Apologising for the Inconvenience: 
Defamiliarisation and Displacement in Landscapes 
in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* 

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and it is entirely my own work.

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Summary

This thesis sought to examine worldbuilding in science fiction, and to establish whether a single driving force, named a strange attractor could be identified in an author's constructed secondary world. A theory of worldbuilding was constructed from the existing theory and applied to Douglas Adams's The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy in the following media: Radio, Book, Television, Film, Illustrated Book, and Game. Worldbuilding is the central theme of Hitchhiker's, making the series perfect for studying worldbuilding, particularly through the landscapes of Earth, spaceships, and alien worlds. The strange attractor identified in Hitchhiker's was determined to be a particular joke: namely that life is meaningless, and any search for meaning will ultimately end in farce. Hitchhiker's is a series which revels in demonstrating its constructedness, and it is this authorial focus on worldbuilding which was used to understand Adam's subcreation.

The thesis examined the cultural context of Adams's work, namely 1970s Britain, and went on to literature reviews on worldbuilding criticism, previous published work on Adams, and utopian literature, the critical context for Adams's use of Arcadia in Chapter Two. I also investigated what exactly was meant by genre fiction in general, and science fiction and comedy in particular, and how comedy and science fiction interact in Hitchhiker's through defamiliarisation and displacement. By looking at the current critical context of worldbuilding, I extrapolated seven laws governing all aspects of Hitchhiker's, and feeding back into the joke itself.

Adams was consciously working with the notion of Arcadia, and particularly literary Britain as Arcadia. I examined how Arcadia was constructed and undermined in the various incarnations of Earth in the series, with particular regard to the pratfalls awaiting Arthur Dent when he sought to find Arcadia.
As *Hitchhiker's* is a space opera, the spaceships take the place of landscape for much of the series. I investigated what it meant for a spaceship to be a landscape and how this affected the characters in the series. I also discussed how artificial intelligence, when integrated into a space ship, makes the ship a character as well as a locus, and how this interacted with Adams's worldbuilding.

The final section of this thesis discussed the alien worlds of *Hitchhiker's*, and how they function as potential Arcadias in Arthur's search for meaning. Further, I examined how sites of wisdom, such as God's Final Message to His Creation, actually function as sites of deconstruction, casting doubt on the subcreation from within.

This thesis concluded the landscapes of *Hitchhiker's* all embody the universal laws, and therefore are all driven by the single governing impulse of the strange attractor; as such, the concept of the strange attractor can be applied to other subcreations, in the interest of better understanding and analysing worldbuilding in general.
Dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth Smith.
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A Note on Abbreviations

When referring to the whole of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, the abbreviation *Hitchhiker's* will be used. When referring to a specific version, its medium will be added, eg, *Hitchhiker's Radio*.

When speaking of the in-text *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, it will be referred to as the Guide, unitalicised, to differentiate it from the main text.

For ease of reading, individual versions of the primary text will be cited in text with an amended version of MLA, as follows:

**Radio Series:**

(Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* Page Number)

**Novels:**

*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy:*

(Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2* Page Number)

*The Restaurant at the End of the Universe:*

(Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel REU* Page Number)

*Life, the Universe and Everything:*

(Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel LUE* Page Number)

*So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish:*

(Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF* Page Number)

*Mostly Harmless:*

(Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel MH* Page Number)

**TV:**

(Adams *Hitchhiker's TV*)

**Film:**

xi
(Adams Hitchhiker's Film)

Comic:

(Adams Hitchhiker's Comic Page Number)

Illustrated Book:

(Adams Hitchhiker's Illustrated Page Number)

While quotes from Hitchhiker's Radio will be taken from the published scripts, interviews from the CD recording will be referenced as follows:

(Adams Hitchhiker's Radio CD Disc Number Track Number)

Where an event occurs in the same form in multiple versions - for example, the Guide entry on Earth and its expansion from "Harmless" to "Mostly Harmless" - Hitchhiker's Radio will be the preferred reference unless stated otherwise.
"Deep in the fundamental heart of mind and Universe," said Slartibartfast, "there is a reason."

(Adams Hitchhiker's Novel LUE 338)

if you are inventing your world, your society, and the people who live in it, your “research” is all inside your own head. You get to make it all up. All you have to do is make sure it all hangs together….

And when do you stop? Well, the authors of The Lord of the Rings, or Islandia, never did stop making up their imaginary worlds. Their books were an integral part of the process of imagining, the way a peach is a part of the process of being a peach tree.

(Ursula K. Le Guin "Navigating the Ocean of Story: Session 1" Book View Cafe http://bookviewcafe.com)
Introduction:

Hitchhiking the Universe
More and more, storytelling has become the art of world-building, as artists create compelling environments that cannot be fully explored or exhausted within a single work or even a single medium. (Jenkins, qtd in Wolf 10)

In *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams,\(^1\) the Ultimate Answer to Life, the Universe, and Everything is forty-two (*Novel H2G2* 128). The Ultimate Question is "What do you get when you multiply six times nine?" (*REU* 305). This dichotomy between truths is fundamental to the core of *Hitchhiker's*, in which life is, ultimately, meaningless, and the search for meaning will always result in farce. This thesis will examine the constructedness of the landscapes in *Hitchhiker's* with a view to understanding Adams's approach to worldbuilding in a subcreation which is, ultimately, meaningless for its inhabitants. As will be proven over the course of this thesis, *Hitchhiker's* is a subcreation whose roots lie not only in science fiction\(^2\) and comedy, but also the utopia, specifically the pastoral, and the culture of 1970s Britain. *Hitchhiker's* also relies on the literal construction of planets to draw attention to the constructedness of all literary landscapes.

If, in the *Hitchhiker's* universe, life is ultimately meaningless, and this meaninglessness is a joke played upon its inhabitants, what, then, is the point of the series? Technically, it is an interesting comedic experiment, examining the result of a sketch which simply never ends. However, the popularity of *Hitchhiker's* implies that the result is far more than simply an interesting technique. The answer can be found, perhaps most eloquently, in Joss Whedon's *Angel*. In the second season episode "Reprise", Angel completes his self-appointed mission to penetrate the home office of the demonic law firm

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\(^1\) Henceforth referred to as *Hitchhiker's* for the full subcreation. See Note on Abbreviations for more details.

\(^2\) Henceforth referred to as SF.
Wolfram & Hart, with the intention of destroying them in their own demon dimension, only to find it is based on Earth, within every human:

Holland: You see, if there wasn't evil in every single one of those people out there... why, they wouldn't be people. They'd all be angels.

However, the hopelessness of defeating the evil inside humanity does not, as Wolfram & Hart plan, push Angel to give up fighting. Instead, in the following episode "Epiphany", Angel reaches this conclusion:

Angel: I guess I kinda worked it out. If there's no great glorious end to all this, if nothing we do matters..., then all that matters is what we do. 'Cause that's all there is. What we do. Now.

Today. I fought for so long, for redemption, for a reward, and finally just to beat the other guy, but I never got it.

Kate: And now you do?

Angel: Not all of it. All I wanna do is help. I wanna help, because I don't think people should suffer as they do. Because, if there's no bigger meaning, then the smallest act of kindness is the greatest thing in the world."

Adams was likely facing this same question in his own life; not only was he fast approaching atheism by the time he was writing Hitchhiker's, he was also the second generation of his family who did not have a prominent career as a doctor and/or writer (Jem Roberts 10-12). Adams's pursuit of comedy, and ultimately of Hitchhiker's, is his own attempt to find meaning in life, and the epiphany described by Joss Whedon is integral to Hitchhiker's: when nothing matters, everything matters. It is why Arthur is the one who saves the universe through a pratfall; that meaningless little action is amplified to infinite
significance. Inevitably, *Hitchhiker's*, like *Angel*, is a challenge to the audience: in the face of meaninglessness, in the face of entering the Total Perspective Vortex and learning just how insignificant one's life and decisions are in the universe, should we simply give up, allow our minds to be destroyed, or should we accept meaninglessness and count the smallest action as important as the largest? For Adams, and for *Hitchhiker's*, the only solution, ultimately, is to laugh, because existence is not only incomprehensible but also ridiculous. All worldbuilding in *Hitchhiker's* is therefore, for the purpose of making the audience laugh, and simultaneously showcasing the meaninglessness of the subcreation.

This chapter will frame the social and critical contexts of *Hitchhiker's* by examining 1970s Britain, putting forward a literature review on worldbuilding criticism, providing a definition of worldbuilding for this thesis, discussing Adams himself, and finally providing literature reviews of the critical works on Adams and the utopian context he would have been familiar with.

The cultural context of *Hitchhiker's* is 1970s Britain, which is commonly understood to have been one of the grimmest periods of British history: "by common consent for decades now, the worst of times came between the election of Edward Heath in 1970 and the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979" (Andy Beckett "Introduction" 1). However, this view of the 1970s is, at best, incomplete; unemployment in the decade was lower than in recent history, and in 2004 the New Economics Foundation declared 1976 as the best year in Britain since 1950 (3-4). This dichotomy, between the popular view of the 1970s and the reality, is not only a product of political interpretation (2), but is arguably a result of the perception of those who lived through the changes of the decade. This is particularly true of Adams; from graduating from Cambridge in 1974 to *Hitchhiker's* runaway success in 1978, Adams's professional life was spotty at best. A promising start with Graham Chapman failed due to Chapman's difficulties with alcoholism, and his
success with the BBC's Light Entertainment and *The Burkiss Way* was sporadic due to his inability to adapt his humour to the shows (*Don't Panic* 14-18). Gaiman referred to him as a 22 year old flop in 1974 (18). And while 1976 was objectively a good year for much of Britain, according to Adams: "1976 was my worst year. I'd decided I was hopeless at writing and I'd never earn any money at it. I felt hopeless and helpless and beached. I was overdrawn and in a bad way" (qtd in Gaiman *Don't Panic* 23). Thus, whatever trials were already present in the 1970s would have become magnified in Adams's mind, and, it seems, in others:

I was surprised and delighted to find a lot of letters from people in the early days would say 'I was terribly depressed and upset until I sat down and read your book. It's really shown me the way up again.' I wrote it to do this for myself, and it's seemed to have the same effect on a lot of other people. I can't explain it. Perhaps I've inadvertently written a self-help book" (ibid).

Not only was the 1970s marked by political changes, but it also marks the end of post-World War II patriotism, the decline of the British Empire, and a greater awareness of the environmental impact of industrialisation. These aspects of the 1970s are also some of the greatest influences on Adams and *Hitchhiker's*, and will serve to create the cultural context Adams worked in. However, it is important to note the concerns of the 1970s were not new; in the 1950s there was concern about high rise housing, the mechanisation of those who had to live in it, and a dissatisfaction from those forced to relocate to them (David Kingston, 5-6, 25-27, 298-299). Dominic Sandbrook also notes a similar tendency to presume that the 1970s were the beginning of troubled times, even though some of the strikes had been taking place since the 1950s (*State of Emergency* 10). However, the early years of the 1970s were times of difficulty, and though there was some superficial
affluence, there was also "fuel crises, more strikes, Bank Rate rising to unprecedented heights, the stock market falling to the plumbiest depths" (7). In addition to this, in November 1973, shortly after Adams graduated from Cambridge, Britain entered its "fifth State of Emergency in three years" (7-8). According to Sandbrook, 1970-1974 was "a period marked not just by outlandish fashions, cosy sitcoms, long-haired footballers and women in dungarees, but by a pervasive sense of crisis and discontent with few parallels in our modern history" (9). Even with this discontent, the early 1970s were a time when job security was common, education and healthcare were free, and crime rates were low (11). Sandbrook points out elsewhere "fewer strikes per year in Britain than in Canada, Australia or even the United States" (Seasons in the Sun xix). This is not to say the problems of the 1970s were over-exaggerated; by the late 1970s, "Britain's infrastructure seemed old and dilapidated, its public services often broken down and unreliable, its hospitals struggling to cope with an ageing population, its railways grimy and underfunded" (79). More relevant for Adams was the effect of the Common Agricultural Policy on the countryside, as farming became more industrialised, and less personal, transforming the countryside (State of Emergency 184-185). Of particular concern was the effect on what was seen as the Arcadian landscape of rural Britain:

By 1980, when Marion Shoard, a former official at the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, published her broadside The Theft of the Countryside, Britain had already lost a staggering 24 million trees, 150,000 miles of hedgerow and a third of its woodlands, meadows, streams and marshes. (186)

While green movements in Britain can be dated back to 1865 (181-182), it can be argued that the 1970s was the decade in which these issues stuck in the public consciousness. Robert Hewison claimed national cultural life had "been crippled by
nostalgia: for the innocence of childhood, for pastoral life, for the world of the country house, for some moment in the not-too-distant past when the community seemed whole” (qtd in Sandbrook *Seasons in the Sun* 90). As will be discussed in Chapter Two, Adams takes advantage of this nostalgia by placing Arthur in the countryside, fighting for his unfortunately ugly home. In 1972, *A Blueprint for Survival* was published by the green magazine *The Ecologist* which recommended abandoning industrialisation to live better; this was rejected by conservation groups as "too alarmist and authoritarian" (Beckett 38, 239), though it is arguably an attempt at an ecological utopian text. In general, conservation efforts became increasingly active in both the city and countryside, but what "lay behind many of these protests was not just a love of the countryside or a fascination with Victorian architecture, but a revulsion from technological modernity and a renewed love affair with an idealized national past" (Sandbrook *State of Emergency* 192-195).

This national past ties in with the decline of British Imperialism: as children, Adams's generation had been told of Britain's greatness; now it was embarrassing and weak, and beginning to suffer financially, as Britain's share of world trade dropped from 25% in 1950 to 10% in 1970 (*Seasons in the Sun* 85-87). Brendon Piers argues the British Empire was doomed to failure, as they claimed to act as trustees of the freedom of their subjects (xviii-xix). Piers also shows the scope of the decline of the empire: "Between 1945 and 1965 the number of people under British colonial rule shrank from seven hundred million to five million. Within a generation some twenty-six countries, comprising the vast bulk of the British Empire, became independent" (599). While the government attempted to promote the end of the Empire as a positive development, many in Britain "lamented it as a grievous national humiliation. They denounced it as a foul slur on the virility of their race. They damned it as an inglorious betrayal of Albion's manifest destiny" (599-600). According to Richard Weight, imperial influence even waned in advertising
from the 1940s to the 1960s (284). Here again we see a difference in opinion on what the 1970s were like: while Weight does support the claim that industrial unrest after World War II had been "a serious concern since the 1950s" (519), he also claims that by "the late 1970s, the middle classes were in open revolt against the postwar settlement" (562). This is a far cry from Alwyn W. Turner's claim the 1970s were "a golden age of British television, of popular fiction, of low-tech toys and of club football" (x). However, Turner does note the public opinion, at the time, favoured a more negative narrative: "it sometimes seemed as though Britain was effectively talking itself into having a crisis, as though it somehow felt more comfortable with its back to the wall, imbibing the spirit of the Blitz" (xiii). Turner feels that this is reflected in such texts as the BBC science-fiction series Blake's 7, which he saw as "a product of late-70s Britain. This Federation is a quasi-fascist state, which uses drugs in the water supply to control its population and which crushes all opposition without compunction"; in short, the series functioned as a bleak space age Robin Hood narrative (203). However, although it came after Hitchhiker's Radio and would not have influenced it, there is universal agreement over the misery of the Winter of Discontent, from 1978-1979, where strikes combined with the coldest winter in 16 years to create harsh living condition for many Britons: according to Weight, it has "entered British folklore and became a direct counterpoint to the Finest Hour, creating a legend of resistance to enemies within just as the war had done the same for enemies without" (564). Given the economic, political, and ecological concerns of the decade, Hitchhiker's can be seen as a text questioning not only the politics of modernisation and urban planning, but also environmentalism, as the opening destruction of Earth renders humanity an endangered species. To understand how Adams integrated this cultural context into Hitchhiker's, it is necessary to examine the critical context of SF worldbuilding.
Worldbuilding, or subcreation, referred to in both J.R.R. Tolkien's "On Fairy-stories" ("Tolkien On Fairy-stories" 27-84) and Mark Wolf's Notes from Building Imaginary Worlds: The Theory and History of Subcreation, is the act of creating a self-contained, self-consistent world separate from the reality inhabited by an author and their audience. Perhaps one of the most in-depth examples is Jorge Luis Borges's Uqbar, a subcreation presented in high detail as it appears in only certain editions of an encyclopedia (17-34). Every genre uses some measure of worldbuilding, though it is arguably more immediately apparent in the speculative genres of SF and fantasy, particularly in texts which do not take place in what appears to be the authorial universe, such as Ursula Le Guin's alien worlds Urras and Anarres in The Dispossessed. Tolkien places the greatest emphasis on worldbuilding, describing how, after The Hobbit was completed, he did not begin work on The Lord of the Rings immediately as he "wished first to complete and set in order the mythology and legends of the Elder Days" (Lord of the Rings xv). Tolkien's rigorous approach, constantly refining the physical and cultural worlds of Middle Earth, led to a subcreation at once popular and enduring. However, while readers have become interested in the mythology and history of Middle Earth, this was not Tolkien's expectation: "I desired to do this for my own satisfaction, and I had little hope that other people would be interested in this work" (xv). Despite popular interest in Tolkien's act of worldbuilding, criticism and theorising on the subject is still relatively underdeveloped, particularly in SF. While SF worldbuilding has, naturally, been an area of immense interest in SF criticism almost since its inception, it has suffered somewhat from a lack of cohesion; prior to Wolf's 2012 work, Building Imaginary Worlds: The Theory and History of Subcreation, there have been no longer texts solely exploring worldbuilding, although there have been many articles and portions of critical books devoted to the

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3 For the purposes of this thesis, the term "worldbuilding" will be in used instead of "subcreation" for the act of constructing a secondary world. "Subcreation" will be used to refer to an author's fictional universe. Primary World will refer to the real world.
subject. In addition, worldbuilding is rarely seen as an activity on its own, as in Peter Fitting's "Positioning and Closure: On the 'Reading Effect' of Contemporary Utopian Fiction", which examines SF worldbuilding in the context of utopian SF texts (23-36).

