

BAYLISS SOCIETY NOTEBOOK



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JONATHAN BAYLISS SOCIETY
NUMBER 3 SPRING 2020

Bayliss Society Notebook

Number 3 Spring 2020

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Editorial

Bayliss's close friends Peter Anastas and Doug Guidry died within days of each other at the end of 2019. Peter, a Gloucester native and prolific writer, was a friend to JB for almost fifty years and delivered a eulogy at JB's funeral. We begin by sharing an early memory of Peter from JB's daughter Victoria.

Doug, who became a friend during JB's last years, was a founding member of the Society and served on the Board of Directors until his death. At the end of this issue we offer two memories of Doug, by members Paul McGeary and Susan Oleksiw.

Peter and Doug were interviewed on videotape in 2009 after JB's death; portions of those interviews are available from a link on the biography page of the Society's website. We extend our sympathy to the Anastas and Guidry families and the many others who loved Peter and Doug.

"Missa Solemnis" by Paul McGeary tackles the difficult subject of JB's views on ritual.

In "Cornucopia," Catherine Bayliss addresses the fictional placenames that relate to the geography of California.

JB's lifelong fascination with cats is on display in several passages from his novels we reprint here.

Manfred Hegemann provides a note about JB's life at the Newton School in rural Vermont, and we include a 1942 *Better Homes and Gardens* article about the school.

"Enjoy or Be Distracted" by Danuta Borchardt continues the debate about the importance of real vs. fictional names.

"The Whole Massive Full-Scale World" is the paper that Stephen Farrell delivered at the 2019 conference of the American Literature Association.

Following up on her article in the spring 2019 issue, Diane Faissler continues to muse about the structure of *Prologos*.

Lars Håkanson shares memories of JB from the 1960s in Gloucester and the 2000s in Austria, Denmark, and Germany.

JBS News and Updates

*September 2020
Annual Meeting and Conference*

The 2020 annual meeting and annual conference will be held on the weekend of September 12-13, 2020, in Gloucester. At the annual meeting, elections will be held for the Board of Directors, which has two-year terms.

Some of the conference activities will take place at the Rocky Neck Cultural Center, on the tiny East Gloucester peninsula of



Above: JB's German Shepherd Akela exploring at high tide in Wonson's Cove on Rocky Neck, April 1977. JB lived in the house at the top right. [C. Bayliss photo] Right: JB talking on the phone on the stairs to his tiny second-floor rooms on Bickford Way, Rocky Neck, December 1976. [P. Bayliss photo] The 2020 JBS conference will be held a stone's throw away.





*In June 2019 the Gloucester reading group celebrated getting to the next-to-last chapter of 1,083-page *Prologos*. From left: Susan Oleksiw, Saira Austin, Doug Guidry, Catherine Bayliss, Paul McGeary, Diane Faissler.*

Rocky Neck, not many yards from where Bayliss lived for more than twenty years (1968–1991). The weekend’s activities will include Bayliss-related walks, talks, and readings, as well as opportunities to socialize over good food. Details will be available on our website in the spring.

The JBS will award \$350 for an accepted paper for the annual conference; abstracts should be mailed by June 15 to info@jonathanbayliss.org.

Reading Groups

The Gloucester-based reading group is tackling, in small chunks, the novel *Gloucestertide* in 2020. Each month the group discusses a chapter or portion of a chapter. Sessions last about an hour and take place monthly at the Sawyer Free Library, Dale Avenue, Gloucester. If you would like to join the Gloucester group—either in person or via phone/computer—or are interested in starting your own group, please let us know.



Bayliss's close friend Peter Anastas, who died in Gloucester on December 27, 2019. Above: In September 1969, probably in East Gloucester. [P. Bayliss photo] Below: At a January 2011 reading of Bayliss's posthumously published novel Gloucestermas held at The Bookstore, Main Street, Gloucester. [C. Bayliss photo]

Peter Anastas

Lover of Language, Literature, and Learning

P is for Peter.

Passionate. Personable. Precocious.

Proud of his heritage. Prolific as reader and writer.

Prominent Public Political Proactive

Progressive advocating for the Poor.

About 57 years ago, somehow JB had the good fortune to make Peter's acquaintance and introduce the family to this man who had such an impact on all of our lives. Peter quickly became a cherished friend to us all and a mentor to me, and now he has left us awash in memories and impressions.

During the 1960s Peter lived with his young family for several years on Farrington Avenue near Niles Beach in a small carriage house, rented to him by the Blanchard family, who lived in the large house on the same property. One day during a visit, Peter was enthusiastically recommending a book for me to read. As he got up to retrieve it from the bookcase, I followed him. He knew precisely where it was, picked it off the shelf, adjusted the remaining books, and handed it to me.

Then it struck me: the bookcases! Peter had to fit his vast collection of books into this small house. So just about every possible wall space was thus occupied. He knew, however, precisely where each book was located, according to his personal system of arrangement. Not only was every book on a proper bookshelf, every single spine was perfectly aligned with every other, and every book on every shelf rested exactly the same distance from the edge of the shelf. But the coup de grace: every shelf and every book in the entire collection was pristine and dust-free! When I noted this and asked him how this was possible, he replied that he removed every book from every shelf every week for dusting. Never before or since have I seen personal bookcases like those.

P is for Peter. Precise. Persnickety. Precious beyond words.

Victoria Bayliss Mattingly

Missa Solemnis

Paul McGeary

Jonathan Bayliss was at a loss for words.

It seems almost comical to say that. Jonathan lived for and by words. He penned more than 3,200 pages in the GLOUCESTERMAN series alone. He famously kept a copy of the *Oxford English Dictionary* by his side while writing, and the care with which he chose just the right word to express a concept or a moment has led more than a few readers to throw up their hands in frustration or exasperation.

And yet . . .

Somewhere deep in his writing is a sense that humans and human culture are the expression of primitive actions and rituals (dromena) that are buried deep in our physical and cultural midbrain and not susceptible of logical, verbal explication.

The reading group of which I am part has pored over Jonathan's work page-by-page for more than two years. We know there is something important there that he wished to express and yet at the end of two years we are more tantalized than understanding. Throughout the GLOUCESTERMAN series, he circles back to the concept that what we are and what we do have deep roots in chthonic, Bacchic rituals both preliterate and prehistorical and perhaps preverbal. But we have gotten no closer than that.

It is my contention that that was Jonathan's intention. That he understood the futility of trying to express this understanding of the atavistic origins of human nature. I suspect that in doing so, he was making a virtue of necessity. For all of his rich vocabulary, mere words did not and could not suffice. I believe that what he was trying to convey in all his works was that understanding of the dromena was necessarily nonverbal.

The futility is perhaps best expressed in *Prologos*, in chapter 8 under the heading "Manuscript Submitted to the *Square Root*

Review, Berkeley, Under the Title ‘A Vocabulary of Ritual’, by Michael Chapman, Offered as a Review of Johan Huizinga’s *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*.” Michael Chapman, at once disdainful of and craving for academic recognition, makes the attempt, but the attempt to express the inchoate and primitive in academic prose falls flat, the ponderous pedantry descending into parody.

Witness this passage:

Things done, as I have qualified them for my purpose, include *legomena*, things said, but not things felt or thought, except insofar as the things done there on the spot produce where we can’t get at them the things felt or thought. Nevertheless it must be understood that dromenology embraces the direct products and consequences of dromena. Thus we concern ourselves with myth.

Let us say then that we are concerned with certain corporate actions of the body that generate culture. (p. 99)

But all is not lost. Jonathan can be obscure but not obscurantist. If the role of dromena cannot be explained, it can be evoked. In three chapters of *Gloucesterbook’s* Second Movement —“Quinquagesima: Offertory,” ch. 10; “Ember Wednesday: Consecration,” ch. 11; and “Lady Day: Communion,” ch. 12— he uses the ritual of the Mass interspersed with Proustian ruminations by Caleb Karcist to achieve just such an evocation of “temps perdu.”

In “Quinquagesima: Offertory,” Jonathan, through Caleb, ponders the role of ritual. First, he describes in minute detail the actions of celebrant and acolyte:

Having relieved the priest of his four-cornered hat (taking it by a certain one of the three flanges of its crown and setting it down on the footpace), while the priest went up to lay out his service of silver and cloth, the acolyte took the book straight up to the Epistle

side of the mensa and (with palms together before his breast) returned the long square way about the predella (genuflecting on the axis) to left of center (stage right), thus positioning himself diagonally opposite the Word; whereupon the priest redescended to stand in the middle closely to the right of the kneeling attendant. (p. 386)

During the recitation of the psalm, Caleb drifts back to his own youth.

Though making fewer errors week by week, Caleb was not yet quite easy with his role in the subsequent action of the revised Anamnesis, still relying upon mnemonic visualization of his choreographic chart, and when his mind went blank the habits of his formative years tended to obliterate the distinctions between the new “antithetical” and the old “thetical” Christianity that manifested themselves in certain rejections reconstructions or textual corrections of the ritual’s component parts. (p. 387)

The use of the word *Anamnesis* (meaning a remembrance of things from a prior existence, or more specifically the liturgical recollection and recreation of the Last Supper in the Eucharist) is both literal (Caleb remembering the actions of his youthful serving at the altar) and metaphorical (the Eucharist as a remembrance and recreation of the unsummonable past). Similarly, Jonathan through Caleb rejects “thetical” (that is prescriptive or doctrinaire) Christianity in favor of “rejections reconstructions or textual corrections of the rituals.” Jonathan, through Father Duncannon and his acolyte, is pointing to a deeper meaning, one echoed and recreated through liturgy and ritual.

