

## Annotated Bibliography

*Anonymous. Ecclesiastes 3.*

This is a holy book committed to the idea that **change is inevitable**. It does not deny that unpleasant events are in our future, and it acknowledges that nothing, however great, will last forever; it ascribes this constant change to the almighty God. **Nothing is constant**, not a child's innocence such as in "The Green Gulch," nor Othello's majestic love and patience — it teaches us to accept those **ups-and-downs** in life. This means there is although there is always time to "lose" (6) or "rend" (7), there is also "a time to embrace" (5) and "a time for peace" (8); in other words, there is **always hope**.

*Anonymous. "NFL Player Sparks Debate by Giving Back His Sons' Participation Trophies"*

Using the example of a NFL player, this article brings up the **debate** about the importance of "participation trophies." The article is very **inconclusive**, saying that "the field is divided on this one, some saying that participation is a win in and of itself, while others feel kids need to learn that sometimes you win and sometimes you lose" (1). This represents mankind as a whole: our ability to respect the **possibility of multiple sides** allows us to advance. This links back to *Fahrenheit 451*, but in the opposite sense: this article openly **provokes** this "big parenting debate" to advance our thinking, while it would be condemned in Montag's world.

*Anonymous. "Spoonfuls of Sugar."*

"Spoonfuls of Sugar" is a train of thoughts in the form of a poem with an interesting stanza pattern of "month-food-television-feelings" that makes the ideas lose continuity, a conductor-less train-of-thought. The pattern and the **randomness** — such as the range of feelings and thoughts from "we discover how easy it is to boil chicken" to "I picked up glazed donuts at Cullen's" — explores the idea that we are **creative** but easily **distracted** creatures — this allows us to be the **innovative**, thinking beings that we are. This sense of randomness exists in *Lord of the Flies* as the boys struggle to complete different tasks, such as the building of the shelter, killing pigs for their meat, or attempting rescue with smoke.

*Auden, W. H. "The Unknown Citizen."*

This poem is a perfect example in the ideals of **anonymous conformity**, in which the rule-followers are promised for their thoughtless loyalty — according to the poem, "in everything [the unknown citizen] did, he served the Greater Community" and he did what "the Eugenicist recommends." It focuses on the idea of a good **reputation** as a direct result of complete **rule-following**. This is in contrary to anonymous social networking, in which the anonymity is praised because of the lack of rules and the misdemeanor that ensues— people want instead to *avoid* creating a negative reputation.

Blake, William. “The Tyger.”

---. “The Lamb.”

“The Tyger” from *The Book of Experience* and “The Lamb” from *The Book of Innocence* are two poems that use two stereotypical signs of good and evil: the timid lamb and the ferocious tiger. Blake is careful only to use kind words to describe innocence — such as “meek” (16) with a “tender voice” (7) — while the tiger is the violent one, “burning bright” and creating “dread” (12) and “deadly terrors” (16); he even questions whether or not the “Tyger” is one of God’s creations. In Othello, this **stereotype** of kind **innocence** throws Othello of “kind” Iago’s tale, causing his own demise.

Bradbury, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*.

*Fahrenheit 451* is a novel about a futuristic world in which controversy is avoided and people are kept happy by burning books — a major source of debate. After realizing that “he was not happy ... He recognized this as the true state of affairs,” (26) Montag learns that their society’s ideals are wrong: that happiness is not caused by a lack in heated **disagreement**, but rather a **diversity** and the **freedom to think** differently that allows our lives to be the most satisfying. In *Ella Minnow Pea*, Ella’s success after toiling against the tyranny of the Council makes her life much more meaningful than if she had given up without a fight.

Collins, Billy. “Thesaurus.”

“Thesaurus” is a poem in which the speaker first introduces the idea of a thesaurus and its absurdities, and then builds his own opinion on what should be in terms of grouping words. When he says that “there is no such thing as a synonym” and that “I get nervous around people who assemble with their own kind,” he is advocating for **diversity**: you don’t have to fit the stereotype of your **family** or any group that you are in; he embraces the idea of “weddings ... between perfect stranger [words].” This is in contrast to the poems “The Tyger” and “The Lamb” by William Blake, in which innocence is *always* the meek, god-loving creature and evil is *always* a ferocious fire — their definitions are strict and un-open to change.

Cummings, E. E. “anyone lived in a pretty how town.”