Furthermore, as will be discussed later in this chapter, at times worldbuilding criticism has focussed on reader response over authorial intent, where a more balanced approach, investigating how the author works within the text to accommodate the reader, and what impact the historical context has on the text, would serve to demonstrate the nature of the secondary creation more clearly. Finally, the primary difficulty in the study of worldbuilding is the presumption that there is too much in the subcreation to allow a critic to understand how it functions; this thesis will propose a solution to this difficulty, through identifying the driving force of the subcreation, and demonstrate how it can be applied to *Hitchhiker's.*

SF worldbuilding criticism's primary strength lies in two areas: first, the willingness of critics to examine SF through a variety of lenses, from utopianism to feminism, and secondly, the number of writers/critics who are capable not only of analysing SF texts, but are also experienced in producing rich subcreations, such as Le Guin, Samuel R. Delany, and Joanna Russ. Perhaps the foundational critic for SF is Darko Suvin, whose collection of essays *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre* is a seminal work. In the preface, Suvin hits upon the greatest difficulty with analysing worldbuilding; namely, the natural complexity of examining any literature:

> the only proper, truly modern approach to all such matters would have been an organized collective effort by a team with identical horizons that included not only people who would know much better the various literary times and places dealt with, but also an economist, a psychologist, a

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4 This text will be discussed in further detail later.
philosopher; and in the case of SF also a politicologist, a historian of science and technology, and so forth. Indeed, an individual overview of a whole historical process, however one slices it up, has by now become an impossibility for any single scholar. (xi)

So SF worldbuilding, indeed, any worldbuilding, is difficult to analyse because the analysis of an entire world is a practical impossibility. As will be discussed later, this thesis will explore worldbuilding as following the path of a single driving force, a novum called the strange attractor. For Suvin, SF functions as a mirror to the natural world, "not only a reflecting one, it is also a transforming one, virgin womb and alchemical dynamo: the mirror is a crucible" ("Estrangement and Cognition" 5). Thus, the Primary World is crucial to the secondary creation, yet to establish estrangement, the Primary World is made both familiar and unfamiliar, recognisable but strange (6). This estrangement is in "the formal framework of [SF]" (emphasis in original, 7), and is paramount to the ability of SF to show an other place which is still recognisable to a contemporary audience. Suvin goes on to argue that, while the myth also uses estrangement, SF uses it as a way of commenting on the Primary World, introducing cognition to the concept of estrangement, making SF not only an attempt at creating a different but recognisable subcreation, but one which encourages critical thought (ibid). Cognition "implies not only a reflecting of but also on reality" (emphasis in original, 10), so the reflection of the Primary World is, if not warped, at least somewhat altered. However, there are limits on how much the primary world can change: for Suvin, the construction of an SF subcreation is dependent on the subcreation denying the traditions of metaphysical fiction, in which the universe adapts around the protagonists (11). "The world of a work of SF is not a priori intentionally oriented toward its protagonists, either positively or negatively; the protagonists may succeed or fail in their objectives, but nothing in the basic contract with the reader, in the physical laws of their
worlds, guarantees either" (ibid); thus, the Primary World can be changed but not turned into something entirely unrealistic. Suvin touches on the strange attractor this thesis will explore when he claims "the cognitive nucleus of the plot codetermines the fictional estrangement itself" (15); in simpler terms, the particular reflection, or altered reflection, of the Primary World influences the construction of the subcreation, or, as this thesis will argue, the strange attractor of the text will determine the limits of the worldbuilding. Thus, for Suvin, SF subcreation is judged by its distance from metaphysics, and its use of cognition and estrangement to allow the reader to understand the subcreation through the Primary World. This implies a need on the part of the author to understand their audience, a need identified by other critics of SF worldbuilding. However, the limitations of Suvin lie in his dislike of SF subgenres such as the space opera, describing SF's relationship to such as having "one of its roots in the compost heap of such juvenile or popular subliterature" ("SF and the Genological Jungle" 22). Suvin also rejects SF's futurological status, preferring SF to perform as an analogy to contemporary society rather than extrapolating future societies (27-30). Further, Suvin sees SF as "educational literature, which much be "wiser than the world it speaks to" (36). While this is a noble intention, it must also be seen as stifling; while, as Suvin says, "80 to 90 percent of the works in [SF] are sheer confectionary" (ibid), the dismissal of non-didactic SF may lead to a dismissal of some of the more interesting instances of worldbuilding, as I will demonstrate through this thesis with *Hitchhiker's*.

Perhaps the most important concept Suvin explores in terms of worldbuilding is the novum, which Suvin sees as narratively dominant ("SF and the Novum" 63). *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* says of subcreation: "Such new textual worlds are set off from ours chiefly by means of a drastic disruption, an anomalous breach in accepted

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5 This is applicable to most SF texts, but as will be explored later, this rule changes in *Hitchhiker's* due to the influence of comedy on the SF subcreation.
verities; in short, an intrusive novelty so strange, and at first inexplicable, that it deserves a
category of its own: the novum" (http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/novum). The
novum originally appears in Ernst Bloch's first volume of _The Principle of Hope_, and was
described by him as "the mediated Novum", a fixture of a well-formed utopia (197). The
novum, for Bloch, is a category of the "New", which had previously been interpreted as
"senselessly changing fashion" (200-201). The essential elements of the novum are
"possibility and finality", implying the novum is only potentially real, but also the product
of "the goal-determination of the human will"; thus the novum could also be expected to
come to pass (202). The novum then, according to Bloch, must be somewhat realisable,
which is why it is so important to Suvin's interpretation of SF; if the SF universe must be
ruled by non-fantasy laws, Bloch's concept of the novum, the new yet realisable element of
a text, serves to explain the mechanics of SF. For Suvin, the novum is "'totalizing' in the
sense that it entails a change of the whole universe of the tale, or at least of crucially
important aspects thereof (and that it is therefore a means by which the whole tale can be
analytically grasped)" (emphasis added, "SF and the Novum" 64). Suvin's distinction
between a novum which changes a universe, and one which changes only aspects is
integral to this thesis, and will be returned to when discussing the strange attractor. The
novum has no single definition, as it changes from text to text, though it can be
subcategorised as inventions, settings, or agents (ibid). Suvin also adds that whether
something can be classed as a novum is dependent on the time and place the text was
produced, with the obvious example of the novum of the communicator in _Star Trek_ now
bypassed by modern mobile phone technology (ibid). However, for Suvin, as with Bloch,
the novum must be achievable; thus, "the validation of the novelty by scientifically
methodical cognition into which the reader is inexorably led is the sufficient condition for
SF" (65-66, emphasis in original). This helps explain Suvin's dislike for genres such as
space opera, in which the novum of convenient interstellar travel is, by current standards, closer to fantasy than science. Suvin's approach to the novum also has the side effect of his opinion that the soft sciences provide a more feasible groundwork for SF than hard sciences (68). Suvin sees the novum as generating an alternate reality, with a different history to the Primary World, "sufficiently autonomous and intransitive to be explored at length as to its own properties and the human relationships it implies (71). The introduction of the novum is dependent on either travel within the secondary creation, or the creation of the novum, though both of these can take place before the events of the text (72). For Suvin, the most important element of the novum is that it must be "convincingly explained in concrete, even if imaginary, terms, that is, in terms of the specific time, place, agents, and cosmic and social totality of each tale", and thus SF must be judged on its internal realism as much as realist fiction (80). That a novum "can be both superficially sweeping and cognitively validated as not impossible, and yet of very limited or brief relevance" indicates the individual novum's inextricable link with history and progress, and its dynamic nature (81-82). The significance of this argument in relation to an analysis of Hitchhiker's will be returned to later in this chapter. To further understand SF worldbuilding, it is first necessary to examine other SF critics.

Peter Fitting's "Positioning and Closure: On the 'Reading Effect' of Contemporary Utopian Fiction" claims SF worldbuilding has always needed to keep the audience in mind; after all, cognitive estrangement cannot be established if the writer does not know who they are writing for (26). Reader-oriented criticism must look at "a work's internal elements - - the ways in which a specific literary text constructs its implied reader" (27). The SF writer must understand the constructed reader through shared literary knowledge, language and culture (ibid). The reader in SF is not passive, a mere listener, but is involved in the text through "the process of identification with a fictional character where the reader
is implicated on an emotional and experimental level as well as on the intellectual one” (29-30). This construction of the reader is a further reflection of the Primary World, and it is imperative for the SF writer to consider. While Fitting discusses positioning in specific regards to utopian SF, the three elements are also consistent with SF in general: the perspective from which the subcreation is described; how the reader is encouraged to identify with the characters, and the distance between the subcreation and the reader's world (30). These elements serve to engage the reader in cognitive estrangement, and are "performative strategies which attempt to directly engage the reader, rather than simply reaffirming the solitary and passive nature of the reading experience” (32). SF worldbuilding then, includes a consideration of an active reader. In keeping with Suvin's opinion of the didactic nature of SF, Fitting sees utopian SF novels as free from closure, or a return to the status quo, not only allowing a temporary excursion from the Primary World, but also encouraging the reader to consider how the realities of the subcreation could come to pass in the Primary World (33-34).

Marc Angenot's "The Absent Paradigm: An Introduction to the Semiotics of Science Fiction (Le Paradigme absent, éléments d'une sémiotique de la SF)” describes SF as a conjectural genre: "Its aesthetic goal consists in creating a remote, estranged, and yet intelligible 'world" (10). Angenot's interest in worldbuilding relies on the language used, specifically what are typically termed neologisms, or, as Angenot would have it, fictive words, either supposing a linguistic evolution from current language or alien words (12). Language is an important aspect of the genre, and "SF has, little by little, created its own vocabulary which is to a large degree used in common by different writers and has penetrated everyday language: android, cyborg, robotics, chronolysis" (14). For Angenot, these fictive words function as a way to imply the subcreation's larger background without pedantry, such as an alien language serving to presuppose another civilisation and culture
This need for implication rather than exact description is, for Angenot, key to worldbuilding: "While the realistic novel should lead the reader to believe in the events it narrates, the SF novel must also have him believe in what it does not and can not show: the complex universe within which such events are supposed to take place" (15). While Angenot sees SF as requiring "a conjectural mode of reading" (18), Angenot is placing the onus for worldbuilding almost solely on the author; it is their responsibility not only to know what to say, but also what not to say. Angenot describes SF novels as "elaborated in a way that makes them resemble a Hall of Mirrors in an amusement park - a labyrinth of glass which disorients the passersby strolling through it" (16), thus the act of writing SF is an act of encouraging estrangement in the reader, and forcing them not only into interpreting the fictive words in the text, but also into guessing at the rest of the subcreation.

Kathleen L. Spencer's "'The Red Sun Is High, the Blue Low': Towards a Stylistic Description of Science Fiction ('Le soleil rouge est au zénith, le soleil bleu se couche': vers une description stylistique de la SF) perhaps comes closest to the approach to SF worldbuilding this thesis is taking. On estrangement, she claims it "plays a vital function in a literary text, for it creates that disruption which forces the reader temporarily out of an involvement in the text (during which she or he is not able to reflect on what is being read), and forces him or her to grapple actively with the material in order to evaluate it" (36). This would seem to contradict any idea of immersion in a text, but by problematising an aspect of the subcreation, it encourages the reader to engage more fully in the subcreation, investing both time and energy in it. Spencer agrees with Suvin's assessment of the novum as a totalizing force, and believes the analysis of SF texts must always involve discovering the novum (37). However, the novum's influence on the text is limited by logic, and, indeed, by the need to connect the text to the Primary World (ibid). Spencer also
distinguishes the difference between magic and the realisable invention novum of SF, in that while magic is always limited to individuals, only the invention of technology is limited to individuals, and its use is not (38). Thus, the invention novum of SF is something not everyone could invent, but which everyone can use, such as Robert A. Heinlein's dilating door, an oblique reference to an alien technology which is simultaneously different to the primary world and yet available to all; this reference also allows for worldbuilding without the risk of the text becoming pedantic (40). Spencer identifies perhaps the most difficult element of worldbuilding, particularly in utopias and other world SF texts, namely the conflict between explaining that which the real world audience needs explained, and in the lack of a need to explain such things to a local (41). For Spencer, "exploring [the subcreation] in all its detail and texture is one of the prime aesthetic satisfactions of reading SF" (42). However, to allow the reader to explore the secondary creation, the author must include extra elements, such as the dilating door, which are not necessarily relevant to the plot, but lend verisimilitude to the subcreation (43-44). These elements, which would be extraneous in realist fiction, cause the background and the foreground to shift because the knowledge taken for granted is not necessarily present in SF (45). The SF writer, then, must pay attention to two main expectations of SF readers: that the text will be set in an other place or time, or at least have radically different circumstances to the Primary world, and that the text can be understood cognitively and is in some way related to the primary world (45-46). The technique Spencer identifies for this is the invention of a fictive author and audience who come from the subcreation itself (ibid). This is a difficult tool to use, as too much explanation of the subcreation would not be realistic, but too little will only confuse the reader. As will be discussed further in Chapter One, in the case of Hitchhiker's, this is

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6 As will be discussed later, the Guide is Hitchhiker's most effective tool for combating this difficulty.
accomplished through the Guide, which presumes it must tell the readers in the *Hitchhiker's* subcreation about the places they visit.

Tom Moylan's text *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination* is, like Fitting's work, primarily about SF utopias, but the theory can be extended to SF in general. Moylan sees both utopia and SF as concerned "realistically with the future" while at the same time they are "most concerned with the current moment of history, but they represent that moment in an estranged manner" (35). Moylan elaborates by pointing out that while "appearing to concern itself with the 'future,' science fiction actually gives a fresh look at the present as it is represented in the past of a fictionally extrapolated future" (42). For Moylan, there are two registers in constructing utopian and SF narratives: the iconic register, which is the background world of the text, and the discrete register, which is the protagonist who informs the audience about the world (36). As will be explored with utopia later in this chapter, this discrete register is present to ask questions and initiate a dialogue which illuminates the subcreation (38). The iconic register is the background made foreground, the constructed world which the author is encouraging the reader to explore (36-37). As utopian fiction is, generally, concerned with a stranger from another time or place visiting the utopia, the iconic register is most often demonstrated via the discrete register directly, "the perambulations and confused, cynical, or excited questionings of the main protagonist" (37-38). Non-utopian SF, as Spencer points out above, is not always able to be so direct, and so the discrete register must interact with the world without necessarily questioning it.

