

Call for Papers  
American Literature Association Annual Conference, July 7-11, 2021  
Boston, Massachusetts

Jonathan Bayliss Society

The Jonathan Bayliss Society ([www.jonathanbayliss.org](http://www.jonathanbayliss.org)) invites proposals for papers to be presented at two roundtables at the 2021 American Literature Association annual conference in Boston, Massachusetts, July 7-11, 2021.

*Please note: If a selected panelist is unable to travel to Boston because of the Pandemic, we may allow an electronic presentation, such as through Zoom.*

Roundtable 1: **“Behold, I am doing a new thing”**: Literary Form in Bayliss, Melville, and Olson

The Jonathan Bayliss Society invites proposals on form—structure, rhetoric, coherence, dissonance—in the work of the novelist Jonathan Bayliss and/or the poet Charles Olson, friends who knew each other’s work, and/or in the work of Herman Melville, who was an important influence for both Bayliss and Olson. Each of these writers was an experimentalist in form, challenging our understanding of the shape that a novel, a poem, or an essay might take.

Proposals might address all or part of Bayliss’s *Gloucesterman* tetralogy, Olson’s seminal monograph *Call Me Ishmael* or his other prose or poetry, or Melville’s poetry or fiction.

Roundtable 2: "All Doing Is Ours": Ritual and the Collective Construction of Meaning in American Literature

Jonathan Bayliss created a fictional science called "dromenology" in his *Gloucesterman* series which was meant to study collective human endeavor. In contrast to the Romantic concept of individual action, this science describes activity conducted by humans as groups: work and play, religious ritual, and artistic endeavors such as dance or drama. He conceptualized such activity as the work that staves off entropy in the thermodynamic systems we call communities or societies.

Proposals should address descriptions of collective activity in families, communities or groups of any kind in American literature, such as the examinations of individual function and collective purpose on the sea voyages of Herman Melville's novels; Flannery O'Connor's fixation with ritual performance; the rituals in Louise Erdrich's early poetry; ordinary activities becoming surreal devotional performances in the work of Ben Marcus; the use of communal repetition in tennis practice and addiction recovery programs in David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*; the importance of death rituals in the work of Toni Morrison.

Please send proposals of no more than 100 words – for either roundtable -- to Gary Grieve-Carlson at [grieveca@lvc.edu](mailto:grieveca@lvc.edu) by February 25, 2021.

For information about the ALA 2021 conference visit <https://americanliteratureassociation.org/ala-conferences/ala-annual-conference/>.