Significantly, the New Testament reading for Quinquagesima is St. Paul’s discourse on Love (1 Corinthians 13), which includes the signal phrase: “For now we see through a glass darkly” (verse 12). Once more Jonathan underscores the certainty that there is a truth but also the futility of trying to explain or rationalize it.

In the next chapter, “Ember Wednesday: Consecration,” Bayliss focuses on the most sacred part of the mass, the consecration of the bread and the wine to be the literal substance of the body and blood of Christ.

For this is my body. An actual metacosmic leap of matter known as the Consecration: mankind’s perpetuated revolution.

The priest genuflects [√] with both hands on the edge of the altar. As authorized technologist he has instantaneously altered the phase-state of bread entrusted to his office. It is for the acolyte to catch up the drama here . . . (p. 427)

The union of drama and sacrifice harks back to the rituals of proto-tragedy. The origin of the term *tragedy* (“goat song” in Greek) has been linked to Dionysian rites in which a goat was sacrificially killed. The Mass, in recreating the sacrifice of Calvary, echoes the earlier sacrifice linked inextricably to the myths of ancient Greece which are otherwise lost in the mists of time.

The author continues: “But the focal dromenon had survived all its distortions. Even in its most degraded forms it had always followed Jesus the supreme liturgical genius in preserving live sacrifice without violence” (p. 427).

Here the link between Christian ritual and the dromena is explicitly established. The liturgy of the Eucharist is a manifestation of that deep, unknowable meaning that has persisted, if dimly, through all human memory.

At the conclusion of the consecration, leading up to the great “Amen,” Jonathan describes in rich detail the drama of the liturgy:

“Through the same Christ, our Lord: through whom, O Lord, all these good things thou dost ever create; dost sanctify[†], quicken[†], bless[†], and bestow them upon us. The priest is now very busy with his hands, making many different signs of the cross with or over the wafer and cup, before and after another genuflection [√].

Through [†] whom, and with [†] whom, and in [†] whom are unto thee, O God the Father [†] almighty, in the unity of the Holy [†] Ghost, all honor and glory. He covers the vessels with their pall, genuflects [√] yet again, and raises his voice in thin tag of song: Throughout all ages, world without end.” (p. 431)

The climax of the Consecration is more ritual than word. The genuflecting, the signing of the cross, the covering of the communion vessels, all are motion and movement. Again, the phenomena are evoked. There is little reflection or explanation, just very detailed description of the highly ritualized and stylized movements of the priest at the altar.

Finally, at the closing:

Remember also, O Lord, thy servants and handmaids who have gone before us . . . Why commemoration for the dead precisely at this point? [. . .] Caleb reminded himself to test Father Duncannon’s advice on this point. Of course no mention of Captain Ozone that I’ve heard. That old warlock was never here, probably had hardly heard of the C O V, would have scorned its belief in society, its realism, its hope for the future. Having been brought up Tudor-Petrine in lovely brick Gothic at the foot of Governor’s Hill in Botolph, and always having considered himself a member of the Antidisestablishmentarian aristocracy (yet not above enhancing devil-vision and encouraging Noxin), the great inventor, it was said, had finally comforted his soul by soon enough denying all his atavisms and sacrileges (such as the private celebration of certain fantasies promoted in Alterian¹ neognosticism) with the most reactionary profession of his mother’s faith.” (p. 429)

The allusion to Captain Ozone (a character resembling the

¹ *Editors’ note: in Bayliss’s corrections for a future printing, Bayliss changed the word Alterian to Gnujian.*

inventor John Hays Hammond, Jr.) is significant in that it counterposes an avatar of modern science and technology to the Classic Order of the Vine, with its counterlogical, counterverbal understanding of the origins of faith. Again, logic is failing to achieve the essence of understanding of the human condition.

While Jonathan was a man of science and eminently logical, it seems to me that he is again pointing out the limits of logic and the scientific method. It's not that the scientific method is unavailing—witness Hammond's great contributions to electronic communication—but that it simply isn't a sufficient toolkit to understand the ineffable. Hammond is forced to retreat into comfortable certainties of the "thetical" established (Anglican) church so as not to probe too deeply into the unknowable.

Throughout his works, Jonathan circles back time and again to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. Foundation to modern quantum mechanics, the principle stated that the position and velocity of a particle could not be simultaneously deduced—that one or the other is always uncertain. Ozone (Hammond) made great practical application of quantum physics—he was able to use the science to create inventions of great utility and immense impact—but when it came to understanding the "spiritual" (for want of a better word) nature of existence, the science was unavailing.

In the last of the three chapters structured by the celebration of the Mass, "Lady Day: Communion," Jonathan further intersperses the liturgy with evocations of the central theme. The Our Father is called a "vital syntagm of the rite" (p. 434), a sequential summing up of what has gone before. The communion, "the last third of the Anamnesis," is a binding of the communion and the community. Jonathan points out that unlike medieval practice the rite is shared. He calls it a "cybernetic circuit" (p. 434), in the sense of closing an electrical switch, an autonomous union of all the participants. In this the recitation of the Our Father is very much a consummation of the ritual.

He goes on:

Caleb too hoped for the City of God. He was glad that this short collective invocation diverted hope from the rewards of individual piety—personal immortality in particular—by connecting the sacrifice to the whole City’s counterentropic love, and love to its works. And he loved Father Duncannon because by simple change of focus from Christian mythology to its ritual source, through analysis and revision of the theodynamic sacrifice itself, he provided the church (if it was willing to hear) with the means for understanding the frustration of its theological efforts to integrate “Scripture” and “social ethics.” (pp. 434–435)

The theology and liturgical expression of the Classic Order of the Vine are pointed, Jonathan says, in the direction of, but not directly at, the corporate, communal dromena from which they arose.

Who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God. . . .

At the Annunciation today commemorated, within the octave of the Greater Dionysia, Mary was covered by the shadow of the Holy Ghost. In an earlier religion it would have been beatitude without atonement! For Beatrice Picory there are probably a thousand atonements without beatitude. At least until recently: apparently she’s been trying to make up for lost time with her new carpenter—if he’s still the only one she can beatifically atone with. (p. 435)

With the introduction of Bice (Beatrice) Picory, Caleb’s mind wanders from the chthonic to the Bacchic. Bice, with her unapologetic sensuality and sexuality, and Caleb’s obsession with her, are inserted into the Mass. Jonathan points out that the feast being commemorated, the Annunciation, is within eight days of

the traditional date of the Greater Dionysia, the great Hellenic celebration from which sprang the great Greek tragedies.

The choice of the name Beatrice for Caleb's love interest is significant as well, I believe. Like Dante's, Caleb's Beatrice is at once adored and unattainable, but Caleb, like Dante, is driven to the pursuit even though its futility is a given. Like knowing the dead Beatrice, knowing the meaning of the origins is unattainable. It is on the other side of a gate through which we cannot pass. And yet it is there, almost but never quite within reach.

In summary then, I have sought in this necessarily highly selective choice of passages to show that in the three chapters of *Gloucesterbook* on which I focused, we can see the core of Jonathan Bayliss's belief system: That there is something ineffable, unattainable, unexplainable but nonetheless real that underlies human behavior and the human condition. It is that paradox that, I believe, is the essence of all of Jonathan's works.

From 2010 to 2017, the Oxford Shakespearean scholar Emma Smith delivered a series of lectures on all of Shakespeare's plays. For each play she based her lecture on a question posed but not answered by the playwright. She argued that it was that ability—to pose deep questions about the human condition but leave it to the viewer or reader to solve—that made the Bard a unique genius and one that still speaks to us four hundred years after his death.

Bayliss, in much the same way, poses questions about the human condition. He points to a sense of origin or beginning and an understanding of the human condition, but he does not offer a definitive answer. Like Shakespeare he poses questions that are at the core of human existence. I have no doubt that four hundred years from now we will all be wrestling with the same questions and seeking the same answers. Jonathan's work, for those who dare attempt it, may be a guidepost on the way.

Cats in GLOUCESTERMAN

The Cat (Sinner) O’Hair and the Dog (Saint) Ibi

The kittens had been sealed off in the front room where their puny antics could be ignored, but from elevated felicity in an easy chair the sinner O’Hair, who’d already partaken of his delicacies as much as he cared to (after loudly waving his tail around the kitchen and almost tripping up the cook), was a supercilious witness of the saint’s docile humility, insidiously hinting at the canard that of all the oppressed species Ibi’s alone had sold its soul to humanity. The dog’s feeble rejoinder to that charge was the local maxim that it took a saint to befriend a stranger. But the cat and dog were both glad enough of each other’s company while awaiting an end to the meaningless cackle from the selfindulgent godlings in the other room. In vain, once or twice, at the mention of his name, Ibi rose to see if he was wanted. O’Hair, paws tucked under chest, twitched his whiskers in condescension to the clumsy unself-respecting dog for fawning like a fishpier beggar and flapping his penate tail like a luffed mainsail in a gale of wind.