In "'Look into the dark': On Dystopia and the *Novum*", Moylan describes how Suvin's "On the Poetics of Science Fiction" and "Defining the Literary Genre of Utopia" served to invigorate both SF and utopian criticism, but that "SF and the Novum" did not seem to have the same effect (52-53). While Suvin took this for acceptance of his theory,
Moylan posits a critical discomfort with the novum, in particular "Suvin's claim that a textual novum needs to be validated by cognitive logic" (53). Moylan attributes this discomfort to Suvin's interpretation of the novum a reaction against prescriptive thinking, and a tendency to connect totalizing thought with totalitarian thought (54-55). Suvin points out that "extreme care must be taken to distinguish between the novum of opposition and the pseudo-novum of commodification" (emphasis in original, qtd in Moylan "'Look into the dark'" 56); namely that the novum promised by utopia is not the same as the novum promised by commercialisation. The novum, as both Suvin and Moylan explain, "is meaningful only to the extent that it effectively intervenes in the author's historical context" ("'Look into the dark'" 57). Suvin's novum was an elaboration on Bloch's, becoming a "dialectical force that mediates the material, historical possibilities and the subjective awareness and action engaged with those possibilities"; thus, the novum is not just new, but is also intrinsically of its time. While Bloch's novum would, arguably, become static upon reaching its Ultimum, Suvin's was dynamic, constantly changing with history (58-59). Suvin's criteria for evaluating the novum are magnitude, cognitive validation, and relevance; the first being how much the novum affects the subcreation, the second the critical reader response to the novum and its historiography, and the third the relevance of the novum to the reader (59-60). There is a distinction between the novum and pseudo-novum, and this lies in its ability to make a difference in the Primary World (60-61). This would imply the novum as an SF tool is more than a different world, invention, or agent, but is something which significantly changes the subcreation and influences the reader's view of the Primary World.\footnote{This will be discussed further with the strange attractor.} For Suvin, the novum is a plot generator, with the ending serving to provide cognitive validation for the novum (64). This thesis will argue
that the plot driving novum is the one most likely to function as the driving force not only of narrative, but also of universal laws.\(^8\)

Fredric Jameson's *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* is an investigation not only into utopia but the operations of science fiction. It includes three essays which are of particular relevance to worldbuilding. The first, "World-Reduction in Le Guin: The Emergence of Utopian Narrative" discusses Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* as "the travel narrative... the pastiche of myth, the political novel... straight SF... Orwellian dystopia... adventure-story... and finally even, perhaps, something like a multi-racial love-story", which Jameson sees as raising the question of the novel's unity (267). However, the complexity of Le Guin's narrative is not only reminiscent of the team Suvin would have analyse SF, but also of the genre's "capacity to provide something like an experimental variation on our own empirical universe" (270). While Jameson does acknowledge the use of analogy and extrapolation in worldbuilding, he identifies a third element he calls "world-reduction", the thinning and simplification of reality (270-271). This is in keeping with other work which examined oblique worldbuilding, as, for Jameson, extrapolation in SF means the small details hint at something larger (276). However, this world-thinning is applied only to ice-bound Gethen of *The Left Hand of Darkness* and to the desert moon Anarres in *The Dispossessed*, with the relative lack of animal species considered part of the process; as such, it is not clear whether this technique was used by Le Guin merely in keeping with these naturally lifeless worlds, or if it was intended to encourage the reader to fill in the gaps of the secondary creation themselves. The second essay, "Progress Versus Utopia: or, Can We Imagine the Future?" presents the contradiction of all fiction, particularly those with high levels of worldbuilding, namely that while narratives must end, the subcreation they are a part of

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\(^8\) This will be discussed later.
does not, typically speaking, come to end (283).\(^9\) Jameson also reinforces the critical consensus that SF, even future SF, is about the present:

For the apparent realism, or representationality, of SF has concealed another, far more complex temporal structure: not to give us 'images' of the future - whatever such images might mean for a reader who will necessarily predecede their 'materialization' - but rather to defamiliarize and restructure our experience of our own present, and to do so in specific ways distinct from all other forms of defamiliarization. (emphasis in original, 286)

For Jameson, the distinctiveness of SF's defamiliarisation is its "process of distraction and displacement, repression and lateral perceptual renewal", "strategies of indirection" which encourage the reader to engage cognitively with the subcreation (287). The third essay, "Science Fiction as a Spatial Genre: Generic Discontinuities and the Problem of Figuration in Vonda McIntyre's The Exile Waiting" largely discusses SF's ability to borrow and adapt more generic forms, such as soap operas (296-313). According to Jameson, there is a "relatively greater freedom, in... SF novels, to readjust thematic and narrative developments according to our own inclinations" (301). The key point in this essay, for this thesis, is Jameson's claim that the obvious constructedness of SF landscapes is a strength of the genre, feeding into estrangement and allowing the audience to essentially play in the secondary creation (307-308). As this thesis is concerned with how the landscapes of Hitchhiker's represent its worldbuilding, this obvious constructedness is critical; as will be argued later, Hitchhiker's is innovative because it is very obviously manufactured. Further, Jameson's claim SF cannot share the same sense of closure as narratives in other genres will be key in discussing Adams's use of delayed punch-lines to demonstrate the nature of the Hitchhiker's subcreation.

\(^9\) Hitchhiker's is perhaps one of the few examples of the reversion of this, as the characters witness the end of the universe long before the end of Mostly Harmless (Hitchhiker's Novel REU 244).
Phillip E. Wegner's *Imaginary Communities: Utopia, the Nation, and the Spatial Histories of Modernity* also encompasses both utopia and SF; according to Wegner, narrative utopias - and by extension, SF - can be considered real "in that they have material, pedagogical, and ultimately political effects, shaping the ways people understand and, as a consequence, act in their worlds" and he further claims narrative utopia helped influence the formation of the nation-state (xvi). This is based partly on Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, in which he posits nationalism and nation-ness "are cultural artefacts of a particular kind. To understand them properly we need to consider carefully how they have come into historical being, in what ways their meanings have changed over time, and why, today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy" (4). Like utopia, the nation "is an imagined political community", as constructed as any literary text, because even in the smallest nations, there is no way for any member of the community to know everyone else (6). Wegner sees "narrative utopias... as a way both of telling and of making modern history, and in this lies their continued importance for us today" (xvi). Like SF, narrative utopia is "a specific kind of representational act, and also a particular way of conceptualizing the world" (xvii). Wegner, along with other critics, describes utopia as not only a root of SF, but also a subgenre, a dual existence similar to the anamnestic nature of utopia, which will be discussed later (32). This is in part because Suvin's cognitive estrangement, that is, the viewing of a subcreation with the effect of thinking critically about the Primary World, is also a crucial element of utopian literature (17-18). Thus, for Wegner, worldbuilding in both utopia and SF is not merely fictional worldbuilding, but also implicit in changes in the Primary World.

As a writer/critic, Delany's *The Semiology of Silence* (134-154)\(^\text{10}\) is both a critical examination of the codes inherent in SF, and an experienced discussion of

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\(^{10}\) Due to JSTOR's inconsistency between naming Delany as single or co-author of this piece, the bibliographic reference only refers to Delany as an author as that is the listing on the title page of the article.
worldbuilding. Delany sees the "real world" as made up of codes, but SF requires the reader to re-interpret expected codes, such as the phrase "Her world exploded", which in reality or realist fiction is metaphor, but in SF can become literal (136-139). Delany sees reading SF as an active education in its codes, with the most usual method of learning being to read a great a deal of it (140-141). Using Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, he demonstrates how the framing of a text as SF changes the reader's response; as a literary text, the reader will look for metaphor and allegory, while as an SF text, they will be trying to understand how Gregor Samsa was transformed into a giant insect, and if this is anomalous or a regular occurrence (141-142). However, Delany stresses this is an interpretative ability rather than a simple mindset (143-144); thus the reader could apply the codes of SF to any text of their choosing, but that does not necessarily mean it is a valid reading. Delany goes further than most in his analysis of oblique worldbuilding in SF: "When Heinlein placed the clause 'the door dilated' casually in one of the sentences of his 1942 novel, *Beyond This Horizon*, it was a way to portray clearly, forcefully, and with tremendous verbal economy that the world of his story contained a society in which the technology for constructing iris-aperture doorways was available" (144). It is, in fact, this "tremendous verbal economy" which so impresses Delany: "All the writer's noise is finally an attempt to shape a silence in which something can go on" (163). SF worldbuilding is thus an attempt simultaneously to introduce a new world to the reader, while allowing them space to infer and interpret the laws of the subcreation. As he claims in "About 5,750 Words", "the only way a writer can present [the subcreation] is by what he can make happen in the reader's mind between one word and another, by the way he can manoeuvre the existing tensions between words and associated images" (14). Thus, for Delany, SF is not only about language and the gaps between them, but also about the reader; ultimately, the "SF writer may want the audience to observe in it the play and fragile stability of the
object world which its malleabilities and opacities alone can model" ("The Semiology of Silence" 164). In order to do this, the SF writer must suppose not only a cultural background for the reader, but also an SF vocabulary for them; as will be discussed later, in Hitchhiker's, Adams uses the combined cultural backgrounds of the pastoral/literary Britain and the 1970s to give the audience the cues they need to interpret the text.

As another writer/critic, Russ's "What Can a Heroine Do?" is a study of the limitations of female characterisation in fiction and the opportunities available in SF (79-93). Russ identifies the primary roles for women in literature as "Bitch Goddess", "Virgin-victim", "Lost Princess", and the love interest (80-90). These limitations, Russ states, are endemic to literature, and women who attempt to write outside of these myths must either omit women or else turn to lyricism, rejecting traditional plot structures (85-90). However, Russ does see SF, along with detective stories and supernatural fiction, as a mode in which women, and indeed the world at large, can be written anew:

The myths of science fiction run along the lines of exploring a new world conceptually (not necessarily physically), creating needed physical or social machinery, assessing the consequences of technological or other changes, and so on. These are not stories about men qua Man and women qua Woman; they are myths of human intelligence and human adaptability. (90-91, emphasis in original)

Thus, for Russ, SF writing is not only an act of worldbuilding which uses cognitive estrangement to critique and interrogate the Primary World, but it can also be free of the constraints, be they gender or otherwise, of the Primary World.

In addition to this body of SF criticism, Wolf's Building Imaginary Worlds: The Theory and History of Subcreation, has served to provide the historical context, not to mention the critical language demanded for this area of study, drawing primarily from
Tolkien. In addition, Wolf’s multimedia approach is perhaps the most relevant for this particular topic, or for any text which is adapted into other media; as *Hitchhiker’s* is a text with one of the most media adaptations in fiction, a purely literary approach is not necessarily the correct one. In addition, a multimedia approach also allows for a multi-genre approach, both in *Hitchhiker’s* itself as a comedy SF text, and in the comedy influences on Adams. However, while Wolf’s multimedia approach is appropriate for *Hitchhiker’s*, the work of SF critics such as Suvin, Moylan, and Jameson, particularly in their analysis of cognitive estrangement and the novum, are necessary to understand the conventions Adams works in.

Early in his study, Wolf suggests why there has been a lacuna in specific worldbuilding criticism:

> Imaginary worlds are, by their nature, an interdisciplinary object of study, and thus likely to either fall between the cracks between disciplines and sub-disciplines or receive only a partial examination according to which features are considered salient according to the analytical tools being applied. (3)

The lack of longer works solely devoted to worldbuilding criticism is a symptom of the aforementioned difficulty in analysing an entire subcreation. However, as with the critics listed above, fantasy has produced worldbuilding criticism obliquely; in *Fantasy and Mimesis: Responses to Reality in Western Literature*, Kathryn Hume, almost in passing, identifies five elements of critical approach which also happen to be crucial to worldbuilding. Hume describes these elements as what surrounds a text: the world of the author, the author, the audience, and the world of the audience, differentiating the first and

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11 SF literature has yet to produce a writer/critic equal to Tolkien in regards to the discussion of worldbuilding, and so Tolkien's criticism will be used for this thesis.
12 The forthcoming publications *Revisiting Imaginary Worlds: A Subcreation Studies Anthology* and *The Routledge Companion to Imaginary Worlds*, both edited by Wolf, will undoubtedly begin to fill the critical gap.
last by calling them World-1 and World-2 (9-10). Hume uses "worlds" to mean all elements shaping the author and audience, whether consciously and unconsciously, and acknowledges there may be significant differences between them; World-1 affects what the author puts into the work, and World-2 is the lens through which World-1 is read by the audience (9). Hume's separation of author and audience from their respective worlds suggest a complex relationship between all elements involved in worldbuilding; both author and audience can accept or reject elements of their worlds when interacting with the text. This can be seen in *The Lord of the Rings*, which Tolkien insists was not inspired by World War II, although he was aware it was read as such (*Lord of the Rings* xvii). Indeed, Tolkien was quite insistent it is "false, though naturally attractive, when the lives of an author and critic have overlapped, to suppose that the movements of thought or the events of times common to both were necessarily the most powerful influences" (xvii). While Hume was using these five elements of critical approach, which could also be understood as elements of worldbuilding, to explain the differences between definitions of fantasy and their limits, her analysis can also be interpreted in reference to worldbuilding, describing an interactive system encompassing cultural contexts, source, shared source, authorial intent, close reading, and reader response. Close reading and reader response are two of the more common critical techniques, and are closely connected to formalist criticism: close reading is one of the core tenets of formalism, paying closest attention to the text, while reader response rejects formalism to some degree, moving from the text to "the many different ways in which readers respond to literary texts" (Davis and Womack 51). However, to study worldbuilding, as Suvin said above, it is also necessary to understand the tools available to the author and how they intended to use them, ranging from cultural and literary influences in literature in general, to scientific influences in SF in particular; scientific influences alone can range from physical sciences such as physics and geology to
the soft sciences of anthropology and sociology. This large potential context demonstrates another of the difficulties facing the critic of worldbuilding: "a world is more difficult to encapsulate in a description or analysis than a particular story, character, or situation, making it easier to overlook", either because it is too large a domain or because it is simply too complex and will be covered when all other themes can be exhausted (Wolf Building Imaginary Worlds 2). To investigate worldbuilding is to investigate the production of large, complicated systems, with different rules from one subcreation to another. Worldbuilding is not only the construction of a subcreation but is also intimately linked with the development of narrative; with the exception of texts with supplementary material - such as maps, appendices, dictionaries, and other ancillary materials - the shape of the subcreation is experienced through the narrative (2). In addition, any supplementary materials, as well as the basic methods of subcreation, must be based on the audience's assumed scientific knowledge and expectations formed from not only generically similar material but from the literature of fact, from journalism to serious scientific texts. Michael Saler suggests these supplementary materials are intended to imitate science (15). This is partly correct, but does not sufficiently appreciate or investigate the skill involved in creating or incorporating these materials; while the ansible13 invented in Le Guin's The Dispossessed is purely fictional, the mathematics it is derived from are real, although Le Guin obviously cannot include the exact equations. Bruce Sterling claims the "basic role of science fiction writers was to serve as a cultural interface between science and the readers of fiction" (242), and while this may be largely true, SF worldbuilding retains the freedom to include elements scientifically impossible or implausible,14 according to present theory, and the supplementary material can be based on what can be currently seen as unrealistic.

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13 The ansible is a device which allows instantaneous communication across the universe.
14 While Suvin would disagree, this thesis allows for a wider range of SF texts than he would seem comfortable with.
elements not far removed from fantasy, such as the warp drive in Star Trek.\textsuperscript{15} David Gerrold identifies the need for skill in anticipating audience knowledge and belief criteria when he says the "reader will suspend disbelief – he won't suspend common sense" (emphasis in the original, 29). This is of particular interest in regards to Hitchhiker's, whose very title not only suggests a particular kind of travel narrative but also the conventions Adams must follow with the bald facts and practicalities of such travel. Further, Adams found a way to include his supplementary material in text, in the form of entries from the eponymous Guide.\textsuperscript{16} Adams is an SF author whose worldbuilding does not rely in any regular way, or at times in any way at all, on current scientific accuracy; the effect of this on the text is that it comedically displaces the audience's expectations of SF as a didactic, reasonably accurate genre, allowing for the trappings of the genre to be simultaneously defamiliarised and made humorous. For example, instantaneous travel across the galaxy is not reliant on serious scientific research, but is instead predicated on the strong Brownian motion in a cup of tea helping to create the Infinite Improbability Drive.\textsuperscript{17} This is further displaced through the anecdote of the Drive's inventor "getting lynched by a rampaging mob of respectable physicists who had finally realised that the one thing they really couldn't stand was a smartass" (emphasis in original, Adams Hitchhiker's Radio 42). This also has the effect of influencing the audience's approach; while the invention of the Drive is clever, it is also somewhat silly; thus the reader learns to anticipate alternative, comedic versions of standard SF tropes. While instantaneous travel across the galaxy is an actual scientific concept, though far-fetched, the Drive itself is what Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr calls "inspired bullshit" (130), designed for the purposes of the

\textsuperscript{15} Although it is now known as Star Trek: The Original Series, this thesis is concerned with the literary and cultural influences of Adams's time; unless stated otherwise, Star Trek will be used to refer specifically to the original series which ran from 1966 to 1969.

