is represented in the ship's physical placement atop the vast sea. Author and shipbuilding expert Apostolos Delis details in his book the process as well as the pros and cons of wooden shipbuilding, explaining that while ships are "designed to be exposed to the dangers of the seas" (38), each voyage is a potential "feasting occasion" (38). In other words, every boat is built to manage at sea but has the potential to fail, and in cases of failure, those on board become a prospective meal opportunity for the hungry creatures below. Wave-beaten and tossed about on the roiling waves, the Pequod is completely at nature's mercy. Melville's choosing to set his tale in a wooden whaler at sea creates the appropriate tension with which to effectively highlight man's vulnerability against nature's brawn.

Melville paints a chilling portrait as he contrasts the goings on above and beneath the sea. Ishmael describes the sky as "pure and soft, with a woman's look" (Melville 425) and the sea "robust and man-like" (425), an uneven comparison meant to highlight the fit and the frail. Ishmael continues, describing birds "on high, [gliding like] gentle thoughts of feminine air" (425) and "the bottomless blue [filled with the] murderous thinkings of the masculine sea" (425). Humans have access to the sky through sight, flight, and height; however, the sea is virtually off limits, specifically in the text's time, as humans have not the ability to explore the entirety of its far-reaching depths. The comparison of sky and sea establishes a clear disconnect between man and nature, and the use of femininity versus masculinity emphasizes the weakness of humans against the strength of nature. Author E. Boehmer explains that the use of such juxtaposition "intensifies and enhances" (43) the true message within the narrative. The stark difference between air (human territory) and sea (nature's territory) advises against man's confrontation with the wild and forewarns of the inevitable dangers lying in wait just below the rolling

swells.

Melville further emphasizes the risks of man versus nature through Ishmael's description of the church's interior walls. Ishmael attends service before leaving port and delivers a spine-tingling sketch of the walls around him. Each wall is adorned with "marble tablets" (Melville 39) commemorating an abundant number of whalers lost at sea. The plaques read: "sacred to the memory of John Talbot...lost overboard"; "sacred to the memory of Captain Ezekiel Hardy...killed by a Sperm Whale"; "sacred to the memory of...the boat's crew...towed out of sight by a whale" (40). Not only do these plaques suggest an ominous outcome for the Pequod's crew, but each memorialized victim represents an instance of man's arrogant interference with the wild and provides a chilling display of nature's certain triumph. In his editorial on the consequences of human intrusion in nature, author Stephen Ambu explains that "nature has the ability to manage...against the onslaught of man" (1). Melville uses the wall-mounted memorials to symbolize man's inferior position when pitted against beast, delivering a cautionary plea against challenging the colossal creatures of the sea.

The dissuasion continues with Ahab's lost limb and the material from which his prosthetic is fashioned. Ahab stands upon an "ivory leg" (Melville 107) crafted from "the polished bone of [a] Sperm Whale's jaw" (107). Ishmael sees Ahab standing "erect, looking straight out beyond the ship's...prow" (107). The captain's straight-backed stance and elevated position over the water reflect his and humanity's sense of superiority over nature; however, Melville cleverly situates Ahab upon a whale bone leg to combat such conceit. That Ahab depends on for every step the very creature he deems lesser than himself boldly mocks human arrogance and exhibits "the remedial measures taken by nature to correct human intrusion" (Ambu 1). Melville places Ahab and his inflated ego atop the whale bone leg to serve as a grim representation of pride corrected, issuing a strong warning to all who consider provoking nature.

In the Parsee's death scene, Melville eerily showcases the power of eyes. Fedallah disappears during the chase then reappears when Moby-Dick breaches the water's surface with him at his side: "Lashed round and round to the fish's back; his [clothes] frayed to shreds; his distended eyes turned full upon old Ahab" (Melville 447). Henry David Thoreau, philosopher and author of *Walden*, details his experience at Walden Pond, comparing the body of water to a pair of eyes: "The [pond] is 'earth's eye[s]'" (qtd. in Birkle 509). Fedallah's enlarged eyes represent nature's eyes, locking with Ahab's as if urging him to cease in his quest for revenge against the whale. This moment is a simultaneous stare down: one between Ahab and his dead shipmate and one between man and nature. After surfacing, Moby-Dick shifts his path, "steadily swimming forward" while the Pequod heads toward him. Melville uses Fedallah's unnerving appearance to display the consequences of man's destructive interference in nature, and he uses the head-to-head positions of boat and beast to represent the vicious clash between the two.

