

FORUM

University of Edinburgh
Postgraduate Journal of Culture and the Arts
Special Issue 01 | Summer 2006

Title	Jonathan Lethem's Genre Evolutions
Author	James Peacock
Publication	FORUM: University of Edinburgh Postgraduate Journal of Culture and the Arts
Issue Number	Special 01
Issue Date	Summer 2006
Publication Date	01/08/2006
Editors	Georgia Axiotou, Stella Bolaki, Alex Christou, James M. Clawson, Sally Henderson, Joe Hughes, Lisa Otty, Marcelle Wong

FORUM claims non-exclusive rights to reproduce this article electronically (in full or in part) and to publish this work in any such media current or later developed. The author retains all rights, including the right to be identified as the author wherever and whenever this article is published, and the right to use all or part of the article and abstracts, with or without revision or modification in compilations or other publications. Any latter publication shall recognise FORUM as the original publisher.

Jonathan Lethem's Genre Evolutions.

James Peacock, Keele University

The ideas I expound here proceed from an initial, rather broad observation that all of Jonathan Lethem's novels subvert established fictional genres in some way. For example, *The Fortress of Solitude* disrupts a semi-autobiographical coming-of-age narrative with elements of fantasy and comic book super-heroics. *As She Climbed Across the Table* is billed as a "campus comedy," yet allows science fiction to infiltrate its witty satire on academic life. *Girl in Landscape* is a western set in space. Now, it can of course be argued that any genre is necessarily an unstable category, a somewhat volatile mixture of repeated, conventional elements and the variations that provide an individual text with a sense of identity. Scholars such as Margaret Cohen, in "Traveling Genre," have argued just this, and I take it as axiomatic throughout.

What is interesting about Lethem's idiosyncratic treatment of shifting genre, particularly in the novels I examine here—*Gun, With Occasional Music* (1994), and *Amnesia Moon* (1995)—is first its evident self-consciousness. What I mean by this, specifically, is that genre functions both for protagonist and reader as a form of cognitive mapping (to employ an evolutionary term I return to presently). In providing templates or simulation models for human behaviour, genre becomes a means of orienting oneself in geographical, ethical and literary space. Quite simply, one knows roughly how to behave when the generic boundaries, allowing for original elements, are clear.

As a result, hints of self-consciousness about generic convention can be found throughout Lethem's work. For example, at one point during *Gun, With Occasional Music*, the narrator reflects on "the actuality of the violence" which erupts through the smart-aleck dialogue: "[v]iolence isn't part of the ping-pong game of wisecrack and snappy comeback," he says; "it puts an end to all that and leaves you wishing you'd stayed in or under the bed that morning" (57). The disorientation the reader may feel at Lethem's generic mixing in these novels thus mirrors the experiences of the characters as their personal schemata become obsolete in what one might call "postmodern" environments. As Joseph Carroll argues, "[t]he desire to construct reliable cognitive maps assumes unmistakable prominence

in a period of serious cultural disorientation” (387). But as I shall argue, Lethem is as much afraid of scientific, taxonomic impulses such as those exemplified by the literary critic and rabid anti-poststructuralist Carroll, as he is the potential chaos of dismantled categories.

Secondly, and relatedly, I am interested in the close connection Lethem makes between genre stylistics and the thematic preoccupations of these, his first two novels. I wish to focus on three key interlinked themes: evolution, forgetting and regionalism, demonstrating that Lethem tends to approach evolution as an adaptive process ironically, and that evolution is therefore not viewed in any way as progressive, but rather as a retreat into deliberate amnesia or denial of history, coupled with an increasingly atomised and parochial world view. In each text, it is the ascendance of science fiction characteristics which heralds the radical forgetfulness and narrowing of perspectives suffered by the characters. Thus, science fiction occupies a contradictory position: it is the common endpoint of an evolutionary trajectory of genre that simultaneously reveals its own ethical and literary inadequacies. On the surface, Lethem appears to set up a classic (and naïve) opposition between the literary—that which is ambiguous, contested, questioning—and the scientific—that which delimits, avoids equivocality, seeks answers. However, even these categories eventually become destabilised, especially in his third novel *As She Climbed Across the Table* (1997), to which I refer in my concluding observations.