\textsuperscript{16} As stated in A Note on Abbreviations, when referring to the in-text guidebook, it will be referred to as the Guide to avoid confusion with the primary texts.

\textsuperscript{17} Henceforth "the Drive".
text but not actually realistic. This can also be referred to as "bolognium", a term coined by Larry Niven to describe something which is simultaneously crucial to the narrative while being "absolutely preposterous by the known laws of physics" (emphasis in original, qtd in Gerrold, 72). Tomas G. Pavel refers to such elements as contradictory objects, which "effectively prevents us from considering fictional worlds as genuine possible worlds" (49). Pavel continues to say:

nothing prevents the theory of fiction from speaking, as some philosophers do, about impossible or erratic worlds. Contradictory worlds are not so remote as one might expect. Not only is physics still divided between the theory of relativity and quantum mechanics, not only is light simultaneously made up of particles and waves, but also our everyday worlds host such impossible entities as individual psyches, desires, dreams, and symbols. Consistent worlds originate in a strong idealization, and our commitment to coherence is less warranted than it appears. After all, humans lived in notoriously incongruous universes long before these became more or less cohesive. (49-50)

Pavel sees incoherence and contradiction to be as much a part of the Primary World as fictional universes, particularly as it is impossible to know or understand everything in the Primary World. Fiction, with its contradictory objects, is understandable to the audience because life is full of such objects. Subcreations filled with impossible or fantastic contradictory objects, Suvin's nova ("SF and the Novum" 63), are not necessarily as impossible as they might at first seem, simply incongruous to the worlds of the author and audience, or requiring extended extrapolation from accepted laws or forms. Pavel goes further, stating the act of creating fiction is "understandable only insofar as governed by a secondary set of conventions that counteract the established rules of normality" (27). All
fiction, then, is understood by the audience to be operating in a set of conventions set apart from the Primary World. However, this understanding depends on the audience's acceptance of the fictionality of the text and its characters; when speaking of Mr. Pickwick from The Pickwick Papers, Pavel says "once Mr. Pickwick's fictionality is acknowledged, happenings inside the novel are vividly felt as possessing some sort of reality of their own, and the reader can fully sympathize with the adventures and reflections of the characters" (11). Neil Gaiman put this more simply in the 2015 Douglas Adams Memorial Lecture "Immortality and Douglas Adams": "our ability to understand simile and metaphor allow us to understand two contradictory things; a story is a lie and a story is true. 'Once upon a time' is code for 'I'm lying to you'. The act of reading a story is the act of knowing you're being lied to". The coding of a piece as fiction rather than fact influences the audience's view of the subcreation, and their attitude to its reality; what would seem bizarre or out of place in the Primary World can be taken as natural as long as it respects the laws of its subcreation. In SF, this acceptance extends not only to the fictionality of the text, but to its nova, those elements which often mark it as an SF text. However, the subcreation must only include elements which are consistent within the scope of the subcreation; thus, it is reasonable within Hitchhiker's for Arthur to learn to fly by simply not hitting the ground because the laws of the subcreation allow it (Adams Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2 400-401), but in Star Trek it would be a wholly unacceptable departure from the subcreation's laws. As Wolf says, "the Secondary Imagination needs limitations to function properly and usefully... a world, though, as a whole, cannot be just a random jumble of made-up things if it is to be believable enough to engage an audience" (Building Imaginary Worlds 22). Once established, the laws of the subcreation must be obeyed; SF then must be realistic for its own version of reality. An example of an inability to adhere to the laws of the subcreation can be seen in Doctor Who's abrupt about turn in regards to the death of all
Time Lords with the exception of the Doctor; while "The Day of the Doctor" is excellently paced, it includes several actions which the series deems impossible, including the Doctor crossing his own timeline repeatedly, and the presence of thirteen incarnations on Gallifrey at once. While entertaining, The Moment, the weapon the War Doctor is supposed to have used to destroy Gallifrey, is simple bolognium, there to serve the immediate plot, but never before hinted at in the series. Indeed, until the end of Season Seven of the modern Doctor Who, "The Name of the Doctor", the War Doctor was never hinted at, and he appears to have been introduced purely for the sake of the 50th anniversary of the show. This is in stark comparison to a series such as Frank Herbert's Dune series, in which everything is consistent with the laws of the subcreation; at no point in Dune do any characters react incongruously to melange, and the Golden Path invariably leads the Atreides to either madness or monstrousness.

This thesis seeks to present a method of analysing SF worldbuilding without being overwhelmed by the size of the subcreation, by focussing on a specific novum driving the subcreation, what can be called the strange attractor, a single impulse which pervades and informs the laws of the subcreation and its causality. A strange attractor is defined in chaos theory as:

the underlying force which controls any given system. The weather, for example, is assumed to have a strange attractor which dictates its patterns. The most extreme example of a strange is a black hole which absorbs all matter with which it comes in contact (Sim and van Loon 173).

In SF, it shall be suggested strange attractors are the controlling baseline/engine of how the subcreation works, dictating the form and narrative pattern, as well as the physical laws of the subcreation. Strange attractors differ from nova in that a novum can be any element of a subcreation, representative of or derived from, but not necessarily the driving
force. In addition, the strange attractor is perhaps most useful for multiple texts within a subcreation, as there is more textual evidence for its existence than with a single text. For this thesis, the novum will include elements which are currently considered impossible, rather than simply unlikely; while Suvin claims the novum functions because although SF is not an allegory, it is analogous to the Primary World ("On the Novum in SF 75), thus implying the novum should be possible in the Primary World, this thesis argues that, for texts such as *Hitchhiker's*, which integrate comedy into their worldbuilding, the novum need not be plausible. Furthermore, the strange attractor is the novum which changes and influences the entirety of the subcreation and is in fact a universal law rather than an element of the subcreation. Identifying the strange attractors allows the audience to understand the internal mechanisms of the subcreation. For example, *Star Trek*'s strange attractor is the in-text reality of faster than light travel,\(^{18}\) coupled with a densely populated universe. All other elements of the subcreation, from the United Federation of Planets to interstellar war, derive from this one internal fact; if removed, *Star Trek* and its universe would not exist.\(^{19}\)

To understand worldbuilding as a process of establishing and following a strange attractor, SF worldbuilding will be defined here as the generation of a sustainable secondary world in which the author employs or accepts a single theoretical, philosophical, mechanistic, or scientific strange attractor, from which the subcreation's physical and socio-cultural landscapes must draw their laws in so far as they may differ from those of the primary world. The difference from the primary world is vital:

In order for a world to be "secondary", it must have a distinct border partitioning it from the Primary World, even when it is said to exist

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\(^{18}\) Henceforth FTL travel.

\(^{19}\) Similarly, the texts in Le Guin's Hainish Cycle are predicated on the existence of an entire species of anthropologists. In modern fantasy/horror, Stephen King's Dark Tower universe is one literally supported by the crumbling and sick Dark Tower at its heart.
somewhere in the Primary World (or when the Primary World is said to be part of it, as in the case of the *Star Trek* universe containing Earth). (Wolf *Building Imaginary Worlds* 25)

What we shall call the strange attractor creates a pattern of physical laws and causality which separates, to a greater or lesser extent, the primary world and the subcreation. Defining worldbuilding in this way allows for and expects the limitations of the author, in that it is physically impossible for them to have determined every element of a subcreation; it is, in a way, a type of world-reduction, but rather than reducing the subcreation, the use of the strange attractor focuses the author's attention on a single set of laws. By recognising the engine at the heart of the subcreation, the one law or set of laws which must not be broken, it is possible to understand how it can and should operate, as in the example of *Star Trek* above, reforming the audience's own universe around its literary and narrative needs. To go further, SF as a mode of literature could be defined as a set of texts whose strange attractors are based on a scientific theory or idea, though this is limiting and unnecessarily exclusive. Despite being a generally accepted example of SF - although with some dissenters, as will be discussed later - *Hitchhiker's* does not actually have a scientific idea or principle as its strange attractor; instead, I shall argue *Hitchhiker's* is predicated upon the necessity of everything in the subcreation being part of a joke on the meaninglessness of life, as Adams first and most important intention was to make the audience laugh; in this way, the comedic elements often override the SF elements, in order to ensure laughter. For example, the Nutri-Matic's inability to make tea to Arthur's taste is nonsensical in an SF context, as there is no reason a machine which should "produce the widest possible range of drinks personally matched to the tastes and metabolism of whoever cared to use it" should fail; however, in terms of comedy, it is much more entertaining for Arthur's desire for tea to continue to be frustrated (Adams *Hitchhiker's*
Novel REU 160-161). However, the series should not be seen as SF or comedy first; rather it is a blend of SF with comedy, and while not the first,\textsuperscript{20} is one of the few in which SF is added to a comedy subcreation rather than the other way around.\textsuperscript{21} Adams was aware of the strange attractor at the heart of Hitchhiker's: in response to a letter from a student wishing to do their thesis on the scientific and philosophical themes of Hitchhiker's, Adams replied: "Most of the ideas in Hitchhiker's come from the logic of jokes, and any relation they bear to anything in the real world is usually completely coincidental" (qtd in Gaiman Don't Panic 158). This is somewhat disingenuous, as humour is typically taken from the Primary World; it can, however, be interpreted as Adams believing comedy, as an amplification of Primary World issues, cannot be considered philosophically because it does not reflect the Primary World accurately, but rather as if it were seen through a funhouse mirror. Elsewhere he said of himself he was "simply a humour writer who happened to be using some science fiction ideas to tell jokes with" (169). Although this made Adams uncertain as to whether his subcreation was SF, the joke at the heart of his subcreation is a scientific and philosophical one: namely that the search for ultimate meaning in the universe, whether through science, philosophy, or religion, is doomed to failure simply because it is funnier that way. Further, if there is no meaning in the universe, the only way to respond is through defiant laughter. Science in Hitchhiker's alternates between being the funny man and straight man in a comedy duo with the universal laws themselves; it is integral to the joke, making Adams's worldbuilding as much an SF creation as it is comedy. In addition, Hitchhiker's is a subcreation about subcreation, a fiction about fictions, as entire planets and synthetic universes are created on a regular

\textsuperscript{20} Robert Sheckley is perhaps the most famous example, praised for his "wry inventiveness" and his use of "modern life and its absurdities" in such novels as Journey Beyond Tomorrow (Aldiss 411-412).

\textsuperscript{21} Isaac Asimov is an example of the reverse; while his subcreations were clearly controlled by SF, he employed punchlines to finish many of his short stories, such as 'Insert Knob A in Hole B', in which the problem of equipment assembled from poor instructions is to be solved by a robot, which has to first be assembled from poor instructions (367-369).
basis; Adams wanted the audience to see the constructedness of *Hitchhiker's* because he wanted them to appreciate the warps in the funhouse mirror. This intentional display of the constructed fictionality of the text is intended to allow the audience to fully invest in the joke; as Pavel pointed out, this acceptance is the key to the audience accepting the text as a reality in its own right (11). Thus, *Hitchhiker's* is a subcreation simultaneously intended to be seen as fictional and an independent world. The peculiarity of this combination and its results suggests *Hitchhiker's* as an ideal subcreation to test a definition of worldbuilding. Should the theory of a strange attractor work well within a text as complicated by multiple media and blended modes as *Hitchhiker's*, it could be usefully applied to any worldbuilding, but particularly multimedia incarnations, providing a critical tool for understanding the purposefulness of subcreations without becoming lost in minutiae. While the strange attractor could be used on single author texts, the ability to identify the driving force of the narrator could also help analyse subcreations which were continued after their original authors died, such as Herbert's *Dune*, taken up by Brian Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson. The usefulness of the strange attractor is perhaps limited when dealing with single texts within a subcreation, as stated above; however, the intention of using the strange attractor is to allow the critic to focus on the driving force of the subcreation in order to analyse it, and this focus can prove useful when dealing with larger multimedia texts. However, even with the strange attractor narrowing down the focus, *Hitchhiker's* worldbuilding is rich and involved, with scope potentially as large as the universe, therfore, this thesis will focus on the physical incarnations of worldbuilding in *Hitchhiker's*: namely the landscapes of Earth, spaceships, and alien planets, and how they embody and reflect the strange attractor of the joke, displaying the constructedness of Adams's worldbuilding and the eventual deconstruction which concludes the series.
As Hume's model includes both the author and author's world, a brief biographical account of Adams is pertinent. Born in Cambridge in 1952, he first attended Brentwood School in Essex, and was admitted to Cambridge "on the strength of an essay on the revival of religious poetry" which included references to Christopher Smart, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and John Lennon (Gaiman Don't Panic 8). Over his relatively short life, he worked with the Monty Python crew, on the comedy radio series The Burkiss Way, as a script editor on Doctor Who, wrote eight novels, campaigned for endangered species, and avidly promoted computer technology, particularly Apple (Gaiman Don't Panic, Simpson, Webb, Jem Roberts). He died in California on May 11, 2001, leaving a creative legacy marked by an official Towel Day, celebrating what he claimed was a hitchhiker's most useful piece of equipment, and two asteroids named respectively after Adams and his most famous character, Arthur Dent (229). Save the Rhino hosts a yearly Douglas Adams Memorial Lecture in his honour. He is, of course, best remembered for Hitchhiker's, which was in turn a radio series, sometimes simultaneously a TV show, a film, a series of novels, a computer game, comics/graphic novels, and merchandise ranging from the ubiquitous towels to trading cards. Hitchhiker's ongoing success negotiated an explosion of revisions and continuations, straddling five different media within its first five years. The multimedia developments and the popularity of each version both justified and challenged Adams's worldbuilding skills, as the tools available for worldbuilding are different in each medium, even when they are used to produce the same subcreation. Unlike most popular SF, it began its life as a radio series in 1978, adapted from two ideas: the first was the drunken musings of a young Adams looking up at the stars in a field in

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22 This is celebrated on May 25, two weeks after the anniversary of Adams's death in 2001.
23 His support of the Save the Rhino Foundation once included climbing part of Mount Kilimanjaro in a rhinoceros suit (Adams, Salmon of Doubt 69-77). While the memorial talks are not typically about Adams himself, Neil Gaiman's 2015 contribution to the series was titled "Immortality and Douglas Adams".
24 While it does not seem as if each media incarnation of Hitchhiker's was universally loved, each one was successful with the audience who were interested in that medium to begin with.
Innsbruck, who, after a trying day even with the help of Ken Welsh's *The Hitch-hiker's Guide to Europe*, the second was a pitch to the BBC for a short comedy series *The Ends of the Earth*, in which the Earth would be destroyed in a comedic manner repeatedly over six episodes (Gaiman *Don't Panic* 24-25). The BBC were uncertain the show would be a success, as it was a comedy without a studio audience, and their first radio SF serial since *Journey into Space* in the 1950s, and so scheduled it for 10.30 on Wednesday evenings on BBC Radio 4, almost to be certain of its failure; they were surprised when not only did it prove popular with listeners, but was favourably reviewed in the following Sunday's papers, unusual for any radio show of the period (36).

The show's popularity did not end there. John Lloyd recalls:

> By the broadcast of the first three or four episodes the place had gone absolutely mad. I think six publishing companies rang up, and four record companies (which is extraordinary with radio - usually by the time you've done six series of thirteen episodes, people have just about heard of it). *Hitchhiker's* just went whoosh! (emphasis in original, qtd in Gaiman *Don't Panic* 38).

Its immediate popularity resulted in five novels published between 1979 and 1992; a second season on radio in 1980; one season of a TV series based on season one of the

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25 Adams claimed to have stolen Welsh's book, but had not bothered to steal *Europe on $5 a Day* as he was not in that financial league (*Hitchhiker's Radio* 10).

26 Adams himself, having told this story on numerous occasions, found himself doubting its veracity after so many repeated retellings (10).

27 While the Earth is destroyed twice in *Hitchhiker's*, it would seem even Adams found the idea of destroying it in six different ways difficult to make funny.