Gloucestertide, p. 339

The Chapman Cat Semiramis

Having cleared away the things in the kitchen he looked for the cat. Her he found curled like giant black shrimp-

meat on a pile of clothes that were waiting for ironing on the kitchen floor behind a door. “Wake up and die right, Semiramis my dear!” At his touch on her head she uttered a trilling purrcall of sleepy pleasure, turned her face up, and after stretching curled tighter than ever, forepaws folded under her delicate chin. But he was going to have to wake her shockingly from the trustful somnolence that had weathered all the din of the morning. He stroked her glossy flank probingly, for there had been suspicions lately—as if any gross mortal could hope to detect the shadowy foeti of cubs in their earliest felicity; whereupon she unfolded, rolled over on her back, and arched out voluptuously into a sable longbow against the white sheets and handkerchiefs, draping herself over the crown of the fragrant tumulus. “I hate to do it old girl but I can’t trust you in the house all day, and it’s not inconceivable that we’ll be later yet.” Semiramis was not alarmed when he picked her up. She had forgotten her needs and guilts. In the cradle of his arms her drowsiness gave way to waking sensuality and she purred unabashedly with the small rumble of pleasure that flatters a cat’s human lover. But the twang of the spring on the screen door stopped that sweet sound instanter. He felt her stiffen. Yet she did not struggle, not she, though reared in the streets where struggle makes all the difference; she merely summoned the self-

hood she would need as one city cat among many. It was not such a great shock after all. Unceremoniously, out the door her master tossed her. Then he hooked the screen—while with twitching ears she sat in regal umbrage surveying her neighborhood from the top of the open stairs as if a god had scorned her sacrifice upon the summit of a ziggurat—and bolted the door.

Prologos, pp. 48-49

*Fay Gabriel's Memory of Her
Dead Cat Felixity*

But she spent the first part of most nights purring in my armpit. I still find myself starting to stoop and fill her water dish at the beginning of dinner routine. And something still seems missing if I don't have to feed her twice a day. I didn't realize how trained I was to her service. I still feel the presence of her absence. But I know that soon I'll be living a totally introverted life again, totally forgetting my effort to imagine her pain at sudden death; remembering the pleasure she gave me by accepting the luxury of my room and board, and how readily she purred and kneaded blanket or pillow with exquisite pleasure as audibly and rhythmically as an eight-day clock; but forgetting how shamelessly twice a day this perfectly dignified regal beast fit for a scutcheon demanded service, zigzagging underfoot, leading me into the kitchen with her streaming banner of a tail, yet with the piercing squeaks of a dying banshee unlike any supplicating mew, or

like an angrily chirping ghost in the Inferno—so unpleasantly distracting my unfocused thoughts from what I was supposed to be doing in my menial routine that I'd sometimes end up yelling at her to shut up. That unladylike behavior on my part, a breach of her trust in my servile responsibility, would shock her into five seconds of silence. But she always forgave me without a grudge the instant she got her dish.

Gloucestermas, pp. 279-280



Bayliss and cats. Above, Cuchulain, 1981; below, Lucifer, 1994. [C. Bayliss photos]

JB's Cornucopia

Catherine Bayliss

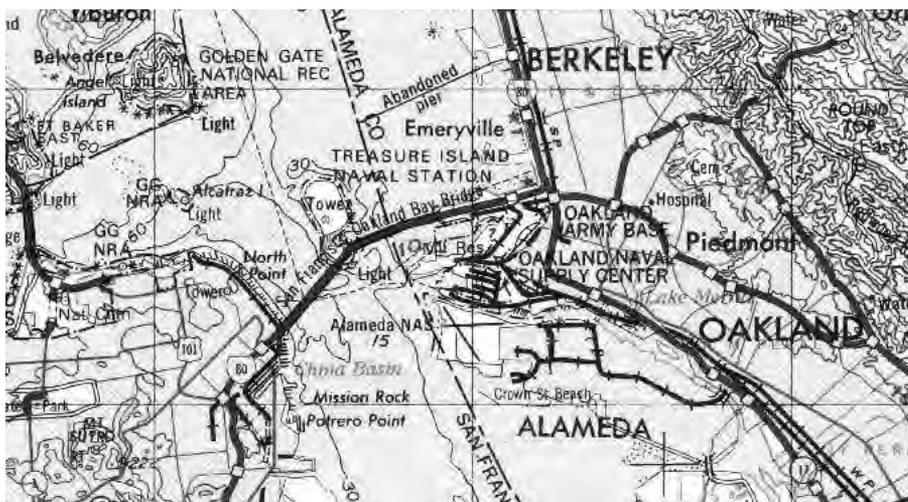
The poet Gerrit Lansing said of *Gloucesterbook*: “The real hero here is Place.”

“Dogtown,” the seaport on “Cape Gloucester” of the U.S. East Coast, is the primary place in JB’s fiction series GLOUCESTERMAN, but it’s not the only important geography. California is also a major place, and memories of “Cornucopia,” the name used in the Gloucester novels, occur frequently in the thoughts of several characters who end up living near each other in Dogtown.

The central character of *Prologos*—Michael Chapman, family man and bookstore manager—lives in Oakland, and the bookstore he manages is in neighboring Berkeley. (Chapman grew up in Gloucester and longs to move back.)

A few comments about JB’s own California years:¹ After leaving the Navy, he finished his bachelor’s degree at the University of California at Berkeley rather than returning to Harvard in the East, even though the GI bill would have paid his way at either university. It may have been a young woman, rather than geography, that detained him in the West, but he probably also found the landscape of California exciting in those early post-War days. References to California, especially the Bay Area, are scattered through the 2300+ pages of GLOUCESTERMAN. In *Prologos*, the first novel written (but published after the first two

¹ From bits of correspondence in his files, it appears that his Berkeley addresses were 2799 Benvenue Avenue (at least part of 1946), 2708 College Avenue (1946–47), and, after his March 1948 marriage, 2239 Summer Street. He lived with his wife and baby in Oakland at 520 31st Street, just around the corner from Telegraph Avenue (1949–1950). In 1951 they were in Canyon, a sparsely populated hillside community near Oakland. Then they moved to 1812 Clinton Avenue in Alameda (1952) and, with a second baby, to 910 Walnut Street (1953). It was in 1953 that JB moved his young family from Alameda to his native Massachusetts, landing first in Newton Corner before buying a house in Gloucester.



The geography and history of San Francisco (left), Treasure Island, Alameda, Oakland, and Berkeley are often referred to in the GLOUCESTERMAN novels. [From a 1956 U.S. Geological Survey map]

Gloucester novels), he uses real California place names: Alameda, Berkeley, Canyon, Monterey, Oakland, Pacific Grove, and San Francisco. In the Gloucester trilogy, which the narrator says is written by Michael Chapman as “Controller,” California becomes “Cornucopia” and the cities’ names are altered too. Whether JB would wish his readers to compile their own GLOUCESTERMAN-place-dictionaries is a question, but it’s impossible to resist making translations, such as those that follow.

Yerba Buena: San Francisco. In *Prologos*, San Francisco is referred to by its real name, but it becomes “Yerba Buena” (“good herb,” the original name of settlement that became San Francisco) in the other novels.

The history and geography of San Francisco and its surroundings are in Michael Chapman’s thoughts as he takes his family on a trip to the zoo in San Francisco from their apartment in Oakland. They get off the ferry at the Embarcadero under the supports of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge and are waiting for a tram:

Under the base towers of this bridge looming out-of-proportion over the plaza that the Chapman family had emerged onto in the warm land air there was no poet but Michael for true American monuments: the city's own railroad serving serried piers that bore vast cool cargo sheds, cavernous warehouses in which now and then you could still smell bales of some such commodity as those in Celebes under the custody of clerks made known to literature by St Joseph [Joseph Conrad], although now more exciting for emptiness than for what they now only sometimes contained—a row of possible theaters waiting for plays that will never be mounted, fronting the street like gated palaces; berthing aprons for barges of freight cars (not much changed in two generations), which rolled from one element to the other on gantlets rising and falling with the tide, never off all but universal rails (Russia and Newfoundland remaining notable nonconformists), and moorings for the tugs now mostly diesel that shouldered them; freight platforms and twelve-branched candelabra of sidings where shiploads used to be anatomized into a thousand bills of lading:: all of them capable but no longer much called for.



The Chapman family (in Prologos) may have taken a ferry like this from Oakland to San Francisco on their way to the zoo. The San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge is in the background. [From a postcard mailed in 1951]



Streetcars on Market Street, San Francisco, with the Ferry Building in the distance. The tram in the lower left could be the type described in JB's text: "distinguished also by clerestory windows in the raised roof." [1944 photo from SFMTA Photo Archive|SFMTA.com/Photo]

Like a circus family not good enough for the Big Show but traveling to join some seedy carnival in a strange town they assemble at ease on the cobbled boulevard sceneried OFF RIGHT by foundation columns of the bridge to wait for an old tramcar (here green instead of orange, distinguished also by clerestory windows in the raised roof and by a crew of two, fitted with a crowd of seats set ingeniously at right angles to each other in vestibules and compartments as anachronistic as social classes: all in all a fine big bunkhouse caboose for family travel) to end its Market Street run circle the square and pick them up. (p. 78)

In *Gloucestermas*, Fay Gabriel, a retired professor of anthropology, reflects on her Bay Area past and what it is like now: "Yerba Buena itself still maintains some cable cars to bemuse photographers, and keeps remodeling the elaborate abutments and roadways of the great bridges in favor of greater and greater kilroy traffic. The Bay's vanishing ships and piers seem to have left the western waterfront generally abandoned" (pp. 8-9).