Lethem’s debut novel *Gun, With Occasional Music*, if one is to believe the blurb, is a scintillating stylistic marriage of Philip K. Dick’s dystopian visions and Raymond Chandler’s literary detective fiction. The protagonist, Conrad Metcalf, is certainly a gumshoe wisecracker in the Philip Marlowe mould:

By this time we’d gotten the attention of Mr. Suit. He put down his magazine and stood up, rubbing his jaw with his big beefy hand as if considering the possible juxtaposition of jaw and hand; mine and his, specifically. (*Gun* 14)

Somewhere on the U.S.A.’s west coast, Conrad is investigating the death of a former client, a doctor called Maynard Stanhunt, on behalf of the chief suspect Orton Angwine. There is nothing especially unconventional in this. Yet the maelstrom of corruption, violence and sexual intrigue which ensues, involving some deeply unpleasant gangsters as well as the “Inquisitors,” a futuristic police force intent on controlling the state, throws up characters one would not normally expect to find in a detective narrative. Chief amongst these are Joey, the talking, gun-wielding kangaroo assassin, and Barry the “babyhead.”

How these two outlandish individuals have come to be, and how they might disrupt the trajectory of the detective narrative, are central to understanding the text's ethical orientation. With another nod to generic self-consciousness, Conrad reveals Barry and Joey's provenance:

The streets were a bit too quiet for my taste; I would have liked it better to see kids playing in front, running, shouting, even asking each other innocent questions and giving innocent answers back. That's the way it was before the babyheads, before the scientists decided it took too long to grow a kid and started working on ways to speed up the process. Dr. Twostrand's evolution therapy was the solution they hit on; the same process they'd used to make all the animals stand upright and talk. They turned it on the kids, and the babyheads were the happy result. Another triumph for modern science, and nice quiet streets in the bargain. (*Gun* 18)

One consequence of the mysterious Dr. Twostrand's therapy is that for the detective, the streets no longer seem mean enough, or even alive at all. His natural environment has been stripped of the idle talk that so often provides the answers.

If any one character has turned mean, it is Joey the kangaroo. It is illuminating to treat Conrad and Joey's relationship as the central agon of the text. Not only does the kangaroo's participation in several murderous episodes drive the narrative forward, leading to the eventual showdown between detective and marsupial baddie, but it is also made clear that these antagonists embody two contrasting epistemological standpoints that are crucial to Lethem's ethical concerns. (In fact, the opposition is much starker in *Gun*, *With Occasional Music* than in subsequent novels.) The following exchange, taken from the first meeting between Conrad and Joey, is illustrative of the key differences:

"Don't play human with me, Joey. I've got the same privilege with you as anybody has with a kangaroo. Who sent you?"

In case I forgot about the gun he stuck it in my gut. Like so many of the evolved, he didn't like being reminded of his lineage. (*Gun* 56)

Initially, it should be noted that Joey's attempts to "play human" reveal a fundamental misconception about evolution itself. As Chris Colby contends, "[o]ne common mistake is believing that species can be arranged on an evolutionary ladder from bacteria through 'lower' animals, to 'higher' animals and, finally, up to man" ("Introduction"). In fact, there are passages in *On the Origin of Species*, notably one in which he alludes to "our ignorance of the precise cause of the slight analogous difference between species," when Darwin is

happy to equate “differences between the races of man” with, for example, the propensity of certain colour cattle to be pestered by flies (219). In *The Descent of Man* he is famously more explicit: “there is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties” (1:35). Apart from factitiously privileging man in essence, rather than simply as an organism adept at adapting to and imposing upon its environment, the belief in the “evolutionary ladder” is implicated in the melancholic tendencies Joey exemplifies. Attendant upon his aspiration to be human is the desire, which Conrad recognises, to deny lineage, to erase history.