28 An audience would have been impractical to say the least; not only did each show take a week to produce, "much of the time the show was recorded out of order, rather like a film, and only half the actors in any scene would actually be visible on stage" (4). In addition, to add voice treatments after the recordings, a number of actors, several of them elderly, were separated from the other actors by placing them in cupboards (4).

29 As *Journey into Space* was the first SF serial written specifically for British radio, and not adapted from novels as had been the norm (Fabb 3), this makes *Hitchhiker's* only the second SF narrative to begin life on BBC Radio.
radio plays, broadcast in 1981; three professional stage productions in 1979 and 1980; a

text adventure computer game from Infocom in 1984; DC Comics adaptations of the first
three novels in nine parts between 1993 and 1996; the Illustrated Hitchhiker's Guide to the

Galaxy in 1994; a Hollywood movie in 2005; Eoin Colfer's addition to the book series,
And Another Thing..., in 2009; the official fan club Plural ZZ Alpha; and the inevitable
merchandising. The cross migration in media alone proves the sustainable aspect of
Adams's worldbuilding in the constantly changing settings of everyday Englishman Arthur
Dent's wanderings. An essential aspect to Hitchhiker's multimedia success was Adams's
continuing involvement with virtually every medium, and his willingness to revise the text
to fit the medium at hand. This means the media variations of Hitchhiker's can be seen
not as adaptations, but as Adams's development of the subcreation. According to Wolf:

an imaginary world can become a large entity which is experienced through

various media windows; but quite often, no one window shows everything,

and only an aggregate view combining a variety of these windows can give

a complete sense of what the world is like and what has occurred there.

Experiencing an imaginary world in its entirety, then, can sometimes be

quite an undertaking. (Building Imaginary Worlds 2)

Hitchhiker's movement through media is an expansion or enrichment of the

worldbuilding Adams's comic universe had begun in Hitchhiker's Radio. This development

was the result of a second distinct element of Hitchhiker's, ongoing creation, as Adams

started each new form from the beginning. As mentioned above, Wolf and other critics link

worldbuilding inextricably to narrative, as the narrative controls what worldbuilding can be

seen by the audience. Some modern storytelling uses each new medium to continue the

30 “Illustrated” here refers not to hand drawn illustrations, but to computer manipulated photography.
31 Adams had been attempting to produce a Hitchhiker's film since 1979 (Gaiman Don’t Panic 117-122)
32 Aside from fan produced works, the exceptions are the comics, a medium Adams wasn't interested in,
much to the disappointment of John Carnell, who had hoped Adams would help him adapt the narrative to
suit graphic novels, and the first two stage productions in London and Wales (193, 61-62).
narrative beyond the original text, however, Adams chose instead to alter the opening narrative to a greater or lesser extent depending on the medium's requirements, and it is these narrative changes which are of interest to scholars of worldbuilding, and allowed Adams to retell essentially the same story without it becoming stale. The proof of this is in its enduring popularity: Hitchhiker's has been successful in virtually every one of its media, even Hitchhiker's Comics, which, despite Adams's singular disinterest in adapting the story for the medium (Shirley 177), and the "general disdain" for the artwork, were popular enough to produce the adaptations of The Restaurant at the End of the Universe, and Life, the Universe and Everything, as well as a set of one hundred trading cards (Gaiman Don't Panic 193-194). Hitchhiker's Computer was "described by the London Times as 'without doubt the best adventure ever seen on computer'", becoming the bestselling adventure game in America on its release in 1984 (149). The reason Hitchhiker's is so successful in its adaptations appears to lie in Adams's willingness to work with his medium; as Gaiman points out, in each medium it was adapted to, "Hitchhiker's has always shown no respect for itself, changing - and often contradicting its previous versions - to make full use of the possibilities of whatever medium it found itself in" (Don't Panic 193). Adams himself thought the best parts of each new version were those which were medium specific, particularly when working on Hitchhiker's TV:

The medium dictates the style of the show, and transferring from one to another means you're going against the grain the whole time. It's the point where you go against the grain that you come up with the best bits. The bits that were the easiest to transfer were the least interesting bits of the TV show. (qtd in Gaiman Don't Panic 86)

33 Joss Whedon is renowned for doing so with two of his most popular TV creations, Buffy the Vampire Slayer which continued in graphic novels, and Firefly, whose storylines were wrapped up in the 2005 movie Serenity with graphic novels filling in the gap between series and movie.
Adams was also content to allow later media to influence earlier ones, one example being perhaps a signature feature of the series: Arthur's dressing gown. While it was *Hitchhiker's TV* director Alan Bell's decision to keep Arthur Dent in the dressing gown rather than the space suit Adams would have placed him in (Gaiman *Don't Panic* 90), *Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF* sees Arthur arriving on Earth still in the same dressing gown after eight years of travel (Adams 463). Despite his original resistance, Adams realised the comedic value of Arthur remaining in his dressing gown; Arthur in a space suit would only have been funny once, while the dressing gown was a continuing gag. The limitations of each medium, with their participation in traditional narrative flow, could explain Adams's delight with *Hitchhiker's Computer Game* (Gaiman *Don't Panic* 151-152); the game allows for a player to make mistakes along the way, meaning Adams could explore multiple narrative arcs within the same scene, giving him almost complete narrative, and thus worldbuilding, freedom. Adams's enthusiasm for each new version lay in his desire to improve on earlier versions (99); this can be interpreted as a desire to create more of his subcreation, embodying his cosmic joke.

We must remember Adams's worldbuilding was affected by one peculiar element: the effects of deadlines on the author and his work. While *Hitchhiker's Radio* producer Geoffrey Perkins did not consider Adams to be as bad as *The Life of Bliss* writer Godfrey Harrison, "who often finished the script some hours after the audience had all gone home" (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 4), Gaiman sums up Adams's reputation: "Apocryphal stories have grown up about Douglas Adams's almost superhuman ability to miss deadlines. Upon close inspection, they all appear to be true" (*Don't Panic* 55). Perkins attributes this to what he considered the strength of *Hitchhiker's*: "Douglas has sweated over every word of it"

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34 Bell's reason for keeping Arthur in the dressing gown was to avoid any similarity with *Star Wars* (Gaiman *Don't Panic* 90). As we will see in Chapter Four, this did not stop him from having a few jokes at *Star Wars'* expense.

35 The limitation of the game is its lack of visuals; had Adams produced the game ten years later, there would undoubtedly have been visual elements to the worldbuilding.
(Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 4) and indeed, Gaiman has pointed out Adams genuinely did not like the act of writing, although he did it well ("Immortality and Douglas Adams"). Regardless of the cause, Adams's difficulty with deadlines affected his worldbuilding, as most works of fiction, in any medium, are edited to varying degrees, with at least an attempt to solve any blatant worldbuilding difficulties or inconsistencies.\(^{36}\) *Hitchhiker's*, in all its productions, is largely unedited because of Adams's reaction to deadlines, summed up by his assertion "I love deadlines... I love the whooshing noise they make as they go by" (*Salmon of Doubt* xxv). While the pilot was produced in good time, and edited extensively (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 11), the commissioning of the remainder of the radio series came at the same time as the four *Doctor Who* episodes "The Pirate Planet", which only exacerbated his pathological inability to finish on time (Gaiman *Don't Panic* 46-47). Adams collaborated with John Lloyd\(^{37}\) to finish the fifth and sixth episodes of season one of *Hitchhiker's Radio* on time; however, by series two, he was finishing scripts as the episodes were being recorded (38-39, 68-69). The first book faced similar problems; unlike the first season of *Hitchhiker's Radio*, the first novel cuts off abruptly after the scenes on Magrathea. The reason was two-fold: first, Adams's continual problem with deadlines, and second, Adams's decision to move the prehistoric Earth scenes to the end of the second book, leaving him with the problem of an essentially unfinished text. Adams went so far over deadline Pan books were reportedly forced to publish the book without any opportunity to edit it (55). Like series two of *Hitchhiker's Radio*, the first novel can be considered a first draft, with little to no polishing or editing. *Hitchhiker's Novel REU* was also delayed, despite Pan planning Adams's deadline phobia into their schedule. These delays meant Adams went largely unedited after the first series of *Hitchhiker's Radio*, yet

\(^{36}\) Except for the extremely self-published.

\(^{37}\) The collaboration turned somewhat acrimonious after Adams asked Lloyd to collaborate on the book, and then changed his mind; Lloyd, though upset at the time, did think Adams was correct to do it on his own (Gaiman *Don't Panic* 52-54).
the series remained popular despite, perhaps because of its raw, unfinished nature. If Adams, as this thesis claims, intended to demonstrate the constructedness of his subcreation, then his difficulties with deadlines unwittingly assisted in this. John Lloyd attributed *Hitchhiker's* success to it being "a non-recurrent phenomenon", something completely original which "catches the spirit of the moment" (qtd in Gaiman *Don't Panic* 59). Certainly the sense of Arthur as the eternal butt of the universe's jokes would have been familiar to Adams, or, indeed, anyone living in the late 1970s, who, although the decade was retrospectively financially stable, were at the same concerned over joblessness and recession in the decline since the 1950s (Strong *The Story of Britain* 512-529); the unfinished sense of *Hitchhiker's* was also an element shared with the comedy of Monty Python, which will be discussed further in Chapter One. Indeed, the lack of finish seems to have fed into *Hitchhiker's* manic quality. Jacqueline Graham of Pan Books called the series intelligently funny (qtd in Gaiman *Don't Panic* 59), while Geoffrey Perkins, producer of *Hitchhiker's Radio*, credited its appeal both to those looking for intelligent comedy, and a younger audience drawn to the humour of the manically depressed robot (60).

Two unusual elements of *Hitchhiker's* are interlinked and related to Adams's deadline difficulties. The first is Adams's haphazard worldbuilding, consistent only in reacting to the comic narrative: Perkins recognised this when he referred to Adams as "someone who was just about the best ever writer of sustained, inventive surreal comic narrative" (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 9). Adams was not creating an SF universe with the occasional comedy thrown in, but a mixture of both, a comedy universe viewed through the expectations of SF. Adams was aware of this, stating:

> with *Hitchhiker's* everything would have to bow and bend to the jokes, and
> often you would have to abandon bits of plot or turn them on their heads, or
do real violence to a plot in order to get the joke to be funny. (Gaiman Don't Panic 166-167)

Thus, while all worldbuilding is deeply involved with narrative, in Adams they are more obsessively intertwined; the subcreation is built on the joke of the meaninglessness of life, Adams's desire to demonstrate its constructedness, and the expectation of everything in Hitchhiker's being funny or coming to be perceived as funny. The jokes themselves warp any hope of a logical narrative, and writing at speed as Adams was, worldbuilding was not viewed or developed holistically save to serve the needs of comedy first and narrative second. This approach to worldbuilding is characteristic of Adams, and perhaps no one else, at least not to the degree Adams reached, and is one of the primary strengths of Hitchhiker's. Other attempts at comic SF, such as the Star Wars parody Spaceballs, are so heavily reliant on parody they are incomprehensible apart from the original text. Hitchhiker's, according to Gaiman, was seen as parodic when it first appeared, but he maintains this interpretation, which he himself once made, was wrong, now calling it "the finest act of predictive science fiction" in relation to the Guide itself, which Gaiman sees as a precursor to both eBooks and the Internet ("Immortality and Douglas Adams"). Hitchhiker's is only intermittently parodic, such as Marvin's manic depression acting in opposition to Star Wars' C3PO's chipper fatalism, and the bureaucracy of the Vogons parodying the efficiency of Star Trek's Federation, and there is more original content than not. For the most part, Hitchhiker's is like nothing except itself, and relies on itself for its laughs.

In SF criticism, any mixture of comedy and SF is not always well received; J.P. Telotte reasons comedy SF texts such as Hitchhiker's are often left out of histories of SF because "in its parodic mode, the comic SF take often seems to be making fun of SF" (71).

38 Gaiman claims Adams was able to turn not writing into an art form (‘Immortality and Douglas Adams’).
There is a presumption in this that comic SF is always parodic, and the comedy is intended to make fun of its source material. While the latter is true, there is a difference between mockery and playfulness; *Hitchhiker's* is playful when dealing with SF, not condescending, and expresses an enjoyment of the source material rather than disdain. Nonetheless, *Hitchhiker's* is rarely covered in critical texts on SF; *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* only mentions *Hitchhiker's* in passing twice (Mark Bould 89, Gary Westfahl "Space Opera" 203), while *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction* mentions it in passing only three times (Helen Merrick 110, Lincoln Geraghty 147, Tanya Krzywinska and Esther MacCallum-Stewart 350). Wolf uses *Hitchhiker's* as an example in discussions of the nature of radio plays and how language barriers are handled (123, 173, 187), but *Hitchhiker's* is not the focus of any extended critical work in peer reviewed collections. The few critical texts which are available on *Hitchhiker's* suffer from two main critical problems: first, they do not examine the text beyond one incarnation; and secondly, they analyse the texts as either SF or comedy but not both. The following literature review will examine the existing literature on Adams, and identify where the gaps in the literature lie.

The only peer-reviewed article on *Hitchhiker's*, Carl R. Kropf's "Douglas Adams's *Hitchhiker" Novels as Mock Science Fiction" (61-70) describes it as mock SF - a reference to the mock epic, which reverses "the paradigmatic expectations readers have learned to bring to the genre" (Kropf 61). However, Kropf, perhaps in reaction to the general expectation that SF comedy is intended to make fun of the genre, claims Adams's reversals are comments on the "bankruptcy of [SF's] paradigms" (62). The difficulty with Kropf's definition is it is based on a narrow understanding of SF as purely speculative, with the audience's expectation consisting of a thought experiment on how future technology and society could develop (63). Kropf finds that "Adams... depicts nature as disordered and
morally chaotic", demonstrating the second main critical lapse in studying *Hitchhiker's*, namely the tendency to only read it as an SF text, and not as a blend of comedy and SF (62). If Kropf had explored the comedic side of *Hitchhiker's* as well as its SF side, the apparent chaos of *Hitchhiker's* would have been an issue, but not a purely negative one. The chaos of *Hitchhiker's* is making not only a philosophical, but more specifically an existential point. Adams did not create a disordered universe, but one whose natural laws derive from comedic rather than scientific axioms, making Adams a follower of Aristophanes rather than Newton. In addition, Kropf argues SF is characterised by what he terms "ideational closure", in which it informs the audience of how the future will turn out through extrapolation (64). As will be discussed later, by appropriating the pastoral, Adams is in effect situating *Hitchhiker's* within the utopian tradition, which, like SF, does not necessarily require closure, which in traditional novels functions as "the disruption of an established fictional order, followed by an eventual re-establishing of that order" (Fitting 32-33). Fitting sees closure as enforcing the status quo (33-34); as will be discussed with comedy in Chapter One, *Hitchhiker's*, by delaying the punchline indefinitely, never returns to a status quo. Kropf quotes Stanisław Lem's assertion: "In science fiction there can be no inexplicable marvels, no transcendences... and the pattern of occurrences must be verisimilar" (64). While the validity of this point of view can be debated, its application to *Hitchhiker's* is misplaced; as a comedy text, *Hitchhiker's* is situated within a heightened subcreation, and should be aware of the rules of SF, while simultaneously bending them; as the joke is on the meaninglessness of life, Kropf's view of SF as a genre in which all can be explained is inapplicable. In *Hitchhiker's*, all our cultural and scientific suppositions about the universe are destabilised by Adams's subcreation; it is as if physics is a fairytale, shown in *Hitchhiker's* through Arthur's encounters with such improbable events as unassisted flying, time travel, and instantaneous travel across the
Kropf is ignoring Adams's larger worldbuilding, as it is not only science or technology which is different in Hitchhiker's, but the universal laws themselves.39 Further, while much SF can achieve the ideational closure Kropf believes necessary, texts set in the past or the present, or even far future, are not extrapolations of current circumstances but of past changes,40 and thus Kropf is characterising only a subset of the mode. Kropf also accuses Adams of doing "violence... to SF as a genre" by not providing narrative closure (66), reinforcing Telotte's discussion of how comedy SF is viewed as a threat to the mode; however, it is the comedic influence of Monty Python which led Adams to abandon narrative closure in favour of an extended sketch (Adams Hitchhiker's Radio CD Disc 8 Track 3). While comedy SF can be insulting to the mode if not done well, Hitchhiker's is not an example of this; it is a subcreation with a specific intent, not to mock SF, but to mock life itself. Kropf's reaction to Hitchhiker's seems to emerge not only from his dislike of Adams's work but of New Wave SF in general, which was known for pushing boundaries both in content and form (63).41 In addition, Kropf does not examine any medium of Hitchhiker's other than the novels; this gives him an incomplete image of the series.