Babylon Oaks: Oakland. Michael Chapman lives with his wife and three children in a small second-floor apartment in Oakland near “Teleology Lane.” Returning to downtown Oakland from their outing at the San Francisco zoo by rail, before the next leg of the journey home by streetcar, the family “staggered down the steps of their space ship with all the aching burdens of a long long day whose last exertions were yet to come. Empty office buildings (topped by a single tower belonging to the newspaper publisher known as the Senator from anticommunist China) rose neither low nor high enough above the travelers, less impressive than the mooselike train, which continued to dominate their sky until it resumed its way and left them melancholy on the nearly deserted pushcart asphalt” (*Prologos*, p. 403).

The medical building where Michael’s young bachelor friend Caleb Karcist works nights in the boiler room is located in Oakland (“Babylon Oaks”) and is where memorable scenes of book burning and sex take place in *Prologos*.



A streetcar on Telegraph Avenue, Oakland, perhaps similar to the one that the Chapman family rides during multiple legs of public transportation to and from the zoo. [From a postcard mailed in 1943]

Hume: Berkeley. In *Gloucestermas*, Fay’s memories about the Cornucopia of her youth include dismay about how the university at Berkeley has changed: “the shady Hume campus has covered itself with much too much asphalt and concrete, replacing grassy expanses and eucalyptus trees, and peopled its environs more than ever with disgusting Blue and Gold fraternizing sororities. The Cornucopia Board of Regents now barely sustains arts and sciences, as it promotes the student chrematistics that promise richer donors in the future” (p. 9).

Londonbridge: Alameda. Michael Chapman moves his family from Oakland to Alameda at the urging of his wife:

. . . according to conjugal treaty, as a war veteran with trifling equity he invoked the backing of the United States Government for a 20-year mortgage at a subsidized interest rate on the only real property upon which he and his wife could agree, an old waterside house in Alameda, the only town he’d consent to, an island (famous in the Navy for the aircraft-carrier base at its western tip) with interesting maritime margins, where she had been born and educated before hard times forced her family to emigrate to Contra Costa County



Berkeley’s Telegraph Avenue at Bancroft Way, c. 1960. The bookstore that Michael Chapman works at is near here. [From Calisphere.org.]

at the outset of her high-school years. He was pleased with the shipping estuary on the opposite side of his new little city like a river separating it from Oakland but sorry that although its own little Belt Line railroad was still operating for freight terminals no commuter could get to work without a car save by an elaborate interchange of noisesome busses. Even high-class passengers to the metropolis no longer had the San Francisco & Alameda Railroad with its ferry from the Alameda Mole. (*Prologos*, pp. 1051-52)

Londonbridge is where businessman Rafe Opsimath's office and factory are located, on the "estuary-island" (*Gloucestertide*, p. 398). Fay Gabriel, who now lives in Dogtown, remembers facing "sunsets across noticeably unattractive tides, the flat island of Londonbridge, marsupial child of Babylon Oaks" (*Gloucestermas*, p. 9).

Eden Grove: Pacific Grove. When Michael is trying to figure out for himself why he's fascinated by railroads, the importance of Pacific Grove is made clear: "On the rails of this akoluthic network you could run a locomotivated train of cars from the handspiked turntable at Pacific Grove just west of the Monterey station to the little potbellied crane planted in the ground to unload steel for the Cape Ann Tool Company at the Atlantic end of the country just east of its easternmost turning loop" (*Prologos*, p. 529).

Rafe writes in a log for his White Quarry teacher about his early work experiences: "I was hired as a maintenance laborer, down at Eden Grove—practically at land's end, in a shed near the old S P turntable—before we moved up to a proper factory on the industrial margin of Golden Bay" (*Gloucesterbook*, p. 32). And he remembers a childhood pastime:

The epitome of his own nostalgia was not uncommon in essence: the abandoned S P line from Yerba Buena, which had ended at a turntable in Eden Grove where kids were sometimes allowed to help the fireman push

the engine halfway around the circle to head it back toward Golden Bay up the coast more than a hundred miles. The energetic ride itself was a rare and dear excursion. By the time he'd finally got to go to college—in fortnights of homecoming vacation—the journey was by road or air. The branch line's demise had lifted the last inhibition of the motel boom. And when the schools of sardines vanished—this time perhaps forever—THEY the rising generation of nonproducers learned the Panatlantean leverage of borrowed money. Migration and toil were indeed outmoded there. (*Gloucesterbook*, p. 75)

Canyon. In *Prologos*, Chapman muses upon his short time living in the hillside hamlet of Canyon, not far from Oakland:

... when we lived in the hills where I spent whole afternoons almost every weekend exploring bottomland redwoods and sunny uplands for miles around that small chain of green ravines (almost unknown to metropolitans since the Sacramento Northern had gone out of the passenger business), slyly unadvertised by the few freeholders and tenants who hadn't yet been evicted by eminent domain under direction of the district water commissioners. The settlement still hangs hidden by foliage on its inhospitable slope eccentrically retarding purification of the gurgling stream that drains the opposite watershed already preserved by the City of Oakland which for the sake of a promiscuous population is extending its reach from this side of the beautiful ridge that formed the sheer head of our obscure little Canyon.

The sparse hamlet strung up along one steep lane and several steeper paths occupied the western end of a long tract that was little by little being repossessed from cranky eccentric homesteaders hitherto left peacefully to their outlandish inconvenience as commuting squatters or ten-

ants of squatters. . . . All the denizens lived straggling or sequestered as high as they could on the northern bank where they could catch from under their pitched roof of trees a little of the sun that never got to the bottom. Their brown dirt paths, most of them joining the gray paved byway to tiny part-time ranches on the grassy rim of the canyon, came down to meet the dark wayside of village conveniences under tall moist aboriginal evergreens lining the obscure road once used by mainline stagecoaches crossing the old pass to the Bay. Where people trickled down across the tracks to their cars you could still see the platform of the station at which rusticators used to catch their morning trains to the city. (pp. 553–554)

San Ricardo: Monterey. San Ricardo, “a hundred miles down the coast from Golden Horn Bay,” is, like Dogtown, “also an old fishing port on a small cape” (*Gloucesterbook*, p. 32). Rafe “grew up near the sardine canneries, where there was hardly any tidal corral to keep the wastes from dispersing” (p. 54) and had an early job walloping “oil drums on the shipping dock” (*Gloucestermas*, p. 764).

Rafe thinks about Monterey-San Ricardo often, sometimes reflecting on its beauty and proud history but usually with regret about the changes since he lived there, as these *Gloucesterbook* passages reveal:

Though cherishing hardly paradisiacal memories of his childhood Rafe thought it taxed nobody’s imagination still to see the calyptic beauty of San Ricardo, while mourning its abuse, as R L S [Robert Louis Stevenson] did when the railroad people hadn’t yet even laid the cornerstone of their speculative hotel; or to cherish its distinction as the former capital of Cornucopia at every international stage before the Gold Rush. (p. 75)

He remembered no such primitive music in the body of San Ricardo, an even older settlement of Christians,

from which vast territories had been governed. On Canary Row (even in its heyday unimaginable either as an invaginated haven or as a lumen of consciousness) everything was nakedly passive to a vaster Ocean. He could remember no electromechanical hum in the night-breath of his own hometown. (p. 80)

In *Gloucestermas*, it turns out that ex-Navy man Finn Macdane also has ties to Monterey-San Ricardo:

Therefore, following the War Crimes Trials and their immediate aftereffects in Germany, he was perfectly qualified for a tour of duty as a professor at the new Naval Postgraduate School in Cornucopia on the beautiful San Ricardo campus. In wartime its luxurious buildings and grounds had been occupied by enlisted men as a school for specialists in radio and radar; but it was thereafter devoted to postgraduate studies for officers in all relevant branches of professional government service for advanced degrees in naval architecture, marine and electrical engineering, electronics, communications, intelligence, and other semi-military sciences, as well as history, government, diplomacy, et al . . . (p. 743)

Fay, Caleb, Rafe, and Finn are not the only characters on “Cape Gloucester” who have West Coast backgrounds; some that I haven’t mentioned also have a Cornucopian past: Frank Bacon, Lilian Cloud, Hecuba Jones, and Shelly Schlossberg.

* * *

One especially notable passage about the West Coast vs. East Coast occurs at the beginning of *Gloucesterbook*, when Rafe is traveling by airplane from Cornucopia to Vinland (Massachusetts), looking out the window and musing about the ungainly dinosaur-like creature that a map of the United States resembles.

My dyed-in-the-wool Cornucopian had no great liking for Chauvinist religion or Yankee virtues; but

as he drew near the base of Cape God, bending itself out into the sea under a shroud of blue haze like the maimed claw of a lobster fossilized in the act of scratching its cheek, he curiously envisaged Vinland's eastward-gazing countenance. He had been informed by his Controller, a native of the little Commonwealth, that this Epimethean coastline (from the Kerouac River to Kites Bay) was longer than that of his own majestic state, which occupied 800 miles of purple-mounted latitude claiming the world's noblest trees and longest irrigation arteries as well as more voters and twice as much of the earth's crust as all six New Armorican states blocked together!