Evolution here is a form of willed forgetting, combined with a desire to bring the future forward more quickly, and it is epitomised by the sci-fi ingredients of the story. It betrays a melancholic fixation on the futuristic present, despite the ghostly physical evidence of the “past” animal body. Another example would be the babyheads Conrad encounters in the bar later in the novel, drinking themselves to death “to counteract the unpleasant side effects of the evolution therapy” (145), trying to forget themselves even as they are dressed absurdly in toddlers’ clothes and smoking cigarettes. Most importantly, this forgetting stands in direct contrast to the avowed aim of the detective. Throughout the narrative, Conrad is referred to, seldom admiringly, as “[a] question asker” (147). Questions have of course always been the primary weapon in the detective’s armoury, but in this increasingly sci-fi-inflected environment, conducive to individual and collective forgetting, the need to uncover past connections, to re-establish a sense of community in the face of increasing isolationism, becomes absolutely essential. In a neat inversion of Joey’s anthropomorphism, Conrad’s honest appraisal of himself as “the creature who asked questions, the lowest creature of them all” (130), reveals the dread and antipathy the population has developed towards the detective function. The detective, as someone who carries “the weight of the past like ballast, something only I was stupid enough to keep carrying” (234), strives for a sense of connection, ethical responsibility and collective narrative in the face of atomisation. Appalled by the “disconnected creatures pass[ing] through the blackness, towards solitary destinations,” Conrad is “stupid enough to think there was something wrong with the silence that had fallen like a gloved hand onto the bare throat of the city” (130).

Obviously, it is not at all unusual for science fiction to offer dystopian visions. What is interesting here is that the detective tries to maintain classic, romantic hard-boiled genre values in the face of the sci-fi elements—evolved animals, anti-gravity pens, the state-sanctioned accounting and docking of citizens’ “karma” (33)—which repudiate his efforts. Ultimately, the unravelling of the case hinges on another such element—the drug called (making the point explicitly) Forgettol. The novel’s “twist” hinges on the discovery that the victim, Maynard Stanhunt, actually orders his own hit. His excessive consumption of Forgettol has caused a radical bifurcation of his personality, such that his professional self cannot even remember that his private self is enjoying an illicit affair with a woman named Celeste in a motel. Tragically, the professional self takes out a successful contract on the private self, with Joey as hitman.

Not only does this scenario represent a narcotically-enhanced rehearsal of the Calvinist split self, it also points to an underlying paradox operative both narratively and meta-narratively; namely, that despite the detective’s old-fashioned craving for the facts and thus for communal culpability for past events, it is the radical act of forgetting which creates the very narrative in which Conrad Metcalf is involved. Indeed, Forgettol, if the chemist’s analysis is to be believed, can potentially be used as a narrative drug:

Anytime you try to regulate Forgettol, it’s a delicate balancing act. Someday they’ll work it out, but they haven’t yet.’ He smiled a funny smile. ‘If he’s doing it right, he can eradicate whole portions of his experience with the make, then sew up the gap for a sense of continuity. (*Gun* 106)

As he says, “a sense of continuity” can be achieved if the correct balance between amnesia and memory is found. Discomfiting elements can be strategically rejected in favour of the comforts of concatenation. It appears, then, that narrative is a combination of remembering and forgetting, and that the assumed purity of the detective’s drive for recollection is in fact no more palatable than the denial practised by the artificially evolved.