The majority of critics approach Hitchhiker's philosophically, and while philosophy has its part to play in the following, this thesis is concerned in particular with Adams's intentions, which were, first and foremost, to make his audience laugh, as any comedy writer must. As mentioned above, Adams once discouraged a student from a scientific/philosophical study of Hitchhiker's because he - Adams - claimed not to have any philosophical intent (Gaiman Don't Panic 158). We must respect this, even though we

39 These universal laws will be defined in Chapter One.
40 Philip K. Dick's The Man in the High Castle is predicated on a different outcome from World War 2.
41 David M. Higgins and Roby Duncan define New Wave SF as a "transatlantic avant-garde SF movement" of the 1960s and 1970s, whose writers were "critical of technological progress, suspicious of nationalism and imperialism and devoted to a celebration of cultural revolution" (129). Kropf's inclusion of Adams with New Wave SF is confusing, as Adams is not typically considered a New Wave writer.
might not agree. Of the philosophical approaches to *Hitchhiker's*, Marilette van der Colff's *One is Never Alone with a Rubber Duck: Douglas Adams's Absurd Fictional Universe* compares Adams's constructions to philosophical debates, particularly to absurdism. There are some issues with van der Colff's work, primarily in her fact checking, as she believes Adams to have been interested in the philosophical debates taking place while he was at Cambridge (van der Colff 3), though it is common knowledge Adams was more interested in writing and performing comedy sketches. And while van der Colff does acknowledge the bureaucracy of *Hitchhiker's* can imply meaninglessness in life, she does so solely through existentialism, and not with any analysis of the comedy elements (72-73). van der Colff also compares *Hitchhiker's* to Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (33, 39, 57), but while there is absurdity in *Hitchhiker's*, it is not necessarily absurdist; life in *Hitchhiker's* is meaningless, but, unlike in *Waiting for Godot*, things do happen, often on a universal level, as when Arthur saves the universe from complete destruction by the Krikkiters (Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel LUE* 448). The absurdity of this important event is that Arthur saves the universe not by his own will, but by tripping over a holdall (ibid). van der Colff also claims there is a Hobbesian morality in *Hitchhiker's* designed to "make life less 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short'" (King qtd in van der Colff 66). As Adams himself described his characters as "feckless" and found it difficult to decide which of them would save the universe, van der Colff's claim would seem to be inaccurate (Gaiman *Don't Panic* 110); this is because feckless characters are funnier than the competent. It could be said that morality in *Hitchhiker's* is only in service of the joke; Slartibartfast, for example, only saves the universe because he has become a conservationist (Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel LUE* 379-380). Furthermore, van der Colff uses fantasy rather than SF theory to analyse *Hitchhiker's* (14); while some elements of *Hitchhiker's* are fantastical, it is not a fantasy text, and van der Colff fails to include even Suvin as part of her critical context for
Hitchhiker's. Some of van der Colff's individual comparisons, such as linking Wowbagger the Infinitely Prolonged with Sisyphus of Greek legend (50-52), show an excellent application of philosophy to the series, however, there is very little in the way of argument, and rather a catalogue of philosophical concepts and how they appear in Hitchhiker's. As such, there is very little helpful criticism in van der Colff's work.

Philosophy and The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, edited by Nicholas Joll, is a more rounded and better researched text than One is Never Alone with a Rubber Duck, but again, there are critical issues, perhaps the most important being that Hitchhiker's is used to introduce philosophical topics, rather than being subjected to a philosophical analysis. However, this is due in no small part to the shortness of the essays in the collection. In the Introduction (1-24), Joll first identifies the remarkable prediction the Guide itself is, as a proto-iPad/wikipedia, but goes on to state that the philosophical and popular philosophy aspects to Hitchhiker's is the reason for its popular success (1-2). Joll attempts to argue against Adams's own assertion that there is nothing philosophical in Hitchhiker's, noting that philosophy could be present in Hitchhiker's unintentionally, but preferring to believe Adams's interest in science could have led to him implicitly including philosophical issues (9-10). Ben Saunders and Eloïse Harding's essay, "'Eat Me': Vegetarianism and Consenting Animals" discusses consent and ethics in respect to the Dish of the Day at Milliways, who becomes insulted when Arthur will not eat him (27-49). Saunders and Harding first discuss moral complacency and the arguments for vegetarianism, before analysing whether the Dish of the Day is truly capable of giving consent (ibid). Joll's "Mostly Harmless? Hitchhiker's and the Ethics of Entertainment" examines the ethical implications of violence in Hitchhiker's, and whether they are ultimately harmful; however, he fails to provide an answer to the question (50-72). Amy Kind's "Life, the Universe, and Absurdity" is perhaps the most relevant essay in terms of worldbuilding (75-100). Kind claims the correct
response to the absurdity of the meaninglessness of life in *Hitchhiker's* is "benign neglect" (97), which she believes should lead to sticking one's thumb out and hitchhiking, essentially abandoning any search for meaning. However, in *Hitchhiker's*, Arthur does not respond in this way; not only is he dragged into hitchhiking, but to the end, he is searching for a meaning in life, even though he has come to realise it is fruitless; this is in part because Arthur serves the joke, but also because it is in his nature, as will be seen when discussing Arcadia in Chapters Two, Three, and Four. This is why Arthur is continually the butt of the universe's jokes; unlike Ford, he does not accept the meaninglessness of life, and so must be humiliated for the universal joke to continue to work. In comparison to Kind, Timothy Chappell's "The Wowbagger Case: Immortality and What Makes Life Meaningful" (101-126) investigates how Wowbagger can make an immortal life meaningful by avoiding the mockery of meaning mortality causes (105). Chappell believes meaning can be found in immortality by Wowbagger's ability to complete any project he is interested in (109-110); however, as *Hitchhiker's* is inherently meaningless, the joke of Wowbagger is that, despite the freedom of immortality, he cannot find meaning in anything but insulting everything in existence (Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel LEU* 314). He has chosen a quest which is impossible to complete, even with immortality; thus it is as meaningless as anything else in *Hitchhiker's*. Jerry Goodenough's "I Think You Ought to Know I'm Feeling Very Depressed": Marvin and Artificial Intelligence" argues Marvin's manic depression can be seen not only as a contradiction of the traditional SF robot which is typically either emotionless or overly chipper, but that his unhappiness is an indicator of a true self (129-152). While Goodenough does admit Marvin is "funny" (129), he fails to examine this in light of comedy. Barry Dainton's "From Deep Thought to Digital Metaphysics" questions whether reality is in fact virtual, and humans a program within it (153-180). While Dainton does raise interesting questions about real world computers,
"Hitchhiker's" is used primarily as a starting point for such questions, and there is little analysis of the text performed. Michèle Friend's "'God... Promptly Vanishes in a Puff of Logic" examines the Babel Fish argument against the existence of God, and the Argument from Design in favour of God, as well as an analysis of logical arguments (185-212). However, like Dainton, she also uses "Hitchhiker's" to examine real world arguments rather than analysing the text. Andrew Aberdein's "The Judo Principle, Philosophical Method and the Logic of Jokes" (213-235) describes the philosophical idea of the Judo Principle, which refers to Adams's use of turning an opponent's strength against them to solve problems in "Hitchhiker's", beginning with the improbability of rescuing Arthur and Ford from death at the hands of the Vogons by "shifting the frame, or terms of the debate, in which the problem originally arose to one where it isn't a problem" (emphasis in original, 227); thus, Adams created the Drive to solve the problem of an improbable rescue. He links this with the logic of jokes, with both working together, pointing out how philosophy and humour interact on this level (229). This reinforces this thesis's claim that philosophy and comedy touch on the same ideas; not only do they deal with the greater questions of life, they also do it in similar ways. Finally, Alexander Pawlak and Joll's "The Funniest of All Improbable Worlds - "Hitchhiker's" as Philosophical Satire" (236-268) investigates satire in "Hitchhiker's" but do so with the presumption it is the only comic intent of the series; while there is satire in SF, it is not the only intent. Satire implies "Hitchhiker's" must depend on other texts for its meaning, or lack thereof; however, "Hitchhiker's" is a self-sufficient text, one which satirises itself more than anything else. While the philosophical approach appears to be useful only in discussing the Primary World and not "Hitchhiker's", it is in philosophy that Adams's landscapes are deconstructed. While the majority of "Hitchhiker's" landscapes are Arcadias, there are a number of pilgrimage sites, including the ruler of the galaxy's swamp, in which philosophical language serves to deconstruct all of Adams's...
constructions, reinforcing the meaninglessness of life. This will be explored further in Chapter Four.

Perhaps the most useful collection of criticism on *Hitchhiker's* is *The Anthology at the End of the Universe*, edited by Glenn Yeffeth. Not intended as a fully serious critical text, it is made up of twenty essays on the series from SF authors, from an analysis of Wikipedia as a real world Guide ("Wikipedia: A Genuine H2G2 - Minus the Editors" Doctorow 25-34) to Selina Rosen's "The Holy Trilogy" and her theory *Hitchhiker's* is actually a holy text which Adams was forced to disguise as SF (73-82). While entertaining, these essays in general offer very little critical relevance, so only two will be discussed in detail in this literature review: Adam Roberts's "42" (47-64) and John Shirley's "A Talk With Douglas Adams" (169-178). Adam Roberts concisely discusses the various theories of humour and explains the subjective and contextual nature of humour, finishing with the funniest joke he has ever told, "Ah, that's known as a Boys-from-Brazilian" ("42" 47-62). This joke is incomprehensible outside of its context, but it is used by Roberts as an example of a spontaneous joke; carefully constructed jokes, like those in *Hitchhiker's*, are less dependent on specific context, and can stand alone, though they are better appreciated when the audience knows the literary and cultural contexts Adams was writing in, such as the obvious stand-in for Margaret Thatcher when Arthur's house is being demolished (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 23). Shirley's interview with Adams is perhaps the most useful essay for this thesis, as Adams speaks frankly about writing *Hitchhiker's*, his intentions, and his influences, including his views on humour and on the unfairness of the randomness of life (170-178). However, the collection is not an exercise in criticism; although Adam Roberts uses criticism on humour, the collection is intended not as a serious academic exercise, but as witty entertainment. Of the remaining essays, a brief summation is all that is needed: Mike Byrne's "Beware of the Leopard" examines systems designs and their
similarity to the incalcitrant technology of *Hitchhiker's* (1-10); Don De Brant's "That About Wraps it Up for Oolon Colluphid" espouses his theory Eddie, Marvin, and *The Heart of Gold* make up a holy trinity (11-24); Bruce Bethke's "The Secret Symbiosis: The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy and Its Impact on Real Computer Science" discusses the influence *Hitchhiker's* had on computer science and the predictions it seemed to make (35-46); Lawrence Watt-Evans's "A Consideration of Certain Aspects of Vogon Poetry" presents the theory the Earth was destroyed in order to prevent humans who were immune to Vogon poetry, and in fact had worse poetical weapons at their disposal, from entering the universe at large (65-72); Marie-Catherine Caillava's "The Zen of 42" discusses the instances of Zen thinking in the series (83-96); Mark W. Tiedemann's "Loop-Surface Security: The Image of the Towel in a Vagabond Universe - A Semiotic (Semi-Odd) Excursion" connects postmodernism to knowing where one's towel is (97-104); Jacqueline Carey's "Yes, I Got It" examines the Britishness of Adams's humour, though she considers British colonialism, rather than the 1970s, to be the sociocultural roots of *Hitchhiker's* (105-110); Susan Sizemore's "You Can't Go Home Again - Damn It! Even If Your Planet Hasn't Been Blown Up By Vogons" discusses how rereading *Hitchhiker's* as an adult made her realise she no longer finds it funny (111-116); Vox Day's "The Subversive Dismal Scientist: Douglas Adams and the Rule of Unreason" discusses Adams's supposed anti-government stance (117-124); Stephen Baxter's "Lunching at the Eschaton: Douglas Adams and the End of the Universe in Science Fiction" discusses how Adams's destruction of the universe compares to SF writers such as Asimov and Clarke (125-132); A. M. Dellamonica's "Digital Watches May Be a Pretty Neat Idea, But Peanuts and Beer Are What Get You Through the Apocalypse" discusses the treatment of food in *Hitchhiker's* (133-144); Margeurite Krause's "The Only Sane Man in the Universe" discusses Arthur Dent in the context of the trope of the Only Sane Man (145-156); John Shirley's "Douglas
Adams and the Wisdom of Madness” examines madness in Hitchhiker's (157-168); Adam-Troy Castro's "Another Fine Mess" considers the relationship between Arthur and Ford Prefect (179-186); Amy Berner's "Words to Live By" investigates how her own mother would advise her throughout Hitchhiker's (187-196); and finally, Maria Alexander's "Goodnight, Marvin" is a response to Adams's untimely death in 2001 (197-199). While overall lacking critical rigour, with some essays written in an extremely informal style appropriate to such a light hearted collection, The Anthology at the End of the Universe does serve to demonstrate the range of topics in Hitchhiker's. I believe this breadth of possible interrogation is the result of the combination of the joke on the meaninglessness of life and the literary knowledge Adams brought to the text, particularly in regards to utopia, though more specifically, the pastoral. While the pastoral will be discussed in Chapter Two, a literature review of the dominant criticism on utopia will help frame the critical context of Hitchhiker's.

As will be explored further in Chapter Two, Earth as a landscape is omnipresent throughout Hitchhiker's, despite its early destruction; through the presence of Arthur, alien worlds, and alternate Earths, Earth Prime casts a shadow over the entire series, and is conspicuous in its absence. In light of this, the type of landscape Adams chooses to represent Earth Prime is important, as it informs every other landscape encountered. This thesis will argue that Earth Prime is represented by Adams as not only a utopia, but more specifically, a pastoral Arcadia. As a graduate of both public school and Cambridge, Adams would have been familiar with classic texts, including More's Utopia, and Virgil's Eclogues. Sandbrook's claim that there "had always been a strong strain of pastoral romanticism in English culture" (State of Emergency 182-183) would seem to support the assertion that Arcadia was familiar territory to Adams. The pastoral and Arcadia will be explored in greater detail in Chapter Two, but first a literature review of utopian fiction in
general will help to define Adams's worldbuilding of Earth Prime and the other Arcadias represented in Hitchhiker's, and help to inform how Adams demonstrated the constructedness of his landscapes.

Utopian literature\textsuperscript{42} and SF share many similarities, regularly including travel to an other, often better place which the protagonists introduce to the reader, and both are often used to examine current politics and culture, as with More's Utopia and Star Trek, the latter of which claims to have formed an actual utopian society on Earth.\textsuperscript{43} These elements, however, are not the only features of either genre, though they have led to the entire genre of utopian literature often becoming mistaken for SF (Fátima Vieira 7). However, utopia and SF, while literary cousins, are more than their overlapping elements, with utopia extending not only into literature but also into politics and real world settlements. While SF's definitions, as will be discussed in Chapter One, are markedly difficult to pin down, there are also multiple definitions of utopia, though, arguably, they are not so disparate as definitions of SF. For example, the following two definitions are presented by Lyman Tower Sargent in Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction, the first by Darko Suvin, and the second by Sargent himself:

The verbal construction of a particular quasi-human community where sociopolitical institutions, norms and individual relationships are organised according to a more perfect principle than in the author's community, this construction being based on estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis.

A non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space. In standard usage utopia is used both as defined here and

\textsuperscript{42} For the purposes of this thesis, utopian literature will be understood to include dystopias.

\textsuperscript{43} It is interesting to note that this society is rather underdeveloped in Star Trek; very little is seen of Earth throughout the series, and it remains centered around Starfleet rather than exploring civilian cultural norms.
as an equivalent for eutopia or a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably better than the society in which that reader lived. (6)

The shared elements of these definitions are the descriptive nature of utopia, the position of utopia as an alternative place or world, and this other world as a better one than the reader's own. Sargent sees utopia as an attempt to determine how current society can be improved (5), and utopian practice as an active attempt to change the world rather than a passive description of its problems (7). Specifically, Sargent considers the literary utopia to have six primary purposes: fantasy, "description of a desirable or an undesirable society, an extrapolation, a warning, an alternative to the present, or a model to be achieved. And the intentional community as utopia adds a seventh purpose, to demonstrate that living a better life is possible in the here and now" (8). Sargent's view of utopia is essentially hopeful, with even dystopias functioning as a warning and, perhaps, a guide on how to stay on the path to a better rather than worse future. For Sargent, "utopianism is essential for the improvement of the human condition" (9), and is defined by the current cultural/physical negative attributes of the author's society removed (13-14). As a result of its use of contemporaneous issues, utopias are "reflections of the issues that were important to the period in which their authors lived" (21); this allows utopias to speak not only to the constructed society, but also to the nature of the author's society.

