

Project Summary

For my project, I was interested in further exploring oil spills, their causes and effects, and the rhetoric employed when reporting on and discussing them. Since the language used is so strong and particular, I decided to use a method of poetry known as “collage,” where, as the name suggests, words, phrases, and sometimes full sentences are lifted and reorganized to highlight ideas or alter the meaning. Being such particular rhetoric, I refrained from injecting my own words to the extent of preserving the ideas introduced in the articles.

Through my research I found two instances especially interesting: the recent BP oil spill of 2010 and the Gulf War oil spill of 1991. In the case of the former, the spill resulted accidentally from a combination of shoddy workmanship and inattention, while the latter is depicted an incidence of intentional spilling as a method of military strategy. In the case of BP, I used an instructional PDF from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) outlining the “Master Plan” for conserving and repairing the Gulf of Mexico, an article from the National Journal’s website describing the long-term effects of the spill on marine life, a statement from BP issued in response to the spill in September of 2010, and the Wikipedia entry on the “*Deepwater Horizon* oil spill.” For the Gulf War I used a highly cited webpage describing the oil spill under the pretense of “Environmental Warfare” and an article from Counterspill, an organization that seeks to function as a “counter-narrative that takes on corporate and governmental spin...”

In an effort to maintain the voice and scientific integrity presented in the articles, I compartmentalized the categories into *Deepwater* and *Gulf War*, with the collaged statement from BP serving as a rhetorical bridge between them. Furthermore, I did not incorporate quotations from different segments (i.e. *Deepwater* quotations used in discussing the *Gulf War*), as this would muddle the validity of the instances in question.

Human-caused oil spills have disastrous ecological consequences, be they immediate or subtle damages to marine life by the oil itself or methods through which oil is removed from the water, such as burning, dispersal, or bacterial consumption. When researching, though, I found to a remarkable degree that these ideas were often discluded or glossed over (or included insofar as the detriment to humans), and as such I attempted to simultaneously draw attention to a hide this fact as a means of reproducing and contrasting accounts, topics of importance, and language.

A key for understanding from which source(s) the poems are drawn is provided by the annotated bibliography, where sources are numbered with “notes.”

*Deepwater*I. ^{3,4}

Since the arrival of Europeans, people have tried to manage the river, safety and prosperity the world's seventh largest delta Southern Louisiana is America's Wetland, a landscape created, an unintended result

of repeated attempts to manage the river
 Since the arrival of Europeans, these repeated attempts continue to seep.

II. ^{3,6}

Between February 2010 and February 2012, Carcasses of 675 dolphins or roughly 337 each year (the average number of "strandings" annually) were recovered in the region Tuesday, May 11, 2010 dead on a beach on Horn Island Killifish, suffering from chronic illnesses as a result of absorbing
 Insects, like ants and crickets are disappearing from wetlands Zooplankton is still being found contaminated by toxic chemicals, petrochemicals in soil and water traces of oil
 Scientific analysis confirmed a chemical match for Macondo 252 confirmed the well "effectively dead"

III. ⁴

Southern Louisiana is America's Wetland the largest low-oxygen (or hypoxic) "dead zone," virtually void of marine life

IV. ³

April 20, 2010:
 explosion of *Deepwater Horizon* (killed 11 men on the platform)

July 15, 2010:
 the gushing wellhead was capped (after it released about 4.9 million barrels)

September 19, 2010:
 the federal government declared the well "effectively dead"

In August 2011:
 oil and oil sheen (a chemical match for 252)

In March 2012:
 a "persistent oil seep" near 252 reported

V. ^{3,6}

unabated for three months in 2010 11 men dead and 17 men injured reported finding alarming numbers mutated crab, shrimp and fish tar balls, fostering *Vibrio vulnificus*, the deadly bacteria, underwater plumes of dissolved oil as well as an 80-square-mile (210 km²) "kill zone" surrounding the blown well

*Statement*²

Release date: 08 September 2010

This was a tragic accident that resulted in the loss of 11 lives, BP's outgoing chief executive Tony Hayward said complex and interlinked mechanical failures, human judgments, engineering design, operational implementation and team interfaces

a sequence of failures of different parties led to the explosion and fire 11 lives. Multiple parties, including BP, Halliburton and Transocean, complex and interlinked, will be undertaking a broad-scale review to further improve the safety of our operations, Hayward said

Based on the report, it would appear unlikely that the well design contributed to the incident, mistake or failure, Hydrocarbons flowed up the production casing through the bottom of the well the negative pressure test was accepted when it should not have been failures in well control and in the blow-out preventer; and the rig's fire and gas system did not prevent ignition

To put it simply, there was a bad cement job.