The pinnacle of the story comes about in the novel's last few paragraphs. In the dramatic moments after learning Fedallah's fate, Ahab forges forward in pursuit of Moby-Dick. After years of hunting, Ahab finally gets his long-desired confrontation – and the whale his, no doubt. Ahab is described by author David Dowling as a man "obsessed with vengeance" (50) toward the whale. Setting up for the final faceoff, Moby-Dick turns toward Ahab's harpooning boat, "seemingly seeing the source of his persecutions" (Melville 449), a representation of nature's eyes once again warning man to stand down. In a cloud of exhilaration and sheer fury, the vengeful captain launches his tethered harpoon at the whale, but in a perilous scuffle, the rope loops around Ahab's neck and pulls him into the sea. Moby-Dick dives downward into the abyss with Ahab in tow, creating a violent vortex by which the Pequod and crew are pulled into the depths. That Ahab's wrath is so violently quelled supports Thoreau's argument in *Walden*: "every intrusion into nature [is] reduced to an absolute minimum" (qtd. in Birkle 503). Ahab's vicious death and the elimination of his crew

and ship demonstrate such reduction. Both horrific and beautiful, the violence of this scene exhibits the consequences of man's self-proclaimed superiority, nature's self-sufficiency, and serves as Melville's final illustration of the indomitable force that is nature.

Though filled with suspense, sadness, adventure, and anger, the novel ends with a picture of true and radiant tranquility, a serene scene of balance with which to counteract the mayhem. After the final brawl between Ahab and Moby-Dick, the spacious sea returns to its natural state: "all collapsed, and the great shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled five thousand years ago" (Melville 452). In *Walden*, Thoreau continually stresses nature's ability to right the wrongs inflicted upon it; he explains that nature repeatedly restores itself "to create order out of chaos" (qtd. in Birkle 503) – which explains the ocean's state of peace after such pandemonium. Ahab's relentless rage introduces unnecessary turmoil to Moby-Dick's otherwise placid existence, and in response to this needless disorder, the whale's disposition drastically transforms from docile to defensive; he grows determined to protect both himself and his territory. Moby-Dick's reaction to Ahab's relentless wrath demonstrates nature's ability to quell chaos and restore order in the aftermath of human intrusion.

Beyond the details of whaling and ship dimensions is the true message of the novel and the essence of Melville's heart. Author Emily Gowen claims that "Moby-Dick is [in many ways] a romance" (279), a theory supported throughout the narrative. The story's undercurrent flows like that of a love letter to nature, acting as Melville's very own vow to dissuade the ill intentions of man, as even the most severe of scenes are peppered with his obvious compassion for the wild. In crafting this remarkable story, Melville reveals his heart for nature and gives a voice to the otherwise unheard; he allows nature to speak freely through his prose and gives nature the final word: you have been warned.

Writers of every genre use literary devices to add dimension to their works and

elevate the reading experience. The use of devices such as foreshadowing and symbolism help to suggest a shocking revelation, build edge-of-your-seat suspense, or deliver an underlying message. Presented as a tale of epic adventure and informative processes, Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* is a sensational saga sailing atop the novel's true and haunting message; Melville masterfully pairs ominous foreshadowing with sinister symbolism to demonstrate the dangers of man versus beast, issuing an eye-opening warning against human intrusion in nature.

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It

a poem
by Mackenzie Strickland

Is not a statue, but lives and breathes
Overtakes every part of me
Comes down from its stool to meet its maker
I shake its hand—its own creator

Rushes like water yet leaves me dry
Thirsting making pleading cries
Ebbs and flows? No—Rages. Kills.
And I begged it come for the thrill

Snatch it. Stab it. Strangle it dead.
Bury it in an unmarked bed
Keep an ever-watchful eye
Else it raise up back to life

I hear Someone say "Be still and Know—
Give it to Me and let it go."