This is a poem devoid of punctuation and proper grammar about the life in an anonymous town and a bundle of events, from childish play to marriage to a death. The overall randomness formed by the poor grammar and lack of punctuation makes the poem flow in a single **rushed** thought — for example, they put a year in a single breath: “autumn summer spring summer” (11). The poem shows that from the perspective of the grand scheme of life, people and places are **anonymous** and **insignificant**, and life passes by in a **meaningless blur**. There is a similar sense of insignificance in *Ella Minnow Pea* when

the Council becomes a dictatorship and the citizens become dispensable, being exported by the dozens from their beloved island.

Díaz, Junot. “Invierno.”

“Invierno” is a short story about the disappointment a family of new immigrants feel when they don’t achieved the coveted “American Dream,” and their struggles thereafter to be free and happy. It explores the direct **relationship** between **freedom** and **happiness**: they are only happy when they lived back in their Dominican Republic home and were unrestricted by the unknown of the United States, and when they sneak out into the snow, where “[it] isn’t too bad” (8). Like anonymous social media, what lets you be most free to do what you want is most desired, by human nature.

Dunbar, Paul Lawrence. “We Wear the Mask.”

“We Wear the Mask” is a poem emphasizing the **ignorant bliss** that the **mask** provides to the world. The speaker tells of multiple disagreements between what is shown to the world — a world of “grins and lies” (1), where “we smile” (4) — and the “torn and bleeding hearts” (4) and “**tortured souls**” (11) that lie behind the masks. It shows the **comfort of honesty**, without having to worry about how you appear to the world. This is similar to the proscribing of books in order to create a freer, argument-free world in *Fahrenheit 451*, and how Montag feels wonderful after joining the honest and free hobos.

Dunn, Mark. *Ella Minnow Pea*.

*Ella Minnow Pea* is a punny novel written about the adventures of a lexically-gifted girl in a lexically-gifted haven gone bad. Drawn into the storyline of courageous determination and an authoritative Council, the book also emphasizes the **dangers** of being **too “smart”**: the highly-educated people of Nollop **overestimate** the fall of physical letters, come up with a near-impossible mental challenge to “save” the island from a self-imposed rule, and deny the help of modern technology — which helps their “vocabu-lazy American neighbors” (10) thrive — in overconfidence of their own brains! On the contrary, the imbecile Nollop *accidentally* creates the line that they worship for decades. This is similar to the convoluted ramblings of Beatty and the flawed government in *Fahrenheit 451*.

Eiseley, Loren. “Green Gulch.”

“Green Gulch” is a short story about a little boy who gets lost on his way home, discovering evil in the dark before he gets sent back to his world of light. Away from the familiar world and in the dark green gulch, the speaker is caught in some “curious **evil impulse**” (1) of **mob mentality** when he discovers that he is really “alone there. They were not human [like the kind humans he knew]” (1). This is similar to Ralph and Piggy nearing the end of *Lord of the Flies* when they realize that nobody on the island is there

to help them: they were alone in their lonely quest for order, and they to discover the evil of the herd mentality.

Foer, Jonathan Safran. "How not to be Alone."

This article questions the exchange of technology for the richer, traditional form of communication: speech. It emphasizes the fact that we are truly **lazy** people: the ease of the "diminished substitute" (2) of communication that technology provides to us is more tempting than the richer, natural method. And because of our preference for **ease**, "we, too, become diminished substitutes" (2). *Lord of the Flies* emphasized the lack of **vitality** Montag feels when Clarisse and her nature-loving and anti-futuristic-technology ways vanish, and the technology that Montag has leaves no room for true life-experiences.

Golding, William. *Lord of the Flies*.

*Lord of the Flies* is a novel about a group of civilized British boys that become stranded on a remote island for weeks as they strive to maintain order. Golding brings into light the idea that Man is always the "**Beast**" — that no animal can compare to the evil of ourselves. This is similar to Bradbury's take on mankind as Montag attempts to find normality in their dystopian, **man-devastated** world. In this way, Piggy advocates for peace and order to **save themselves from themselves**, "to have rules and agree, [rather than] to hunt and kill [themselves]" (180); however, he is shot down, further emphasizing this hateful ignorance of the beastly Man.

Gwynn, R. S. "Scenes from the Playroom."

"Scenes from the Playroom" is a gruesome poem about two sadistic children playing with their toys with savage intentions, beyond the gaze of their unwary parents. There a vivid description of their play, including brutal "disfigure[ment] [of] Mother with an emery board" (2) and intentions to use a "match and rubbing alcohol" (3), along with the "Buchenwald of limbs" — however, this is mixed in with the light mood of a playroom with little children playing with toys. This shows that **innocence** is **skin-deep**. This is reflected in *Othello*, when Brabantio warns that Desdemona, although beautiful and seemingly innocent, can stab you in the back.