The problem is, as the chemist recognises, that forgetting cannot and should not be controlled in this way. Moreover, Lethem has created a fictional world where it is the state that increasingly attempts to control it through manipulation of technology, in order effectively to relax society’s critical faculties and disable resistance or free thinking. Evolution therapy is one aspect of this. Mass-produced Forgettol is another: later in the novel, after Conrad has spent six years in suspended animation (“the freeze”) for reaching

zero karma points (211), the drug “makery” has become completely mechanised (239) and the time-release version of the drug, which completely obliterates memory, is now the most commonly used (216). Indeed, the detective leaves the freeze after six years to find a world more recognisably imbued with the qualities of science fiction than ever before. Most telling of all are the little boxes everyone seems to own which have taken the place of memory. Conrad attempts to interview again several of the people involved in the case, only to find them stripped of integral memory, obliged instead to ask the electronic box to tell them what they “remember.” Memory has become abstracted, “externalized, and rigorously edited” (224). Thus the population is condemned to the numbing drudgery of an eternal present, free to listen to the muzak “which was sure to be coming out of the nearest water fountain or cigarette machine” (224) and divested of the troubling cognitive maps memory might supply in order to inspire action. The ending of the novel is resigned and pessimistic: once the case has been “cracked,” Conrad too looks forward to the anaesthetic pleasures of time-release Forgettol.

Gun, With Occasional Music begins as a noir detective novel with elements of science fiction, and evolves into a dystopian sci-fi text, which has rendered the ethical, and literary aspirations of the detective obsolete. Consequently, the narrative trajectory describes a retreat into atemporality and solipsism. Evolution is depicted not as a process whereby living organisms adapt their physical and cognitive faculties to suit their environments, but as one of many techniques, along with the administration of drugs and the seductions of consumerism, for detaching the individual completely from his or her environment and a sense of collective responsibility. Similarly, imaginative use is made of scientific knowledge in order to demonstrate that if one is not careful, all narrative runs the risk of becoming science fiction in the end. Science fiction in this novel is what results when an ideologically charged sense of individual sovereignty overwhelms individual rights. An overly enthusiastic acceptance of Darwin’s optimistic evolutionary prediction, that “all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection” (397), results in its antithesis—social breakdown.

Amnesia Moon again offers an amalgam of generic forms, this time fusing the road narrative with science fiction dystopia. It takes place in a post-apocalyptic America but denies both protagonist and reader any knowledge of the exact nature of the cataclysmic

event. Various theories are propounded—alien attack and nuclear accident, to mention but two—but the true significance lies not in what happened but in the consequences of, and reactions to, the unnamed event. To offer a brief synopsis: our hero is a man named Chaos (Lethem is seldom shy about using heavily allegorical names) who, when the novel begins, is living in a disused multiplex cinema in Wyoming. After an altercation with the local self-appointed tribal leader Kellogg, who appears to be able to control Chaos's dreams, Chaos hits the road in a stolen car and heads out west to California with a young girl named Melinda, in a bid to discover his pre-apocalyptic identity.

Melinda may or may not be Chaos's daughter. It is worth remarking that his possible paternity is marginally less interesting than the fact Melinda is covered in smooth, shiny "brown fur" (30) and resembles a seal. Her bodily modification is aesthetically rather pleasing, which is more than can be said for some of the other mutants in Hatfork, Wyoming. Neatly invalidating a weak evolutionary concept of man as the pinnacle of biological adaptation, Lethem depicts a world in which, as Chaos observes, "[t]he animal kingdom is dead" (5), so that the almost logical outcome is the diversification of human physical forms (and genres) into different sub-species. In this, Lethem's early work displays distinct similarities with the novels of the British science fiction writer and social satirist, Jeff Noon, especially his *Vurt* trilogy.