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44 These definitions represent literary rather than real world intentional utopian communities, which Lyman defines as "A group of five or more adults and their children, if any, who come from more than one nuclear family and who have chosen to live together to enhance their shared values or for some other mutually agreed upon purpose" (34). While such intentional communities do have some relevance to worldbuilding, their importance to an analysis of Hitchhiker's is somewhat limited: as the series does not feature colonisation - save for the farcical colonisation of Nano in And Another Thing... - the formation of real world utopian communities is of less relevance to this thesis than literary utopias, particularly in light of Chapter's Two's argument that Adams is constructing a literary rather than a physical Britain.

45 The dystopia could be said to be defined as the enhancement of the negative aspects of society, as in Suzanne Collins' trilogy The Hunger Games, which combines contemporary concerns at the effect of reality television on society with a futuristic quasi-Roman gladiatorial death match.
Utopian literature, like SF, was named long after it had begun. While More defined not only the name but also the genre of utopian writing, the concept had existed before him, with both Western and non-Western versions of a better society outside of one's own, often in a mythical Golden Age (67). The focus for this thesis will be on the Western literary utopia, in light of both Adams's education and his choice of rural England for his primary setting. Perhaps the most famous Western utopia is Eden, with utopian thought sometimes seen as the desire to re-enter Eden (87-88). Vieira argues that the anamnestic nature of utopia is a result of More's familiarity with the myths of the Golden Age, be they Eden or otherwise (5). The appeal of a lost utopia in the past can be represented by the figure of the Noble Savage, who "was seen as closer to nature and, therefore, somehow purer, simpler, and better than the supposedly civilized" (Sargent 53), but is more often represented by the pastoral, of which Virgil's Eclogues is one of the best known examples. According to Sargent, Virgil made utopia "based on human activity rather than simply being a gift from the gods: people work, primarily in agriculture" and created the "myth of the happy peasant or farmer" (16). The backwards looking utopia, often in the specific pastoral form, therefore has its roots in a type of primitivism, valuing simpler lives connected with nature.

However, utopia is also associated with other lands in the present or the future, as with the euchronia (Vieira 9). Critic Paul Tillich sees the utopian ideal as a dichotomy between the possible and the impossible, suspended between hope and disillusionment, demonstrating new methods of civilisation to mankind (qtd in Sargent 99-100). This is perhaps the significant departure between SF and utopian. While SF sometimes posits an alternative present or an extrapolated future, such world building is not necessarily meant as a model; however, utopian literature intends if not change, then at least a serious

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46 As will be discussed in Chapter Two, Arthur and Ford essentially re-enter Eden in Hitchhiker's, only to discover that they and the Golgafrinchams are the snakes in the garden.
47 This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.
consideration of what needs to be changed: "By providing alternative futures, the utopia challenges the present to justify itself in values that transcend the immediate questions of power" (Sargent 100). However, utopian literature and thought is not a set of guidelines to follow, but rather a way of thinking about the world differently: "a utopia is a mirror to the present designed to bring out flaws, a circus or funfair mirror in reverse, to illustrate ways in which life could be better, not necessarily the specific ways in which life should be made better" (emphasis added, 112-113). Sargent describes utopian thought as beginning with dissatisfaction and the conviction "human needs can be satisfied if certain conditions are met" (102). Utopian thought, then, is the attempt not only to present a better world, but to encourage thinking about how to make a better world. This is reinforced by the limitations of utopia; they represent not a complete society, but only a fragment of one: "Many utopias are like a photograph or a glimpse of a functioning society at a moment in time containing what the author perceives to be better and designed to break through the barriers of the present and encourage people to want change and work for it" (104). Thus utopia is not simply a set of guidelines, but an encouragement towards imagining a better world.

Opponents of utopia often make the error of equating utopia with an unchanging perfection, an idea that once achieved, it will become static, and argue that such a simplistic approach is at best foolish (103). However, Sargent argues this is true of very few utopias and that they are, in reality, imperfect working models (104). Perhaps the best modern example of this is the intentional utopian community of Anarres in Le Guin's The Dispossessed, which is a constantly evolving utopian process. Sargent's assertion "History does not end with the arrival of utopia; change may be slower, but change, and thus history, will occur" (104) is particularly true on Anarres, whose inhabitants are attempting to alter not only the moon's surface but also their own tendencies to revert to property
ownership, with both goals difficult and slow to achieve. In addition, Sargent's claim "how you see... utopia depends on where you stand" (117) implies utopia is not universal, and one person's utopia is another's dystopia. This is perhaps best seen in Le Guin's "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas", in which the utopian city of Omelas is presented to the reader, including the brutalised child whose unhappiness fuels the joy of Omelas (275-284). Le Guin's narrative balances the joys of the citizens of Omelas against the horrors of the child's brutal treatment. In Omelas, those who leave are the ones who have seen their utopia is not one for all, and thus must be abandoned (284). Thus utopia is not a single idea or set of values; according to Sargent, all ideologies are built upon a utopian vision of world (124). As an ideological apparatus, utopia then becomes dangerous in the hands of those who would misuse it "to gain power, prestige, money, and so forth for themselves" (126). Utopia, then, is not only a powerful literary tool, but also a powerful political one.

As this thesis is focusing on the literary utopia, specifically as it relates to Hitchhiker's, a British SF text, a brief overview of the general criticism on literary utopia, and the specific criticism applied to SF texts is necessary. The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature is one of the most complete collections on the nature of the literary utopia. According to Gregory Claeys, "the field of utopian studies has come to reflect discussions about the progressive or regressive aspects of historical development in microcosm" ("Preface" xi). Claeys also indicates that, unlike the utopian ideals of the Golden Age or Eden, "utopianism is not now usually assumed to involved salvation, perfectibility or the millennium, so much as the imagined, improved reordering of society in this world, and the more harmonious reconstitution of human relations and of attitudes towards nature" (xi-xii). Utopia, then, is concerned not with divine grace, but with human

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48 This personalisation of utopia will be of interest when discussing Arthur's Arcadian ideals in Chapter Two.
kindness and empathy. This approach also implies utopia is not that which can be granted to humanity, but which has to be worked towards.

Vieira's essay "The Concept of Utopia" explores the history of the word utopia and its meanings (3-27). Vieira begins with More's 1516 neologism "utopia", literally meaning "non-place" (3-4). More's second neologism, the homonymic "eutopia" meaning "the good place", created a tension and double meaning to the term, as it gives utopia two identities to live up to, simultaneously non-existent and somewhere to work towards (4-5). Utopian narratives can be characterised by a rigid form, involving a journey by a man or woman to an unknown place, given a "guided tour of the society", an explanation of how the utopia works, and their return to tell the tale (7). Utopia is focussed on humans; it is not created by "the intervention of external, divine forces in order to impose order on society" (ibid), but is rather the product of human diligence. The Early utopian fictions of the Renaissance were "perpetuity" utopias, set not in the future but in mythical other lands, often islands, in the present, and thus represented authorial wishes rather than hopes (9). With the Enlightenment came the first euchronias, which not only implied a history leading up to the euchronia, but also caused the island utopias to become optional, rather than necessary (10). It is interesting to note the euchronia was used primarily in literature by the French for a century, while the British produced satirical literary utopias until the 19th century, which Vieira sees as abandoning "the positive spirit they should have" (11). Vieira argues that after the euchronia first appeared as the imagined result of progress, it was transformed by Marxism, which changed the euchronia from a mere potentiality into something which could be accomplished through the progress of history, and which

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49 As will be discussed in Chapter Two when discussing alternate Earths, this dual meaning is almost quantum in nature, a literary Schrödinger's cat, which, according to quantum theory, both exists and does not exist until observed (J.P. McEvoy & Oscar Zarate 146-147).

50 Utopian narratives, while following this form, often play with several elements, such as in Marge Piercy's Woman on the Edge of Time, in which the protagonist Consuelo travels to a future utopia and dystopia in her mind, while her body remains in the present.
required a change in social economy before it could be accomplished (13-15). Satirical utopias and anti-utopias arose in the 18th century, whose respective purposes were to value the real world and to represent a distrust of the utopian hope for a better future (16). Dystopia was named by John Stuart Mill in a parliamentary speech in 1868 to define a place opposite to utopia, but, like utopia, it too became a term which was both place and a body of literary texts (16-17). Dystopias differ from apocalyptic narratives in that the latter are meant to engender horror at the end of the world, while the former is didactic, and intended as a warning with the hope of avoiding or escaping it, such as the critical dystopias of recent times (17). In the 20th century, particularly after two world wars, the utopia gave way to the dystopia as the more popular form, with the latter often featuring totalitarianism and technology supporting dictatorships rather than freedom (18). Dystopias also incorporate the heterotopia, a safe haven within the dystopia, be it physical such as the freetown Tikva in Piercy's *He, She and It*, or mental, as in Offred's memories of her family in *The Handmaid's Tale* (Vieira 18). The supposed death of the utopia in recent years is in reality a death of earlier versions of the utopia, as the content changed to match the current era, with the hyperutopia arising online in recent years (19).

Utopia has also been declared dead or unnecessary by those who equate it with Marxism, or who believe the tools to achieve utopia are already at hand (20). To understand the changing, and sometimes ineffective nature of utopia, it must be understood that the "ideal" of utopia is not always the same as its "idealization", or putting it into practice and that utopian thought's effectiveness will always depend on its era (21). Utopian thought today focuses on smaller, more pragmatic changes, envisioning the slow betterment of modern society rather than replacing it wholly with a better one (22-23).

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51 This includes Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, in which the totalitarian theocracy of the Republic of Gilead is described along with the final days of America, culminating in the protagonist Offred's escape attempt, the result of which remains unknown.

52 This perhaps explains why, in Shelley's *History of Science Fiction*, utopia seems to disappear in the 1920s, as it appears Shelley did not realise it is still an active genre today.
J.C. Davis's essay "Thomas More's Utopia: Sources, Legacy and Interpretation" traces More's Utopia back to Plato's Republic, and the tension inherent in attempting to make a better world when political interaction will inevitably lead to corruption (28). Interpreting the text is complicated by a number of factors, from the use of punning in naming the first characters in the text, with Raphael Hythloday as "a healer and divine messenger, but also perhaps a purveyor of nonsense" and Thomas More as "a sceptic who might also be a fool" (29-31) to differing Latin editions, and its translations into German, Italian, French, and English by 1551 (30). In addition, post-Reformation and Marxist scholars each imposed their own interpretation not only on Utopia but on More himself (30). In 1965, Yale University Press published a complete edition of More's works to an effort to "escape anachronism and refine the contextualization of the work" in order to understand the work's meaning (30-31). A debate arose over More's intentions towards his work: was it intended to act as a "Platonic model", as an examination of the "folly, the nowhere, of rigid idealism", or a "witty but serious exploration of the problem of accommodating ideals to political realities" (31)? These questions on the interpretation of Utopia extend beyond More's work into the entire field of utopian literature (ibid). Critical approaches which claim More based his work not only on Plato and Aristotle, but also on Erasmus, may indicate the contemporary influences on More, but J.C. Davis claims this approach can be polarising, both in terms of analysing Erasmus and in its politics; instead, an acceptance of the text as more complex and playful, drawing from multiple influences is more appropriate (31-32). Utopia is open to interpretations because the interaction of politics and wisdom were debated since classic times, and because these debates were also in the Christian arena, with the concern of how to make a moral society on Earth (33). More was familiar with the theatre since childhood, and his use of the theatre as metaphor "implied social and political plasticity, the possibility of conceiving alternative worlds", 
with More considering how different situations call for different behaviours from players, and death itself removing all roles (34-35). *Utopia* can also be studied in regards to the "parerga" supplied by More's contemporaries, including Budé, Busleyden, and Giles (emphasis in original 36); the interest in profit versus delight, and the need to set aside preferred work in favour of earning money is a concern of the parerga (ibid). A community of friendship was also of importance in the parerga, and it is embedded in the communal sharing of the citizens of Utopia (37-38). Pride is identifiable as the main evil in sixteenth-century society, particularly a pride in the status possessions can give, and it is the absence of such pride which allows utopia to flourish (39-42). More suggests communal property and social uniformity, from dress to occupation, serves to eliminate this pride, as well as the perverse pleasures associated with it (42-45). However, the ending of *Utopia* is ambiguous, as the literary More prefers European society to the land he has been educated on, though he does concede both lands are right in their own way (46). Ultimately, *Utopia* can be seen as More's attempt to use fiction "to see reality afresh", and to face the "challenge of the ideal society", which is "how to reasonably manage imagination and emotion without crushing both under the imperative of reshaping the human will" (47). Davis concludes that it remains an open question as to whether or not More succeeded in this endeavour (ibid).

Nicole Pohl's essay, "Utopianism After More: the Renaissance and Enlightenment" (51-78), identifies three aspects of utopia which were evident during those periods: the mythological aspect of the better life, as seen in the Land of Cockaygne, Shangri-La, and Eden; utopia as "discourses on change itself rather than simply blueprints"; and the hybridity of utopia, encompassing both literature and politics (51). Utopia "has always carried a spatial dimension that created imaginary geographies", with early utopias set either in distant lands or islands, or other worlds entirely, inspired by sixteenth century
colonisation (52). Pohl claims "Utopia is inseparable from the imaginary voyage", in keeping with Suvin and Sargent's above definitions of utopia as an other place (53). The non-terrestrial utopias found their inspiration from Johannes Kepler's *Somnium* which, while not strictly utopian itself, inspired later lunar utopias and the space opera branch of SF (54). Renaissance utopian narratives were not only exploratory, but also seeking a return to Eden or the Golden Age (55). These are Arcadian or pastoral urges, which will be examined in Chapter Two; Pohl does note Arcadia is a classic literary trope, part of the literary tradition predating More's *Utopia* which proves the anamnestic quality of the genre (ibid). Pohl points out *Utopia* is "indebted to classical utopianism, early-modern travel writing, the pastoral/Arcadian tradition and finally Christian Chiliasm" and "borrowed its generic make-up from classical literature, particularly Menippean and Lucian satire, travel writing and the romance novel"; it also includes Platonic dialogue, and functions as an archistic utopia, in which strong governmental control is necessary for the common good (56-57). The sin of pride in More's *Utopia* is replaced in later texts by "Tyranny, Sophistry and Hypocrisy, variations on Pride and self-interest", though sin is not defeated in Renaissance utopias with human nature "reprogrammed and disciplined" instead (57). By contrast, anarchistic utopias are "ruled by an Arcadian primitivism" in which the individual's desires serve to create utopia (ibid). More's *Utopia* was followed by Johann Eberlin von Günzburg's *Die fünfzehn Bundesgenossen* in 1521, Tommaso Campanella's *La Città del Sole* in 1602 and Johann Valentin Andreae's *Reipublicae Christianopolitanae Descriptio* in 1619, each espousing different utopian ideals based on their author's own religious or political leanings (58-59). The first truly scientific utopia was Francis Bacon's fragment *New Atlantis: A Worke Unfinished written by the Right Honourable Francis Lord Verulam, Viscount St Alban* in 1627, with scientists representing the moral leadership of Atlantis (60-61). In the 1640s, utopianism turned towards "concrete political and social
reform", focussing on "politics, education and religion to recover the original wisdom that mankind lost with the expulsion from Eden" (61). Utopian thought spread throughout England, with women writers joining in for the first time, and women's education becoming an important element of utopian writing (62). Women's utopian literature, and a number of texts by men, promoted the rights of women to education and other civil liberties, with Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792 the best remembered today (70). In the 18th century, the utopia evolved from geographical to progressive socialism, promising "the regeneration of society to its original state of innocence and peace" (63). Native American societies featured in many 18th century utopias, valorising primitivism, and the Antipodes provided a new, unexplored location for "anti-utopian satire" (64-65). These 18th century utopias were critical utopias, contrasting "a plurality of social models in one text without offering one satisfactory utopian solution"; they are flawed and designed to raise more questions than they answer (65-66). Perhaps the most famous anti-utopia in literature, *Gulliver's Travels*, was written in this period, ultimately determining humanity itself prevents utopia from becoming reality (67). A number of sequels, termed Gulliveriana, followed on from Swift's satire, all anti-utopian (ibid). The 18th century also saw the rise of the Robinsonade, solitary utopias in which exile provides "true happiness, contentment and self-fulfilment" (67-68). Although not quite utopian narratives due to the lack of a historical social development in the texts, Robinsonades did demonstrate and interrogate the "paradigm of conquest, adventure and colonial capitalism" (68). The rise of Romanticism served to continue the tradition of "pastoral, agrarian utopias", intended to provide liberation for all (72). This was also the time when childhood and education came to attention in utopian literature, with the idea of making better people, and thus a utopian society, via educating the young reinforced the theory of "history-as progress", that is, that successive generations would always be better
than their forebears (73-74). Historians have yet to agree as to whether utopia influenced the American and French revolutions, or vice versa, however, the 18th century utopia was intended to critique and examine its contemporary culture (75).