Persian Gulf

I. ¹

a few days after the Coalition
air campaign
orientated to a northwest
instructional module
The Persian Gulf,
the Arabian Gulf
by the Arab Countries,
is a kidney-shaped body,
equal in size to New York State
and Pennsylvania combined
(570 miles) long
greatest width (210 miles)
(2070 cubic miles) of water
a mosaic of
negative gray scale was used
to highlight the oil slicks

II. ^{1,5}

On January 21, 1991,
valves at the Sea Island oil terminal
released large quantities of crude oil
into the Gulf
water (1-25)
light oil (26-40)
heavy oil (41-53)

III. ^{1,5}

1. Iraqi forces purposefully opened the
valves at the Sea Island oil terminal

2. The U.S. accused the
Iraqis of committing
“environmental terrorism”

3. Iraqi officials blamed the U.S. for
starting the spill via a recent bombing

4. American officials denied the claim,
as spilling oil
didn’t “do anything militarily.”

IV. ^{1,5}

The purpose of this instructional
module is to present
a methodology
by intentionally
spilling several million barrels of oil
unleashed served no military purpose
only the environment suffers

The oil minister proclaimed
the natural resources were officially
protected

The ceremony included musical
accompaniments of bagpipes
and tambourines
and the emir walked down a red
carpet to shut down the well.

many in the local population
continued to complain
of respiratory problems.

V. ⁵

Even so, over 200 lakes of oil
formed through the desert.

VI. ^{1,5}

the massive cloud of smoke
formed during the fires
ceremoniously

Annotated Bibliography

¹Baumann, Paul R. "ENVIRONMENTAL WARFARE: 1991 PERSIAN GULF WAR."

2001. Web. Accessed 22 Apr. 2012.

<http://employees.oneonta.edu/baumanpr/geosat2/environmental_warfare/environmental_warfare.htm>."

Paul R. Buamann presents an analysis of the extent of the damage caused by the Gulf War oil spill of 1991. Baumann addresses the history of the region in relationship to and ecological consequences of oil spills.

²BP Releases Report on Causes of Gulf of Mexico Tragedy." BP Press Release, 8 Sept.

2010. Web. Accessed 20 Apr. 2012.

<<http://www.bp.com/genericarticle.do?categoryId=2012968&contentId=7064893>>.

This webpage provided by BP outlines report of and statement on the causes of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill of 2010. The statement supplies quotations from BP executives, as well as provides an explanation on some of the specific details of the spill.

³"*Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill*." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation. Web. Accessed 20

Apr. 2012. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deepwater_Horizon_oil_spill>.

The "*Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill*" Wikipedia page presents an overview of the spill from its beginning in 2010 to its current state. The page is a reliable source insofar as it is highly cited with many particular statistics.

⁴Environmental Protection Agency. "Gulf of Mexico Regional Ecosystem Restoration Strategy." *Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force*. 29 Mar. 2012. Web. Accessed 20 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.epa.gov/gcertf/>>.

The Environmental Protection Agency provides a lengthy PDF outlining their plan to restore the Gulf of Mexico in the wake of years of negligence and the recent BP oil spill. The PDF is available through their "Gulf Coast Restoration Task Force" web page and points out the organization's establishment under presidential order.

⁵"Gulf War Oil Disaster: A Brief History." *Counterspill*, 10 Apr. 2011. Web. 20 Apr. 2012.

<<http://www.counterspill.org/article/gulf-war-oil-disaster-brief-history>>.

Counterspill, an organization dedicated to preventing and supplying an outlet for expression on oil and oil spills, provides an overview of the Gulf War oil spill, including its causes and repercussions.

⁶Manger, Mike. "Two Years After BP Oil Spill, Marine Life in the Gulf of Mexico Still Reels." *NationalJournal.com*. Atlantic Media Company, 21 Apr. 2012. Web. Accessed 21 Apr. 2012.

<<http://www.nationaljournal.com/energy/two-years-after-bp-oil-spill-marine-life-in-the-gulf-of-mexico-still-reels-20120420>>.

This National Journal article explains the current day consequences of the BP oil spill in terms of its detriments to marine life. The article contains quotations from BP employees and conservation directions alike, as well as reparative methods and costs.