The second thing to note is the archetypically American character of the journey through the wilderness, the "journey west" (149). Not only does it echo the move from east to west Lethem himself made aged eighteen (of which more later), but it forces us within the textual arena of mutation and accelerated evolution to reflect that the westward expansion so integral to Turner's frontier thesis has itself a form of evolutionary thrust, with the creation of a kind of national species its most devout wish. If it is a thesis ably challenged by the New Western Historians such as Brian W. Dippie and Patricia Limerick, who propose an America constituted by regions of distinct personality, Lethem takes this idea yet again to its almost logical conclusion. For in *Amnesia Moon*'s landscape of fear and confusion, regionalism becomes a parochialism so narrow in its perspective, that the citizens of California are barely even aware of the existence of Wyoming, or "Little America," let alone these regions' distinct reactions to the apocalyptic event. For example, in Vacaville, California, Chaos notices that in the magazines "[t]he cover stories were all

about the television and the government, even when they were versions of magazines like *Time* and *Rolling Stone* and *Playboy*, which Chaos knew from before. Nothing referred to anything outside Vacaville” (98). Another character remarks to Chaos, “I’m sure you’ve noticed how local things can get nowadays” (139). Indeed, the primary result of the cataclysmic event is this parochialism, especially in California, and it is a narrowing of perspectives the state government officials (who double as the television and film stars in heroic action films and romances) actively encourage. This is not a classic American regionalism balancing, as Tom Lutz expresses it, “local and larger perspectives” (192), it is a deliberate form of control.

Memory—of a past when one’s identity was comprised not only of pride in local colour but also from a wider civic responsibility—is the victim once again. To exacerbate this loss, the California government forces people to take different jobs every day and to move twice a week. Quite simply, there is not enough time to accumulate meaningful memories. Like the sci-fi environment of *Gun, With Occasional Music*, this California relies on the melancholy of the banal, eternal present. Even Chaos acknowledges that his apparent ability to hold on to some of his memories might be a trick of locality:

Here in Vacaville he had managed to hold onto his previous identity, his memories of Hatfork and his trip west. He felt a certain pride in that. He wanted to believe he was getting stronger, building up an immunity to local effects, and Vacaville obviously had its share of changes. Chaos didn’t remember much, but he knew people shouldn’t have to move twice a week and work a different job every day. Or have their luck tested. / On the other hand, the effect was milder here. The Vacaville equivalents to Kellogg and Elaine—the government stars—lived in the media instead of invading dreams. And you could always turn the television off. So maybe his ability to hold onto his old self was just a part of local conditions. (*Amnesia* 99-100)

And he can never be sure whether these memories are real at all, or simply oneiric illusions.

This might all simply be a familiar satire on the widely-perceived provincialism of much of Middle America, as well as the vacuity of media-saturated politics. It could even be interpreted as highlighting the inherent absurdity in mythical American notions of newness, the forgetting of the Old World as one moves out west to forge a new identity. Most of all, however, I would like to emphasise the broader political and ethical connotations. These are most lucidly, if ironically, revealed through the paranoid fantasies

of one of the incidental characters, a soldier called Vance. He has a particularly outlandish theory about the cataclysmic event:

Vance waved his hand impatiently. ‘Listen: why do you think the world got broken up? *Because the aliens landed.* It was a defensive response, an evolutionary step. Reality shattered to isolate the hives.’ (*Amnesia* 181)

Even if the alien theory is false, the defensive reaction it postulates is significant and strangely prescient, when we consider some of the consequences of 9/11. Evolution is, as in *Gun, With Occasional Music*, a form of retreat into blinkered perspectives even as the idea of progress it promulgates represents a return to grand narratives. It is certainly evidence of adaptive facility in the face of fear, confusion and a destabilised cultural, political (and as we have seen, generic) environment, but its outcomes are isolation, and thus division and rule. Lethem is not, I think, extolling the virtues of a nationalist perspective instead, so much as he is warning against a regionalism which remains unaware of the exquisite tension between differing regional and national identities necessary to sustain a sense of identity in the first place.