Magritte, René. *The Lovers*.

*The Lovers* is a painting of a kissing couple whose faces are covered by cloth, a literal example of blind love. Like a mask, the cloth covering their faces hides them from each other; interestingly, it blocks their view too — it hides themselves from the world *and themselves*. In this **double-sided** form of masking, it seems that it is only a stronger form of a **mask** to **protect** against injury from the powerful force of **love**. Iago attempted to cover Othello with this kind of cloth in order to create a willingness to turn against

Desdemona — Iago not only changed Othello's view on Desdemona, he blinded Othello towards himself.

McKay, Brett and Kate McKay. "The Masks Men Wear."

This article explains the evolution of the idea of "masks" from the physical ones from the ancient days of the hunt to the dangerous social masks that we don constantly nowadays. But what is interesting about the social mask of today is its extreme temptation to "let the social masks so mold to our faces that we can't take it off" (2) — the mask becomes a false reputation, an **obsession to lies** about our personality that seems good at first but quickly **sours** into a mess. Iago experiences this in *Othello* as he has to **constantly feed** his loyal-ancient side to carry out his plan, which ultimately fails when his mask is lifted.

Olds, Sharon. "Rites of Passage."

This is a poem about a coming-of-age party from a mother's perspective, and shows an outside view of boys trying to grow up. The boy and his friends "clear their throats like Generals, they relax and get down to playing war" (25), and they announce, "We could easily kill a two-year-old" (22). Little do they know that they are **fostering a violent adulthood** by imitating adults: their joking mentions of "kill[ing]" (22) or "beat[ing] you up" (12), with practice, easily become harmful habits that they don't even recognize. It's similar to the boys in *Lord of the Flies*, who attempt to achieve successful hunting and autonomy, but do not recognize the bloodthirstiness and lust for power that they learn.

Perez, Sarah. "Few Winners in Anonymous Social Networking and Secret's Not One of Them."

This article uses multiple examples of recent popular anonymous-networking apps that have had troubles with cyberbullying and had an unfortunately direct relationship between popularity and misbehavior. It brings into light the fact that human nature dictates that many of us hide behind our own "social masks" (2) and **relish** others' **pain**. In *Lord of the Flies*, the savages almost obliterate Ralph and his last friends, finding fun in their devastation as long as there was individual **anonymity**.

Rothenberg, Jerome. "A Little Boy Lost."

"A Little Boy Lost" is a short poem about despair written from the perspective of a little boy. The lack of proper grammar and punctuation, creates a very **naive**. Like the boy in "Green Gulch," he is **lost** with his frantic **innocence**, that "I have no way of turning no door" (13). The two poems are very similar with the contrast between the light and the dark — "from the white sun ... to the black sun" (1) — and the imagery of the countryside and the city. It shows the **purity** of a **child**, that you **can't blame** them because they truly don't understand the evil in the world — even the savages of *Lord of the Flies* don't know what they're doing.

Shakespeare, William. *Othello*.

*Othello* is a tragic play about the treachery of a man greedy for power and jealousy of others, and the ruin that he causes with clever manipulation as he wedges himself deeper into a pit of lies. Shakespeare illustrates the idea of “reversals in **perspective**”: he transforms Othello from “having a constant, loving, and enduring nature” (2.1.310) to the “rash and most unfortunate man” (5.2.333) and Desdemona from a willing traitor to the innocent victim. All but Iago were described as noble and innocent in the exposition, but the entire view switched — an entire **reversal** — as Othello’s view on the world changed. This is comparable to *Ella Minnow Pea*, in which the change in Ella’s view cleared her distorted view of the Council.

Weir, John. “The Beautiful American Word ‘Guy’.”

This short piece goes over the author’s opinion about the word “guy” relative to other similar words. He says that “Guy is friendly” and “the most inclusive and universally tender,” basing his opinions only on **connotations** of the word based on prior experience and usage. Instead of going by literal meaning, Weir shows us that definitions are never totally **absolute**, and are up to open interpretation. This is similar to the *Ecclesiastes 3*, which implies that anything has the potential to change.

Williams, William Carlos. “This is Just to Say.”

This is a short poem in which the speaker apologizes insincerely for a minor case of burglary. Because there is little meaningful content in the poem. Williams emphasizes the matter-of-factly, indecent tone that is present throughout the poem as the speaker states that the thieves plums were “delicious so sweet and so cold,” while also saying “forgive me.” This is similar to the mask of social networking, in Perez’s article, when people often say differently than what they mean, and they often **mean poorly** — this **mental smirk** is the negative side of human nature.