In the diminishing scale of eastward passage the aircraft seemed to decline long before it yielded altitude. Opsimath began to feel a boreal shadow from the Markland [Maine]forehead invisibly beetling the upper horizon, hanging out over the granite brow on his fantastic map like a sperm whale's macrocephalus. At the same time he grew more and more conscious of the concentrating differentiation of the physiognomic crease he was going to land in. Even along the shores of his own Yerba Buena Bay, with its kinds of splendor that excelled all the worn-down cities of the East, there was nothing in Cornucopia of such cerebral intensity. Irony here was too crinkled for the happily deuropeanized mentality. (p. 10)

For a writer so closely associated with New England and Gloucester, Massachusetts, where he lived from his thirties until his death at age 82, it may seem surprising that JB's few years in California produced such vivid thoughts and memories. But as the passages above, and numerous others, demonstrate, JB's fiction reflects his detailed interest in coastline landscapes—especially those marked, for better or for worse, over time, by the works of man.

A Brief Recall from the Newton School

Manfred Hegemann

The Newton School, where Jonathan spent his high school years, was founded in Vermont in the mid-1930s by David and Margaret Newton. David a Princeton grad and Margaret from Vassar had been teaching at a private school in Connecticut when they decided to break and start a school on their own terms. The school had been a farm, remote from the towns around it, and it took a long drive over back dirt roads to reach it. It was at the height of the Depression, and the farm, the land, and a smaller farm a quarter mile or so from the main farm were perhaps an easy buy for the Newtons, coming from a comfortable middle-class background.

With David's teaching reputation and referrals from other private schools, plus the lure of a different schooling experience with small classes, students arrived. By and large, it was a motley all-male student body. Some had behavior problems, some learning difficulties. The main draw, however, might have been the opportunity, felt by the parents, to have their sons develop character by working on the farm and benefiting from small classes. After graduation many went on to quality colleges and universities, as did Jonathan to Harvard.

There was no electricity. Evening study hall was lit by kerosene Aladdin lamps. Heating came from wood stoves and one basement furnace that burnt four-foot logs. The wood came from trees we students cut, sawed to length, and split. There were no chain saws in those days.

Cutting trees was done with crosscut saws requiring two men, in our case boys. Jonathan and I got quite good at it. Together, while cutting, we would make up filthy limericks that had us writhing in the snow with laughter. These limericks often started with "There once was a maid . . ."

Jonathan was a scholarship student, I believe, and this may

explain why he was asked to milk the cows in the morning. It was tough work. It required getting up early, trudging at least a quarter mile to the other farm through often heavy snow. There were no plowed paths. It was truly trudging, especially through snow where earlier footprints were frozen solid. Then the cows, perhaps three, had to be watered, milked, and their manure shoveled out.

There were several teachers full-time and part-time. The full-time teachers, I assume, were fugitives from the Depression but educated and able. Pappy, as David Newton was called, taught at least English and Latin classes. I have a clear picture of Pappy sitting behind his desk with Sam Greeley and myself in his Latin class. Stopwatch in his hand, he timed us on declining *amo, amas, amat*, etc. I recall his English classes where he grandly illustrated the uses of words. For example, the difference between *borne* and *born*. “After the fight the poor sod was borne from the room on a slab.”

And so it goes. There’s lots more. But memory gradually atrophies. This many years after the events, most of us are either dead or close to it, and there is the danger that what we recall is either false or fabricated.



Left: Manfred Hegemann and JB at Newfane, Vermont, just before they began a hitchhiking trip around New England, summer 1942. [Photo courtesy Manfred Hegemann] Right: JB and Hegemann with the latter’s German Shepherd, in Putney, Vermont, fifty-seven years later (1999). [C. Bayliss photo]

Editors' note: The experience of working and learning at the Newton School, described in Manfred Hegemann's "Recall" in the previous pages, was surely a formative one in JB's life. For that reason we reprint, with permission, a story about the school originally published in Better Homes & Gardens magazine, September 1942. Perhaps JB and Hegemann were two of the boys Evans met.

How to Make a Man of Your Boy

Wainwright Evans

Twenty boys of assorted sizes are doing assorted tasks. Three are milking cows. One—a tall towhead—is hammering new shingles onto a shed roof. From a forge comes the clang of iron on iron.

Inside the house, half a dozen boys are dressing, splashing wash water, tossing clothes back and forth, and arguing heatedly about just what democracy means. They are getting ready to attend a town meeting.

All this is on a hill farm, hidden deep in the Green Mountains of Vermont. It is the Newton School, which has its own peculiar and unorthodox system of building men.

It isn't important, of course. It's just a little school. But the principles back of David Newton's adventure in education are so fundamental they can be put into practice in any American home where parents are faced with the man-sized job of turning boys into men—or girls into women.

Five years ago, David Newton (Princeton '23) resigned his instructorship in a large preparatory school for boys because he had a theory. He wanted to teach youngsters a way of life; he wanted to create a school

where boys would get somewhat the same training most American boys were getting back in the horse and buggy age.

With little money but plenty of nerve, he set out to make his dream come true, using as his laboratory an old run-down Vermont farm near South Windham. On it were an Eighteenth Century farmhouse, the usual barns, chicken houses, stables, and the like.

From this raw material the Newton School has been built by its students and faculty. Today the Newton School has 20 students, ranging in age from 12 to 18. They know their way about, act and talk like grown-ups, never take examinations, and know nothing of the Teacher-may-I-leave-the-room rules of most schools.

More like a big farm family than a school, it's also a carefully designed way of life. Its aim is to make it once again part of the heritage of each boy to be able to

guide a plow and milk a cow,
harness, drive, or ride a horse,
feed the chickens and call the
hogs,

swing an ax and fell a tree,
split firewood and pile it high,
whitewash a fence or swing a
 scythe,
mow the hay and pitch it too,
build a barn or shoe a horse,
hoe potatoes, tap a maple,
name the trees and weeds and
 flowers,
attend town meeting, speak if
 need be,
read the Bible and draw strength
 from it,
swing a gal in a square dance,
and sing the calls or scrape a fiddle.

“What made me dissatisfied with the usual prep-school education,” Mr. Newton told me, “was that boys getting it were children when they came, and still children when they left. They had no civic knowledge; they had never mixed with people poorer than they nor with folks who worked with their hands; they had no conception of how hard it is to make a living. They knew nothing of the thrill of working shoulder to shoulder with others in productive toil instead of merely playing shoulder to shoulder with them; or that play is incidental while work is vital.”

Newton shifted an ax he was

holding to his right hand and spoke with conviction: “I maintain that ordinary school training, by failing to emphasize the activities of actual living, constitutes a progressive postponement of adult responsibility in a youngster’s life. What would happen, I asked myself, if a group of energetic boys were put down in surroundings that would really make demands on them—something like a farm run by a farmer and his family! So,” he finished with a grin, “here we are. And it works.”

In appearance, Newton is a convincing combination of a farmer with his feet on the ground and a schoolmaster with books in his head. He does not suggest easy chairs. He moves about with the springy, relaxed step of a woodsman. A good pace-setter in a job calling for plenty of pace-setting.

While he talked he was showing me round the school. We had been looking at the big kitchen in the basement, a home-made job constructed in pioneer style from lumber grown on the place. Now we suddenly passed into a room about 15 feet by 10. Along one side were



One of several 1942 photographs in the Better Homes & Gardens article: Newton School buildings. [George Higgins photo]

stacked blocks of ice; and on shelves and hooks was enough home-grown provender to stock a hotel.

"The refrigerator," he said. "We made it ourselves. That's the last of the ice, but we'll soon be cutting some more."

As we moved back into the temperate zone, I noticed a ball bat, looking neglected over in a corner, and I remembered his comment on play versus work. "What do you do about sports?" I asked.

"We don't have much time or inclination for them," he said. "What games we play are intramural, except for baseball. We do play a few ball games on the outside. I play third base myself. The point is that all these things, however excellent in their way, become incidental when you're doing a grown-up job of work."

We stepped into Newton's study. It was a plain room with a desk and a typewriter and some businesslike filing cabinets, and bookshelves that reached toward the ceiling. There was no need to ask if it was the library of a book-lover. But it suggested a question, in view of what he had just said. "Do the boys get much time for reading?"

"Not as much as I'd like," he said. "That's something I must work out. We strongly approve of reading and encourage it, but we are firm about one thing—we consider reading a poor substitute for doing.

"Inactivity—which we discourage—is, of course, quite different from earned rest and relaxation—which we encourage. Constant

hustle, hurry, and tension we consider as bad as idling; it does not make for mental health."

Newton paused a moment, then said emphatically:

"Because it is a cardinal principle in our system never to give a boy a lesson too big for him to master, our boys are free from the fears and anxieties which, I believe, beset most school children and make their school days miserable. Such hidden anxiety makes youth an unhappy period for adolescents in thousands of American homes.

"On the other hand, pride of real accomplishment, the sense of being mature, dependable—these are the things that can make youngsters happy."

"But how do you get them interested in their jobs? Don't they hold back?"