I would to like conclude by speculatively opening out some of the evolutionary ideas discussed in relation to *Gun, With Occasional Music* and *Amnesia Moon*. Lethem has not yet attracted a great deal of critical attention, and my intention here is to provide some perspectives from which future scholarship, including my own, might proceed. First, it is curious that the kind of science fiction which characterises these two novels and the two which came afterwards—*As She Climbed Across the Table* and *Girl in Landscape*—was Lethem’s chosen genre while living in California. When he returned to Brooklyn, he produced the more or less conventional detective novel *Motherless Brooklyn*, followed by *The Fortress of Solitude*. Both were, as he has acknowledged, much more personal, candid pieces of work, couched in the geographical and cultural specificities of his birthplace. It would be fascinating to investigate whether there is some inherent characteristic of Brooklyn which facilitates a regionalism based in genres more amenable to representing community, that is, detection and coming-of-age, and whether the ironic distancing of his science fiction is a result of his earlier state of exile, the initial step in the process of “[d]reaming my way back to Brooklyn” (“Birnbaum v. Jonathan Lethem”). Does the evolution of Lethem’s work, somewhat ironically, allow a more inclusive and humanistic

outlook the closer it gets to a romanticised conception of “home?” Or is California simply too weird to write about without ironic distance?

Secondly, I am aware that this essay has, for reasons of space, rather avoided the question of literary influence. This, as Lisa Hopkins has observed, is an “example of evolutionary change” in itself (35). Lethem is typically very explicit about his own influences:

I sometimes use the word ‘exoskeleton’ of plot or concept. With the first couple books, there was always an exoskeleton of concept, which I then filled with all sorts of ephemera, emotions, autobiographical feeling, jokes, and so forth. But there was always that exoskeleton of plot or concept: *Let’s put Philip K. Dick and Raymond Chandler together*, or *Let’s put Don DeLillo and Italo Calvino together* [. . .] I’ve always been very open about influence – not just in confessing it to others, but between me and myself. (“*The Long Way Home*”)

If one accepts as I have that genre functions as a kind of shared cognitive map for protagonist and reader, one might also ask to what extent recapitulated literary ideas constitute cognitive maps, and how far they can be applied and adapted to new historical and cultural circumstances. Might Lethem’s deliberate recognition of the enduring influence of certain literary tropes and stylistic devices in some way represent “the survival of the fittest” in terms of canon-formation? In which case—and this adumbrates a possible conservatism in Lethem’s outlook I wish to investigate further in future articles — intellectual heredity affirms the primacy of authorship as conceptual touchstone. Lethem thereby runs the risk of subscribing to paradigms of dominance in evolutionary theory, against which the novels themselves, as I have shown, appear to militate.

Finally, one would need to look more closely at science itself and its function in Lethem’s novels. Although the technological and scientific developments described tend to have a negative, stultifying effect, it is as I have suggested true that they also create a space for the narrative to emerge. This is especially true of *As She Climbed Across the Table*, in which a group of physicists at a California university create a negative space, nicknamed “Lack,” through which an alternative universe is created. Various academics, including the quite wonderfully parodic Georges De Tooth, the deconstructionist, compete to forge narratives that capture the true meaning of Lack. The narrator’s girlfriend, Alice, ends up falling in love with it. In manufacturing a parallel campus universe (note once again the

microcosmic provinciality of it all) comprised “only of the elements Alice found charming or harmless” (177), Lack becomes merely a vessel for subjective, paranoid impositions of narrative.