Colossians 3:5

Edmund Spenser and Classical Art

a literary and historical research essay
by Delaina Walley

The English Renaissance was a time of intellectual revival that began in the 15th century and carried over into the earlier years of the 17th century. Out of these three centuries, the 16th century seems to offer some of the most substantial contributions to the movement. This period was filled with rejuvenation of ideas through a combination of different art mediums: visual, auditory, and literary. Among the most prominent English Renaissance literary figures is Edmund Spenser. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, Spenser produced an English epic, which he entitled *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser's epic, which is dedicated to the honorable queen, is a tantalizing fictitious tale of mankind's search for virtue amid continual temptation. As an author during a time of such flourishing thought, Spenser draws upon the creativity that is coming to light all around him in various forms such as tapestries, sculptures, architecture, portraits, and literature. Because of the increased significance of art and intellect, Spenser uses these aspects of the Renaissance to his advantage. This English author alludes to classical art within *The Faerie Queene*, a tactic which grounds the theme of the poem into a form understandable and relatable to his contemporaries. Spenser uses references to classical art within *The Faerie Queene* to display the possibility and importance of leading a virtuous life that upholds Christian principles set before man by God.

Before one can begin to understand the significance of art within *The Faerie Queene*, he must develop a general understanding of the progression of art during the Renaissance. Learning about the basic principles of renaissance art forms provides a background for the language and imagery found within Spenser's exceedingly colorful text. According to an in-depth study of 16th century European art, "The achievements of humanism in the fields of geometry, perspective, composition, and

light were by now common property in the world of art... Expressions, gestures, color, and a canon of ideal beauty were now closely studied" (Zuffi 14). As the Renaissance spread new ideas across Europe, art became humanistic in nature; everything seemed to come to life as the period moved toward the focus of man and his intellect. As the Renaissance progressed, man's intellect continued developing in new ways. A new appreciation began to develop for classic Greco-Roman art from previous periods, with a revived mind which has continually refined its process of interpretation. As well as through tangible art pieces, art began to evolve through other mediums such as music and theater. Lori Kent comments on this topic, "Places and artworks come alive through an addition of cultural contexts" (43). Spenser proves this to be true within his epic as he utilizes the artistic context of the world around him to display the truth of the overarching narrative. The cultural context and implication of each work of art is unique and contributes to Spenser's theme in different ways.

By portraying such vivid images for his reader, Spenser employs the technique of ekphrasis. Sarah Howe very simply describes this technique as a "literary depiction of works of visual art" (34) that "act[s] as a prism through which the poet can regard his own artful creations" (34). Howe is correct in her assertion that Spenser takes advantage of ekphrasis, specifically within his work *The Faerie Queene*. Throughout the extensive poem, Spenser makes numerous references to classical European artwork, whether it be presented in auditory, visual, or literary form. Millar MacLure also discusses Spenser's use of ekphrasis by stating that readers "discover that [Spenser's] primary working device is the emblem, that his 'gallery of pictures' is actually a book of emblems, in which the 'initial significance' of each picture is set out at large" (2). Both Howe and MacLure are correct: *The Faerie Queene* includes a vast combination of artistic pieces that work together to convey a meaning that lies beyond the surface. Spenser's use of this technique effectively correlates the world of art with the search for truth by describing art that was

flourishing during his time of authorship.

The very first artistic reference that Spenser makes within *The Faerie Queene* can be found in the proem, or introduction, to Book I. The reference to the Muses can be found in the proem's opening lines when the author refers to them for help in taking on the task of writing this poem. Here, Spenser is referencing the Greek goddesses that are considered to be the overseers of art and science: "Lo I the man, whose Muse whilome did / maske, / As time her taught, in lowly Shepherds weeds, / Am now enforst a far unfitter taske" (Proem.1.1-4). Underneath the flowery vocabulary of Spenser lies the simple idea of searching for inspiration from one of the most powerful sources that offers it. Spenser is stating that he is now in need of inspiration since he is attempting a new genre of work: the epic allegorical poem. Therefore, he calls upon the Muses to inspire him now as they have done with his previous works. According to a study of these Greek mythological characters, many scholars see the Muses "as originally a goddess of poetic inspiration and favor the etymology that begins with" (Maslov 416) the Muse being described as "one who makes possible the poet's intellectual effort of composition" (Maslov 416). These descriptions imply that the Muses are a critical reference because they represent the beginning inspirations of art in all forms, including literature. Spenser's allusion to these mythological sources demonstrates the author's recognition of the art movements that have led him to the writing of *The Faerie Queene*. By alluding to these Greek goddesses, Spenser acknowledges the profoundness of artistic inspiration and the works that are being created around him during the Renaissance.