"Not if you work along with them," he said. "For instance, I go out in the woods and swing an ax as hard as anybody. If there is a carpentry job to be done, I'm a carpenter. Similarly, the rest of the faculty take a hand in whatever is doing. The younger boys require this leadership. The older boys go ahead on their own. The same thing will happen in



Milking cows at the Newton School, 1942. [George Higgins photo]

any home where the parents energetically lead the way.”

The most popular activity among Newton scholars is forestry—and those in the forestry squad are the aristocrats of the school. They learn axmanship and practice forestry, surveying, and map-making under the supervision of Samuel R. Ogden (Swarthmore). Mr. Ogden is a professional forester. On the side he is also a chicken expert, a skilled workman at the forge, and Chairman of the State Conservation Commission. He was for six years a member of the State Legislature. He teaches civics, taking groups to town meetings, and opening their eyes to the duties and practice of citizenship.

Under Mr. Ogden’s guidance the boys become expert axmen, husky as all get-out. And they know the woods. They haul logs to the mill to be sawed into boards at \$5 a thousand feet. Last year they made 100 gallons of maple sirup, sold half of it at \$2 a gallon, and kept 50 gallons for their own flapjacks. They planted 500 ash and 1,500 red pine.

The school diploma for the forestry crew on graduation is a double-bitted 3½-pound ax sharp enough to shave with. Any boy in the Newton School who would attack a tree with a single-bitted ax would not be in good social standing.

Another fixed convention is that you wear dungarees when you are working. In cold weather, a lumber-jacket or windbreaker is the thing.

Every boy who comes to Newton School studies and practices account-

ing, as one of the best ways to learn the value of money. Mr. Newton thinks this training should be used in every home. Each boy submits his weekly expense account; these statements are summarized and go to the parents at the end of the year.

Music gets a great deal of attention. Many of the boys play instruments and they all sing. They have formed an a cappella choir which sings in the little Congregational Church at South Windham Sunday mornings. There is nothing casual about this training. The school has a music teacher who means business, expects results, and gets them.

Saturday night they go over to near-by Londonderry to the village dance. This is the old-fashioned Vermont article—no “revival.” They dance square dances—Money Musk, Portland Fancy, Lady Walpole’s Reel, Virginia Reel, Hull’s Victory, and the like.

“These romping, lusty dances are a social tonic,” said Mr. Newton. “They create friendliness among people, and they provide a kind of good time whose value in the life of a democratic community or in the home or at a neighborhood party can hardly be overstated.”

A boy stays with one job usually for a year, sometimes longer—till he acquires a professional attitude toward it and professional skill. He stays with his plowing, wood chopping, milking, etc., even tho tired of it. That, says Mr. Newton, is the adult way, and every child in every home should be taught that point of view about a job.

Mr. Newton believes in the classics and the Bible as a good foundation for an education. There is a short period of Bible study and Bible reading every morning.

The way to make sure that a boy does well in a subject like Latin, he says, is to give such short, easy assignments that perfection becomes possible. A child likes tasks he's good at, and he hates those he bungles. This is a principle, he points out, which is applicable in the home, where children learn a lifetime hatred of tasks they would have enjoyed had the demand not been too difficult.

So far as possible the academic work of the school is arranged in half-hour study periods followed immediately by recitation. No marks are given. The only two grades are "satisfactory" and "unsatisfactory."

Boys who don't take naturally to books often acquire an alert interest in them under this system. The boy who thought chemistry was not so hot gets a very different slant on it when he discovers that chemistry can change the soil and the crops on a piece of land he is to work. Feeding stock is a scientific problem in nutrition; boiling maple sap is a very nice chemical and physical problem; reconditioning a mower or an automobile is a lesson in mechanics; keeping a chicken house clean is a lesson in sanitation.

The day at Newton School begins at 6:15. First come the morning chores—beds to make, cows to milk, wood boxes to fill, horses to feed and water, chickens to feed—in

short, the early morning jobs of a farm and home.

Classes and study last from 8:30 to 12:30. Then comes dinner, in the big dining-room by a leaping, genial fire.

After dinner the boys scatter to their various outside jobs. At 4:30 the farm bell rings; and the boys and the faculty gather and relax in the big, comfortable living-room—they call it the "slump room"—for a cup of tea.

With Mrs. Newton at the tea table, and the boys gathered round in dungarees and windbreakers, that tea hour is something to watch. It is an adult gathering. There is none of the chatter and babble one would ordinarily expect from a group of young boys. They talk gravely, intently, or eagerly and enthusiastically, swapping stories and experiences and problems related to their work.

The whole group is tasting, with quiet delight, such commonplace and simple luxuries as heat, food, and earned leisure. Following tea there is study hour till suppertime. After supper, more study, at the long tables in the dining-room, once the main floor of the old barn.

At 7:30 the younger boys turn in, too sleepy for bedtime monkeyshines. The older boys go to bed when they get ready—usually 9:30. They have had a busy, worth-while day and need their sleep. By 10 the fires are banked, lights are out, and quiet closes down on Newton School.

Enjoy or Be Distracted

Danuta Borchardt

Perhaps Jonathan Bayliss intended his characters to be familiar to us Cape Ann dwellers, but our acquaintance with the prototypes of these characters may be a distraction to fully enjoying the art of his writings. It may unnecessarily clutter our minds. To my mind, any art is a thing unto itself, not to be cluttered by extraneous matter. To wit: “‘Yes, yes,’ said Doc [Charlemagne] ‘this steak is fine. Seeing that we seem to be taxing the patience of this organization by showing up at all tonight, I’d better tell you ahead of time that I’ll be wanting another one’” (*Gloucesterbook*, p. 90).

Yes, of course, I knew Charles Olson; it’s easy to see that he is the Doc’s prototype. One time my husband and I saw him at the back of a cinema, the movie was “Blow-Up.” He didn’t have a car, so we offered him . . . Stop! What am I doing?! What does this have to do with JB’s text? Go back to Doc. Or, this is Gepetto Da Getto: “‘Revisionist priest!’ Petto let out a whooping screech of mirthless laughter” (p. 361), Vincent Ferrini being the prototype. What a vibrant poet that man Ferrini was, I begin to muse, quite a ladies’ man too, and . . . Wow! Here I go again.

How about other works of art, literary or visual? Let’s take Thomas Mann’s *The Magic Mountain*. Mann’s biography shows us how rich and complex his family’s and his life have been, and how hard it may be for those of us who have this knowledge not to stop and wonder while we’re reading his works.

In some instances our emotions come into play. Shall we not go to Woody Allen’s movies because of his transgressions? How about Picasso? Are his paintings any less valuable because of his misdemeanors? Or, on a milder note, do I need to know about the lives of the women in his life to appreciate more, or less, his paintings of them? Not at all. How many of us are “pure,” hide

no skeletons in our closets, or need to “take the bane out of our own eyes”? So let us give the artist some space.

Not to succumb to distractions and to avoid cluttering my mind require self-discipline. Many a time I have to say to myself “Beware,” if I want to really, truly admire works of art and regard them in their pure state, as they are meant to be.

Editors’ note: What follows is the talk that Stephen Farrell gave at the American Literature Association conference in Boston in May 2019 as part of a JBS-sponsored roundtable, “Experiments in Narrative Form in American Fiction.”

The Whole Massive Full-Scale World Jonathan Bayliss and the Future of the Meganovel

Stephen Farrell

What I’m going to be discussing today is the idea of the meganovel and its relevance in our culture.

I’m using the word *meganovel* to refer to the type of novel that should be familiar to people who appreciate twentieth-century literature: the novel as a monumental statement, sprawling and encyclopedic, marked more by its experiments and digressions than by its attention to conventions such as plot or character. The *mega-* refers not just to its length but to its ambition. *Ulysses*, then, would be a meganovel, where *East of Eden* would not.

Bayliss acknowledged two notable influences on the structure and scope of his work that should give us an idea of the genealogy of this phenomenon in general. *Tristram Shandy* by Lawrence Sterne is well represented by epigraphs in the text of *Prologos*. In one, Sterne says:

’Tis to rebuke a vicious taste . . . of reading straight forwards, more in quest of the adventures, than of the deep erudition and knowledge which a book of this cast, if read over as it should be, would infallibly impart

with them—The mind should be accustomed to make wise reflections, and draw curious conclusions as it goes along; the habitude of which made *Pliny* the younger affirm, ‘That he never read a book so bad, but he drew some profit from it.’ (*Prologos*, p. vi)

Herman Melville is the other influence we should note in this regard. Bayliss constantly references Melville’s work, and *Moby Dick* is the prime example of a work of fiction whose playful and poetic digressions are as important as its plot.

From these two sources, then, Bayliss learned about the possibilities of the novel. His work is full of discussions of not only literature but also philosophy, anthropology, religion, science, civics, and business policy.

This conception of the meganovel might be an increasingly obsolete phenomenon, a vestige of the elitist avant-garde of a century ago. It could be that in our tech-obsessed era, this type of novel is relegated to cult status, an artifact that people admire more than they read.