Here, Lethem presents the complex relationship between science and literature in a far more sophisticated way than Joseph Carroll in his mammoth polemic *Evolution and Literary Theory*. For Lethem, the two discourses are not mutually exclusive: science creates space for literary interpretation or storytelling and is in itself a form of literature. Therefore, it cannot pretend to “truth.” Carroll, resentful of rhetoricians who “insist that the laws of discourse take precedence over the laws of science” (31), at least recognises that literature itself constitutes, just as science does, a form of knowledge. However, he chooses to ignore the ideological undercurrents of evolutionary theory and its more nefarious ramifications (notably eugenics [Cuddy 11]), and then proceeds to incorporate all literature into a biological evolutionary paradigm that reduces literary subject matter to a series of taxonomies. For instance:

Protagonists can be motivated by any combination of the following purposes: the need (1) to define, develop, or integrate the self (psychodrama, *Bildungsroman*); (2) to find or fulfill sexual romance (love stories; quantitatively by far the largest category); (3) to protect or nurture a family or to establish a right relation of family functions (domestic dramas, for which *Oedipus Rex* is a classic prototype); (4) to found or reform a society or to protect or establish the protagonist’s position within a given social structure (political drama, novel of society); (5) to define some peculiarly human ideal (heroic quests, cultural romance); (6) to live and thrive, to survive or come to terms with death (naturalist fiction; any work in which the author concentrates on man’s animal nature); and (7) to achieve a religious vision or sense of cosmic order (religious and philosophical dramas). (*Evolution and Literary Theory* 250-51)

If Lethem’s novels illustrate anything, it is that human life is *not* readily amenable to the imposition of generic boundaries, and that even if genres do indeed offer a form of cognitive mapping, the vicissitudes of experience will eventually, and necessarily, re-draft those maps. Although Carroll acknowledges the complex inter-relations between the genres listed above, there is surely the risk of placing even more emphasis on forms of discourse than those critics he savages for denying a reality beyond the text. Yes, literature reflects human experience, but such categorising risks an inadvertent inversion: human experience can best be described through textual species.

Carroll merits closer attention, if only for his unblushing adherence to what he calls the “truth” of science (5); for his bludgeoning collective dismissal of thinkers as diverse as Fredric Jameson, Richard Rorty, Terry Eagleton and Jacques Derrida; and for his frankly awe-inspiring equation of queer theory with a postmodernist conspiracy to rob the world of material reality and replace it with autogenous text (166). In the words of Philip Engstrand, the narrator of *As She Climbed Across the Table*, he truly has “[p]aradigm eyes” (80).

I hope to have demonstrated that Lethem’s early novels at least approach evolution as a scientific, ethical and literary concept with somewhat more maturity than this.

Works Cited

- Birnbaum, Robert. “Birnbaum v. Jonathan Lethem.” *Morning News* 7 January 2004.
<http://www.themorningnews.com/archives/personalities/birnbaum_v_jonathan_lethem.php>.
- Carroll, Joseph. *Evolution and Literary Theory*. Columbia and London: U of Missouri P, 1995.
- Cohen, Margaret. “Traveling Genre.” *New Literary History* 34.3 (Summer 2003): 481-99.
- Colby, Chris. “Introduction to Evolutionary Biology.” *Talk Origins*. 16 September 2006.
<<http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/faq-intro-to-biology.html>>.
- Cuddy, Lois A. and Claire M. Roche, eds. *Evolution and Eugenics in American Literature and Culture, 1880-1940: Essays on Ideological Conflict and Complicity*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2003.
- Darwin, Charles. *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex (2 vols.)*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1981.
- . *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*. Ed. Joseph Carroll. Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2003.
- Hopkins, Lisa. *Giants of the Past: Popular Fictions and the Idea of Evolution*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2004.

“Jonathan Lethem Takes the Long Way Home.” Interview with Jonathan Lethem. *Powells*
23 September 2003. <<http://www.powells.com/authors/lethem.html>>.

Lethem, Jonathan. *Amnesia Moon*. Orlando: Harvest, 1995.

---. *As She Climbed Across the Table*. London: Faber and Faber, 2001.

---. *Gun, with Occasional Music*. London: Faber and Faber, 2005.

Lutz, Tom. *Cosmopolitan Vistas: American Regionalism and Literary Value*. Ithaca and
London: Cornell UP, 2004.

Noon, Jeff. *Vurt*. Manchester: Ringpull Press, 1993.