One of the main characters within the narrative's first book is Archimago, a magic man who represents the technique of image making. Spenser utilizes Archimago's portraits of false characters to display the truth that perceptions have the potential to be deceptive at times. The sorcerer Archimago uses dark magic to conjure up a false woman, Duessa, who is a deceitful imitation of the virtuous woman Una. The woman appears to the narrative's protagonist, the Redcrosse

and tempts the knight with lustful notions. MacLure states, "The really sinister aspect of art lies, however, in its power to counterfeit nature [and] to deceive" (6). MacLure's comment suggests that art is a very powerful tool that has a great influence upon humanity and the interpretation of it. Duessa represents the sinful act of lust that the knight must either succumb to or condemn. Naturally, the woman is very beautiful and physically attractive because Archimago is an intelligent artist and craftsman who knows what appeals to man's eye. Despite the magician's best efforts, the Redcrosse Knight refuses to partake in sexual sin with Duessa because he is aware that what he is seeing appears to be too favorable to be true, and it is: "He started up, as seeming to mistrust, / Some secret ill, or hidden foe of his: / Lo there before his face his Lady is, / Under blake stole hyding her bayted hooke" (1.1.49.435-438). Though she is a beautiful sight to see, the beauty of the false Duessa conceals harmful deceit. MacLure relates this back to the world of art by stating, "As there is an art that conceals art, so there is, in a manner of speaking, a nature that conceals nature" (16). The type of art MacLure refers to is imagery that conceals a hidden meaning within. A study of portraits over the course of time boldly concludes, "The portrait is indeed the best illustration" (Gilbert 285) of how the Renaissance is defined through "the rediscovery of the world and of man" (Gilbert 285). The text goes on to further state, "It emphasizes both rediscoveries: of the human individual and of the world of physical matter" (Gilbert 285). The text suggests that the portrait was widely understood and highly regarded as an art form during the Renaissance. Spenser utilizes this art medium by creating the deceitful character of Archimago, who has the power to conjure up the most unbelievable beauty. The portrait Archimago creates of Duessa is beautiful, but the subject has many hidden layers that cover up the ugly truth of her lustful nature. Duessa places significance on the duty of the Renaissance portrait to convey beauty. Spenser's representation of this truth through the establishing of Archimago's deceptive image would have been understood during the Renaissance period due to the rise of

portraiture in the world of art.

Tapestries are another art form that Spenser mentions within the allegorical epic. In Book II, Spenser describes a collection of tapestries encountered within the Bower of Bliss. The tapestries contain woven depictions of Roman mythology. Spenser writes, "And in those Tapets weren fashioned / Many faire pourtraicts, and many a faire feate, / And all of love, and all of lusty-hed, / As seemed by their semblaunt did entreat" (2.11.29.253-256). Spenser's description of the "tapets" suggests that they are very eye-catching pieces of art that recount both real and fictitious historical moments. He also suggests that the tapestries were very passionate and did not shy away from lustful depictions. The vivid description that Spenser gives of each element of the tapestry collection is easy to imagine, as he does not shy away from the vulgar, sinful things depicted there. According to Sarah Howe, there is an assertion that "derives from a commonplace of classical philosophy and rhetoric, that things seen are of greater sensual immediacy than those heard" (36). By using vivid vocabulary to describe the tapestries found within the bower, Spenser effectively provides "sensual immediacy" (Howe 36). Visual arts became a technique that Spenser uses to develop his work. This is an example of Spenser's undeniable use of ekphrasis within the poem. Howe writes, "It will, I hope, become apparent that these works' continual description and exploration of visual art-objects is intimately related to their hermeneutics of representation" (34). Simply put, visual images such as tapestries are employed to aid the reader in his interpretation of individual aspects of the text, as well as in his interpretation of the work as a whole. In his text on the history of tapestries, author Eugene Muntz states, "From this time forward the figures, instead of being ranged one above the other, were properly distributed, and grouped so as to form perfectly clear scenes" (175). Spenser's description of the tapestries directly correlates with Muntz's statement. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, tapestries began to evolve to depict actual live action scenes that can be used to teach a lesson or recount a point in history.

These are the type of tapestries that Spenser includes in *The Faerie Queene* to appeal to his readers' intellect and appreciation of art.

Edmund Spenser successfully uses references to art to display the overarching truths found within *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser's use of ekphrasis is crucial because it allows him to connect with contemporaries who would have understood the significance of the artwork he describes, and the truths displayed through them. Spenser's references include, but are not limited to, the Muses, portraits, and tapestries. By using ekphrasis, Spenser fuels the text in the direction of displaying virtuous truths in light of sin. The sinful aspects of the narrative, combined with the references to artistic truths, work together to display the overall theme of fighting immorality.

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