However, there are high-profile examples of the meganovel in contemporary fiction. *Infinite Jest* by David Foster Wallace is probably the most obvious example, a rambling and immense work whose ambition threatens to swallow up its characters and whose self-conscious annotations scare away casual readers. *2666* by Roberto Bolano puts together seemingly unrelated narratives to create a vast statement about the future of literature in a civilization that has run its course. Eleanor Catton’s huge and original novel *The Luminaries* won the Booker Prize in 2013. And Karen Tei Yamashita’s *I Hotel* uses its idiosyncratic structure and a cast of thousands to examine the struggles of marginalized communities in the USA through place, politics, art, and food.

The ironies in attempts to perpetuate the meganovel are various. Putting demands on one’s audience, particularly when literature is in competition with so many other sources of

entertainment, doesn't seem prudent. Paradoxically, technology both contributes to the anachronistic nature of the meganovel by presenting so many other options for would-be readers as well as aids the survival of the form by making it more accessible and portable in formats other than a traditional hard copy.

The emphasis on literary language in Bayliss's work, too, presents problems for its relevance in a culture that constantly creates situations where language needs to be brief and literal. Once again, the irony is that technology correspondingly offers resources to help the layperson understand unfamiliar words and references. The digital humanities are developing techniques to analyze literature and aggregate critical interpretations.

As I noted in my mention of contemporary meganovels, the format seems to lend itself well to authors who need space to develop their statements about society and the human condition, and explore matters of literary and historical interest in depth.

The model of the meganovel that Bayliss presents is an important one in that it explicitly deals with the problem of information. In our millennium, data has become a human need, and our culture's attempts to fill that need deserve to be questioned.

It has never been more crucial for a society to come to terms with its history and engage with its processes of generating and broadcasting information. Ever since *Moby Dick*, the meganovel has represented a way to anatomize an entire society and its interactions, its forms of authority, and its systems of symbols.

The writers of meganovels, as I have mentioned, come from diverse backgrounds and have varied artistic aims. They all, however, need to create worlds. And in our day and age, we need the meganovel because we need to explore new worlds.

Structure in Prologos

Diane Faissler

Prologos teases us with its unique literary structure. Chapters have “codes” as well as titles and ordinal numbers—why is that? It appears there are subgroups of chapters and indeed each subgroup can be read as a sequence. Such readings would highlight each aspect in turn of narrator Michael Chapman’s life—family, employment, and private intellectual life. There is also a mysterious “metasystem.”

An obsession of MC is his understanding of how he can best arrange his life to garner the most time in his prize realm of solitary contemplation and sparring with fellow intellectuals. Accepting responsibility for the wife and sons his intellect might not have chosen—providing for their economic and domestic support—he also chafes at how little time that leaves for his personal pursuits. JB conceives the right triangle of various proportions as a perfect metaphor for expressing the tensions between the three major parts of MC’s life. [See my article in *Notebook* number 1, spring 2019.] “By hewing and pruning to this triangle he managed to preserve himself from radical decomposition” (*Prologos*, p. 16).

While this three-way dynamic balance is the glue of the story in *Prologos*, the more important aspect of his work is how he holds that story in his mind with all its other furnishings. JB is emphasizing MC’s role as *witness* to his life even more than that of *actor* in his life. (It is probably no coincidence that JB wrote plays and often describes scenes through stage directions. Also, his peculiar theory of dromenology had to do with rituals, and it mattered whether the audience participated or merely witnessed them.) The first and last chapters of the book are included in the metasystem. In them, author JB seems to look over the shoulder of narrator MC and comment on the opus and the life. JB says, “*After I’ve put this hermeneutic aftermath*

[the last chapter is titled “Aftermath”] *before you as part of the story outside the story estimate for yourself the prospects of his story within the story*” (p. 1039).

My mind cobbles this multi-level information into a mental image: an exoskeleton or scaffolding within which is suspended the organic story of a life, with of course many points of contact between them. (Interestingly, even within the inner story, we have MC writing the character Caleb Karcist as both his literary creation and his intellectual companion—another instance of one figure being both, shall we say, subject and object—another of JB’s little puzzles.)

I believe it is the whole structure—core and all levels of commentary—that is what’s important to JB. If my image is anywhere near correct, this could account for JB’s arrangement of chapters, where all the threads are begun early and moved along at intervals, making it a great challenge to tease out the inner organic story (a family excursion to the zoo anchored by lovemaking before and after). Yes, you can read any subset of chapters—he even assists you to do this by his Index. And still we wonder, why the *given* order? What is its significance? I conclude it is a material approximation of the imagined exoskeleton or metasystem housing the lovingly told story at the heart of a highly intellectual existence.

This superstructure and chapter order make clearer the necessity of MC/JB keeping family life and employee life from swamping his boat. Balance is needed on every hand. Think of a mobile. JB has undertaken a huge work of great delicacy. No wonder we hear MC pray only to live long enough to complete it.

Memories of JB

Lars Håkanson

On August 17, 2000, Jonathan and I attended the 42nd Meeting of the Society for the History of Technology (SHOT), held at the Deutsches Museum in Munich. We had first met in Gloucester in 1967, when I was a 17-year old exchange student in the U.S. Jonathan at the time was 41. On our last meeting in Copenhagen, in June of 2004, I had just turned 54, and Jonathan was approaching his 78th birthday.

Early fond memories from the time in Gloucester include an evening at Peter Anasta's, with the two writers discussing the common misconception of creative writing as something that emerges in sudden spells of inspiration, contrasting that with the reality of hard, disciplined, and often tedious work in front of a typewriter or computer. At times, eight hours of such labor result in little but (perhaps) a promising beginning of a paragraph (to be continued tomorrow . . .), at other times, on a good day, several pages of useable text. Academic writing is not much different, as I subsequently discovered, drawing consolation from the shared wisdom and experience. In this context, I cherish also the memory of Jonathan—one night taking Cathy and me to a brilliant performance of *Iphigenia in Tauris* in a cellar theater in Boston—proudly and full of joy announcing that he had just written “a new chapter in the history of English literature.”

On one of his latest travels to Europe—“*I never got to Europe until late in life and I can never get enough of it! (I renounce the Southern Hemisphere and forego the Orient)*”—Jonathan came to see me in Copenhagen. I vividly remember our lunch at “Det Gamle Apotek” [The Old Pharmacy], allegedly the oldest restaurant in Copenhagen, successfully persuading the normally so ascetic Jonathan to share a beer with me—something he clearly enjoyed: “*I yearn for northern Europe and good beer . . .*”

As always, our meeting in Munich was a most pleasurable

and intellectually stimulating one, occasioned not only by our joint wish for good discussions over good Bavarian beer, but also by our common interest in the history of technology. Munich being only about a two-hour drive away, I drove there by car from Linz in Austria, where I live. Jonathan, who had spent time on Rhodes and at a writers' workshop on Crete, came there by train through Italy. After the conference, we drove back to Linz, where Jonathan spent some time seeing the city and meeting my family.

Since it would only be a slight detour on our way there, I asked him if he would like to see Salzburg, where he had never been. He said, "Yes, if we can make it quickly." Asked what "quickly" might mean, he suggested, "like in five or ten minutes or so . . . coming from Greece, I have seen so many old buildings lately." Following an accordingly brief visit to Salzburg, we drove to Linz, an industrial city and heavily bombed during WWII—a nice place to live, but by most accounts not a terribly interesting place to visit. But Jonathan was intrigued, spending a long time admiring the view of the industrial cityscape and the Danube river from Pöstlingberg, the hill above Linz.

At times, Jonathan Bayliss saw the world differently from most of us.

Editors' note: italicized text is from JB's emails to the author.



*The industrial city of Linz, Austria, which JB preferred to famous Salzburg.
[L. Håkanson photo, 2020]*

Editors' note: Doug Guidry, who died on December 30, 2019, was a founding member of the Jonathan Bayliss Society and served on the Board of Directors until his death following complications from surgery. He and his wife became good friends to JB during JB's last years. JBS members Paul McGeary and Susan Oleksiw share some memories.

Doug Guidry

Doug was a prolific reader and scholar. He brought a unique perspective to our discussions, blending down-home East Texas folk wisdom and his understanding of topics as far flung as quantum mechanics and the philosophy of Kant and Hegel.

I and my wife Catherine spent many wonderful evenings at Doug and Ellen's rambling Annisquam home close by Dogtown. Doug and Ellen presided over gatherings that drew guests from Gloucester's many communities for evenings of lively and stimulating discussions of literature, the arts, politics, and Gloucester's special nature. We often talked long into the night.

Among the frequent guests was Jonathan Bayliss. Doug and Jonathan could talk at length on ideas that ran a gamut of topics from Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle to Thomas Aquinas and Greek myth. I studied ancient Greek art and culture in graduate school, but Jonathan and Doug had a command of the topic that was as deep and broad as any of my professors. The discussions of Jonathan's writings would often bring an exasperated if bemused "*But Jonathan*" from Doug as he tried to grasp some point in Jonathan's often difficult themes in the GLOUCESTERMAN series. For those of us who were witness to those encounters, it was always challenging and uplifting just to be present.

Paul McGeary

When Doug and Ellen decided to move East, they didn't know where they wanted to live but as they approached the East Coast Doug insisted on taking a look at the city where poet Charles Olson, whom he greatly admired, had lived and worked. They fell in love with Gloucester and settled in. Within months they made friends with many of the literary lights of Cape Ann, and that was the beginning of evenings of conversation bringing together Jonathan Bayliss, Vincent Ferrini, Peter Anastas, and many others.

Doug didn't make a point of his own poetry and the first I understood of how deep his interest went was during a birthday party for Ellen. Doug brought together a group of her friends for dinner, and then surprised her (and the guests) with a poem he composed for her. He read with passion lines that echoed of earlier artists both he and Ellen admired. It was a rare treat for those of us who didn't know his work only because of his own modesty.

During the last few years, Doug participated in the Jonathan Bayliss Reading Group. His comments and interpretations brought into the discussion a wide range of ideas and scholarship. He will be sorely missed by all of us for his humor, his openness to different interpretations, his willingness to listen no matter how distant the view being proposed from his own, and his incisive comments and questions.

Susan Oleksiw

Contributors

Catherine Bayliss is retired from careers in university press publishing, information technology management for a state agency, and consulting.

Danuta Borchardt is a Polish-born, retired psychiatrist, and writer. The erstwhile *Exquisite Corpse* published her essay on brief encounters with Charles Olson. An award-winning translator of Polish literary works, including Gombrowicz novels, she has recently completed a translation of her father's collection of maritime stories, a 1960s best-seller in Poland. She recently published *Life behind an Author's Works—Memoir of a Translator*, available on Amazon.

Diane Faissler is a long-time seeker and reader who loves books and ideas, an opsimath something like the JB character Rafe, you might say. She is retired from a career in textbook publishing, in which she got great satisfaction from shepherding words and manuscripts into bound books.

Stephen Farrell is a fan of experimental literature and music. His interest in the work of Jonathan Bayliss began when he ran across *Prologos* in the Boston Public Library. He lives in Somerville, Massachusetts.

Lars Håkanson is professor in international business at Copenhagen Business School. A native of Sweden, he has lived most of his life in Linz, Austria, where he previously taught. He is happily married, has three grown-up daughters, and a cat belonging to the wife and youngest daughter.

Manfred Hegemann was a friend of JB's at the Newton School and again later when they found each other as grown men.

Victoria Bayliss Mattingly went to public schools in Gloucester, the University of Chicago for an A.B., and, much later, the University of Guam for an M.Ed. in TESOL. She and her husband, Joseph Mattingly, lived and taught overseas for a number of years and now live in Traverse City, Michigan.

Paul McGeary is a retired journalist, technologist, city official, and most of all a father and grandfather (known to his grandsons as "Pop-pop"). He was a resident of Gloucester for many years and now lives in Clovis, California. His children's book, *Michael and Tim*, is available on Amazon.

Susan Oleksiw writes mystery novels (available on Amazon) including a series set in India, where she lived and studied. She received a Ph.D. in Sanskrit from the University of Pennsylvania, taught in colleges on the East Coast, edited for academic presses, and later became director of a social service agency for those living with HIV/AIDS and HCV.

About Bayliss

GLOUCESTERMAN is Bayliss's groundbreaking fiction tetralogy of the mid-twentieth century: *Prologos*, *Gloucesterbook*, *Gloucestertide*, and *Gloucestermas*.



The four expansive, inventive, playful, and thought-provoking novels explore Bayliss's wide-ranging interests—including history, liturgy, tragedy, systems, nature, engineering, business, railroads, geography, and politics—as well as friendship, love, sex, domestic life, responsibility, and work.

The tetralogy is headed by *Prologos*, a richly detailed literary masterpiece whose foreground is California's Bay Area about a decade after the end of World War II. The background is the pre-war East Coast (Depression-era Cambridge, Gloucester, Manhattan) and the wartime and post-war Pacific.

The protagonist of *Prologos*, Michael Chapman, is the “Controller” of the other three novels. *Gloucesterbook*, *Gloucestertide*, and *Gloucestermas* follow the inner lives of a cluster of friends who live and work during the 1960s and 1970s in the Atlantic Coast's seaport “Dogtown” on “Cape Gloucester”—the geography that is the backbone of this sprawling, eclectic, unconventional, and stimulating fiction.



Bayliss's dramatic works, *The Tower of Gilgamesh* and *The Acts of Gilgamesh*, take place in Sumer (now southern Iraq), where it is said that civilization began: the first writing, numbering, and accounting systems, and the first literature. Loosely based on the Gilgamesh legend, together the plays form a comedic tragedy exploring—with humor, imagination, and spirited language—ideas about free will, love, creativity, friendship, and religion. These plays, included in the novels *Gloucestertide* and *Gloucestermas*, are available in a separate volume, *Gilgamesh Plays*.

Democratic Oak Tree, a collection of Bayliss's political essays and selected correspondence about politics, was published posthumously. It explains his views on why political parties matter, why citizens should register and vote as Democrats, and what—in a nutshell—Democrats stand for. It includes ten essays written between 1999 and 2006 as well as public letters and personal messages commenting on the major political events and issues of Bayliss's lifetime, from FDR and the New Deal to Adlai Stevenson's 1952 run for President to Hillary Clinton's 2008 campaign.

JONATHAN BAYLISS was born September 7, 1926, in Arlington, Massachusetts. His parents, Henry and Lois Henderson Balos, divorced in 1932, after which Lois—adopting the name Bayliss—raised her three children alone. She moved the family frequently during the Great Depression.

Jonathan and his younger sister and brother attended public schools in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Arlington, Vermont.

Later Jonathan won a scholarship to the Newton School, South Windham, Vermont, where his jobs included felling trees for lumber and milking cows.

Bayliss enrolled at Harvard in 1943, served in the U.S. Navy toward the end of World War II, and finished his A.B. at the University of California at Berkeley in 1949.

Bayliss and Doris Sturtevant married in 1948. Two daughters were born in Oakland, California. The family moved East in 1953, living first in Newton Corner, Massachusetts, and then in Gloucester starting in 1956. A son was born in Gloucester in 1960. The marriage ended in 1966.

While writing his *Gilgamesh* plays and novels, the work of a lifetime, Bayliss earned a livelihood in positions involved with sales analysis, accounting controls, and management, beginning in 1950 at a Berkeley bookstore.

In the 1960s, as controller at Gorton's of Gloucester, the frozen-fish processor, he was a pioneer in

developing integrated business applications for the IBM System 360. Working with the architect Eduardo Catalano, he also supervised the design and construction of a new Gorton's headquarters building.

After leaving Gorton's in 1972, Bayliss devoted the next five years to full-time writing, with the help of a literary grant from the Massachusetts Arts and Humanities Foundation.

Later he worked for the City of Gloucester as an executive aide to the mayor and as city treasurer. In 1985 he resumed full-time writing.

Bayliss was putting the finishing touches on his final novel when he died in 2009 at Addison Gilbert Hospital, Gloucester, at the age of 82. Cause of death was a cerebral hemorrhage. Bayliss's ashes are buried in Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, in his mother's family's plot.



JB at the typewriter in his attic study at his house on Washington Street in Gloucester, 1965. [C. Bayliss photo]

About the Society

The Jonathan Bayliss Society was formed to promote, perpetuate, and enhance the study and appreciation of the literary work of the American writer Jonathan Bayliss (1926-2009) and to encourage scholarship relating to his life, philosophy, and historical and literary context.

The Society is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, EIN 83-1891575. For more information visit the Society's website jonathanbayliss.org or write to info@jonathanbayliss.org or Jonathan Bayliss Society, 11 Rocky Pasture Road, Gloucester MA 01930 USA.

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“The Newton School in 1938 in winter. The barn is now a beautiful school building (1941) used for dining-hall, bunk-rooms & Pappy Newton’s study” [Note by JB’s mother, Lois Henderson Bayliss, in her photograph album]

Gloucesterbook, Second Movement, Chapter 5, “The Rectory”

“Dutchkill School was preparatory, not reformatory. Our little town school in Montvert didn’t have what I needed to get into a Laurel League varsity. No Trig, no Chemistry, no Physics, no Latin, no German,—”

“Oh my goodness!” Mockingly she tapped her temple with four spread fingers. “So you had to board at a charity school for scholars?”

“For troublesome rich kids, over in another valley. My mother begged a full scholarship for me. There were only about twenty five students. I dreaded her visits. She called me her pride and joy in front of everybody. Thank God it was hard for her to get there, without a car.” He fetched from a dusty corner of the room a discolored axe with two blades like the faces of Janus, holding up the flattened shaft of worn hickory by its throat just under the double head as if it was a sacred steel cobra. “This is my diploma. The school was a hard-scrabble dairy farm at the end of a valley, surrounded by woods, and this Western axe is the kind we used for cutting lumber and firewood, along with wedges mauls and two-handed crosscut saws. See: both edges are sharp, but this blade for felling and trimming trees has been ground finely concave like the bow of clipper ship, whereas the other one’s as convex as the bow of an East Indiaman and is used for hack work like clearing brush when no deep cut is needed and it’s likely to get nicked by stones.”

He showed her, and told her, up close, running his thumb over the biting edges. Now she nodded respectful indeed. The shapes of kindred tools in the Maritimes were familiar, but never before had they been explained to her. She said nothing to discourage him as he plunged into the maze of his passage to manhood, bragging about details of his rugged education that still excited his pride: the georgics he had acquired with the unfeigned sweat of manual work in ice and snow or sweltering summer sun, alongside mostly older prepschool boys who paid to learn responsibility. But he was there to earn his way by getting into college, for the sake of Dutchkill’s reputation.