Kenneth M. Roemer's essay, "Paradise Transformed: Varieties of Nineteenth-Century Utopias" (79-106), charts the nineteenth century's golden age of utopian fiction, when fictional utopias, utopian social theory and intentional communities thrived (79). While literary utopias were at their height at the end of the nineteenth century, there were still important utopian works earlier in the century, with Étienne Cabet's 1840 *Voyage en Icarie* credited with inspiring, among others, Fyodor Dostoevsky and Nathaniel Hawthorne (ibid). Roemer's charts the movement of utopia through the development of blueprint utopias, and conservativist, primitivist, and religious utopias, and dystopias (80). A combination of revolution and industrialisation served to help move utopia from distant lands to distant times, and to create the euchronia (81-82). In particular, the immense poverty caused by the Industrial Revolution served to create a need for utopian thought to imagine a better future, from Henri de Saint-Simon's belief in developing the three main aspects of human nature, Charles Fourier's 810 different types of people, and Robert Owen's malleable personalities (82-85). However, these theorists, like Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, did not think of themselves as utopian, although their ideals are now considered to be so (85-86). Roemer's survey of nineteenth century utopian fiction indicates an inherent complexity, from the Christian utopia of Charles M. Sheldon's 1894 *In His Steps* to Samuel Butler's complex 1872 *Erewhon* and Mark Twain's creatively hilarious *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* in 1889 (87-91). Later utopias played upon this complexity, reflecting the socio-cultural realities of their time and increasing in diversity as the century progressed, although utopia did not become truly multicultural until the twentieth century (92-100). As this development of utopia took place during the golden age
of print media, utopia captured the imagination of the public, encouraging radical thought and transformation (101). However, as Roemer's analysis shows, every utopian writer had a different interpretation, with Edward Bellamy's euchronia capturing the public imagination more than most, although its idealisation did have the unfortunate side effect of creating a backlash against utopia (101-102). However, despite this backlash, utopia did not die, but altered once again to suit its time (102).

Claeys concludes the history of utopia with "The Origins of Dystopia: Wells, Huxley and Orwell" (107-131). Dystopian literature came to the fore after the horrors of the First World War, and can be characterised as either conservative or "sharply critical of the societies they reflect" (107). Dystopia is almost a blanket term encompassing both anti-utopia and negative utopia, all of which set out to describe a society in which negative forces rule (ibid). While the terms dystopia did exist since 1868, it came to prominence in the wake of satirical utopias such as Gulliver's Travels and in the aftermath of totalitarianism and the Second World War, some scholars came to see utopian impulses as inherently dystopian (107-108). The difficulty with dystopian literature lies in the personal view of utopia (108); as demonstrated in Le Guin's The Dispossessed, the Anarestri dystopia of Urras is considered a utopia by visitors from Earth. However, dystopias can usually be distinguished by the following:

the quasi-omnipotence of a monolithic, totalitarian state demanding and normally exacting complete obedience from its citizens, challenged occasionally but usually ineffectually by vestigial individualism or systemic flaws, and relying upon scientific and technological advances to ensure social control (109).

This totalitarian state can still be seen in modern dystopias such as The Hunger Games, in which twelve production districts are not only brutally controlled by the Capitol,
but also forced to submit children for a yearly death-match as punishment for earlier rebellions.53 Dystopias must be "feasible negative visions of social and political development", which serves to exclude many SF texts from the genre, such as H.G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds*, which could only be reclassified as dystopian if Martians existed (109).54 Dystopia was prefigured by satirical utopias through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, texts which discussed social control, and eventually Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which questions the ability of society to prevent the corruption of "naturally virtuous individuals" (109-110). After *Frankenstein*, SF began the dominant form of both dystopia and utopia (110). Eugenics and socialism began to shape utopian thought towards the end of the nineteenth century, influencing both utopias and dystopias (111-112). Wells is perhaps the most famous early dystopian writer, with *The Island of Doctor Moreau* his most famous true dystopia, although *The Time Machine*, while not a dystopia by Claeys's definition, does have many dystopian elements (113). Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* explores the problems not only of totalitarianism but of uniformity, and the adaptation of humans to serve technology and not the other way around (115-116). George Orwell's 1949 novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* describes a world which is "blank, stark and pitiless", formed from a fear of totalitarianism (118-119). Later dystopian texts of the twentieth century include William Golding's 1954 novel *The Lord of the Flies* and Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*.

Peter Fitting's "Utopia, Dystopia and Science Fiction" (135-153) begins with an attempt to define SF and utopia, and Suvin's problematic claim utopia is a sub-genre of SF (135-136). Specifically, Fitting identifies how utopia predates SF, and how the modern SF text, as it is popularly recognised, is no more than two hundred years old (137). In addition,

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53 The true horror of this is that two children from each district must be sent, but only one can survive; however, this horror is what eventually overturns the Capitol, as it is Katniss Everdeen's refusal to kill the boy from her district which sparks the final successful rebellion.

54 This implies dystopian SF texts are closer to speculative fiction as defined by Margaret Atwood than SF (REF).
SF has a strong presence in visual media, a presence not shared by non-SF utopian texts (138), and SF has a fan community outside of criticism which utopian literature does not possess (144). However, SF's use of other worlds does make it an ideal space for utopian ideas, with critical utopias arising in the 1970s with Samuel Delany's *Triton*, Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* and Russ's *The Female Man* differing from traditional utopias in their "critical examination of the utopia itself" (143-147). Modern SF utopias function by encouraging the reader to engage with the utopia on a character level, not a social level (148). Fitting sees SF utopias as having ended by the mid-1980s (150), however this may not be the case; in Whedon's *Serenity*, The Operative espouses the utopia the Alliance is attempting to build, a dystopia to the crew of the *Serenity*, which the Operative says is a world he himself cannot live in as he is a monster. Utopia and dystopia, then, are questions SF is still exploring, though perhaps more subtly than in previous generations.

Patrick Parrinder's "Utopia and Romance" (154-173) discusses the connection between romance and utopian literature. Parrinder argues utopia and romance both aim for a shared happy ending: "If romance is Cinderella, then utopia is a fairy godmother not just to the heroine but to the whole world" (154). Utopian romance is a marriage of love and didacticism, with romance arising from the arrival of the visitor to utopia (154-155). Parrinder does identify an opposition between traditional romance and utopian texts, in that romance is traditionally backward looking, where the utopia is forward looking (155). In addition, romances rely on coincidences where utopias, like realist fiction, rely on exact detail; however, Parrinder does point out all fiction relies on some level of coincidences, and romantic subplots occur in much fiction (ibid). It is fitting the first true romance, Sir Philip Sidney's *The Arcadia* in 1580, is also a pastoral text; the romance, then, fits best with the pastoral, the backwards looking subgenre of utopia (156-157). Utopian romances
are generic hybrids, combining the melodrama of romance with the adventurous voyage of the utopia, including the philosophical conundrum as to why a utopian inhabitant would fall in love with someone from a lesser culture (157-158). However, some utopian texts with love stories at their centre, such as Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, can be somewhat inept, failing to explore the social implications of eugenics meeting a forbidden love (166). Dystopias, by virtue of being not only closer in time than utopias, but also closed systems, generate the romance without the aid of an outside visitor (169).

Alessa John's "Feminism and Utopianism" (174-199) explores the history of feminism in utopia, demonstrating that the history of feminist utopian literature is almost as old as the genre itself. Utopian imagination has always been useful for feminist writers, as it frees them from the constraints of their own patriarchal societies (175). While utopian literature is vast, feminist utopias sometimes shift from mainstream utopias instead of standing in opposition (176-177). Feminist utopias can be tracked back as far as Christine de Pizan's 1404-1405 *The Book of the City of Ladies*, and as recent as the 1970s critical utopias of Le Guin and Piercy (177). Feminist utopias are "process-oriented", with five main characteristics; the importance of education, the adaptability of human nature, gradual change associated with sharing power, a "dynamic view of the environment", and pragmatism (178-193). These aspects combine to create a distinguishable school of utopian fiction, while still remaining coherent within utopian traditions.

Sargent's "Colonial and Postcolonial Utopias" explores utopia in both colonial thinking and literature (200-222). Sargent identifies the two types of European colonies as those which exploited local labour and resources, and those intended for settlement of Europeans (200). Settlers often had their own utopian visions they wished to impose upon colonies, with the most common utopia also the most basic: "a full stomach, decent shelter and clothing and a better future for themselves and their children" (ibid). However,
colonial and postcolonial history is not simple; with over two centuries of European colonisation, varying "climate, geography and natural resources", different indigenous peoples, as well as variation among the colonists themselves in terms of class, wealth, and gender, colonial history and narratives cannot be defined as any one thing (201). Settler colonies produced a number of utopian literature and projects, with a common - and oversimplified - view of these colonies as an attempt to escape from their dystopian homeland (202). The utopian/dystopian divide can be seen in immigrant songs, which laud or bemoan the journey, the arrival to a new land, or the old land, with Irish songs declaring parts of the homeland as utopias (ibid). Despite many settlers returning due to homesickness or failure, letters home were often utopian in nature, highlighting the abundance of food, equality, and increased access to land ownership (202-203). Colonialisation was a part of utopia since More, whose *Utopia* includes colonies Utopia had conquered and used for resources (204). However, colonialisation may be a utopian endeavour for the colonists, but it is a dystopian nightmare for the displaced indigenous peoples, and their displacement is often considered a necessity for the budding utopia (204-205). Settler colonies produced texts which dealt not only with the Arcadian paradise their new lands were hoped to become, but also with how to live and rule in this new land, with the US Constitution perhaps the most famous of these documents (205-207). The first utopian literature published in a colony was in British North America in 1753, William Smith's "A General Idea of the College of Mirania", with later texts following in Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and Latin and South Americas (207-210). SF, in particular space opera, provided a new kind of colonialism, in the idea of planetary and space station colonies, but like terrestrial colonialism, the problems of displacing indigenous peoples remain, as in Le Guin's "The Word for World is Forest" (210-212). The utopias created by indigenous peoples are, for the most part, lost to modern scholars, with
India and Ireland retaining the greatest number of pre-colonial literature, however, postcolonialism has brought the opportunity to revisit their perceived pre-colonial utopias to imagine better futures for their people (212-213). Postcolonial indigenous writers are also using utopia to describe the dystopia of settlement, with a few countries such as Australia openly apologising to the native inhabitants for their treatment (214-215).

Jacqueline Dutton's essay "Non-Western Utopian Traditions" (223-258) explores the idea that utopian literature is not solely a recent Western concept, but that utopian traditions have existed all over the world throughout history but have been unrecognised as such (223-224). Dutton argues the origins of the Western utopia indicate the existence of non-Western utopian thinking (224-225). While the Golden Age, the Land of Cockaygne, the Millennium, and the Ideal City are not necessarily utopian concepts, they helped to create utopianism (225). The greatest challenge to the study of comparative utopias across culture is the opposition of some scholars to the idea of non-Western utopias, claiming that while other cultures had Golden Ages in their mythologies, none coalesced into true utopias (226). The flaw lies in the definition of a true utopia, in that scholars look for Western models of utopia in non-Western culture; thus by limiting their definitions, it becomes impossible to identify other utopian impulses (227-228). However, comparative utopian studies have begun to gain ground in scholarly research (228-229). Dutton identifies mythological Golden Ages or pastoral idylls as the founding material for utopia, with the intersection of religion as an important influence on the development of utopian thought (230-231). Dutton then goes on to examine the utopian traditions of Judaism, Zionism, Islam, Hindu, China, Japan, and indigenous Australian peoples, with a view to understanding how utopia will be viewed in different cultures (232-250). These traditions

55 Dutton also notes the West/East divide in utopian literature is too reliant on defining the rest of the world against the West, and that "East" refers to a broad range of cultural which should not necessarily be grouped together under such a title (224).
are accessible to scholars familiar with Western utopia because they focus not on More's *Utopia*, but rather on the influences earlier mythology had on More (250).

Brian Stableford's "Ecology and Dystopia" (259-281) concludes *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, focussing on how ecology has become intertwined with the dystopian imagination. "Ecology" implies a scientific and mythic sensitivity to the natural world, as it was originally defined by Henry David Thoreau (259). Ecological thinking has shaped utopia since Thomas Robert Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population as it Affects the Future Improvement of Society* in 1798, which posited the problem of the arithmetic increase in food being unable to meet the geometric increase in human population (260). Cities, with their attendant pollution, became almost intrinsically dystopian, particularly as the original meaning of "pollution" also had a moral element (262-263). Stableford goes on to describe immiseration, pollution, and alienation combined in early speculative fiction, creating primarily dystopian texts, with the future ultimately seen as unnatural in later speculative fiction, and a return to Malthusian fears of overcrowding in the mid-twentieth century (263-273). Posthumanism, while sometimes attempting optimism, is generally dystopian in nature, unable to escape fears of technological change (273-276). Current dystopian imagery is related to global warming and carbon emissions, and eutopias are often postponed to after an environmental collapse, implying that, ecologically, mankind cannot now reach utopia without first passing through dystopia (276-279).

While *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature* provides a general sense of utopia in Europe and the rest of the world, Adams is working within a specific British utopian tradition, thus A. L. Morton's *The English Utopia* helps to further narrow the critical surroundings of *Hitchhiker's*, not least because its publication in 1952 makes it possible that Adams would have read it at Cambridge. As Morton points out, English
utopias are not only numerous, but also apt, as both Britain and utopia are islands, and thus share a geographical link ("Introduction" 11-12). Many English utopias have already been mentioned earlier in this literature review and do not need to be recapped here; instead I will focus on those texts most relevant to the pastoral leanings of Hitchhiker's. English utopias begin with the Land of Cokaygne, "an image of desire" in which all needs are met, "the Utopia of the hard-driven serf, the man for whom things are too difficult, for whom the getting of a bare living is a constant struggle" (15-19). Cokaygne is "the fusion of the pre-christian [sic] nature cults of abundance with the very practical needs and desires of the people", a sociable place where expensive spices simply grow on trees, and all needs and desires can be enjoyed without effort (22-24). As can be seen in the Arcadia's of Hitchhiker's, Cokaygne does not feature heavily as a utopian ideal, except perhaps on Bartledan, with disastrous consequences, as will be discussed in Chapter Four. Cokaygne arises primarily from the wants and needs of the masses - where the Bartledanians have neither - but in literature it is considered childish, if not entirely contemptible (32-36). However, Cokaygne thrived in songs, as part of the popular folklore of the people (36-37). Later versions of Cokaygne can be seen in America, with the Big Rock Candy Mountains perhaps the best known (41). However, as part of the English utopia, it is particularly important to this study, as, like Arcadia, Cokaygne looks backwards to a harmonious relationship with the natural world, which can be seen in Arthur's home in Little Crottington, and, eventually, on Lamuella, which will be discussed in Chapters Two and Four (44).

Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, in which Crusoe is stranded on an island with only his Man Friday to keep him company is reminiscent of Arthur becoming stranded on Lamuella, though there are no slaves on that pastoral idyll. Morton considered Robinson Crusoe the seminal utopia of the early eighteenth century, a tale at once "objectively
progressive" and "morally squalid" (115-116). William Blake's writings can also be seen as an influence on *Hitchhiker's*, as his utopian ideals could be found in Albion's transformation to Jerusalem, and his dystopian vision in "the wilderness and exploitation which he saw the rulers of England creating around him" (161). As will be explored later, for Adams this is reversed; it is the built city of golden pillars, London, which Arthur rejects, and the wilderness which he embraces. Morton's final analysis of utopia is that its realisation "through the power of the working class... is the vindication of the belief that has lain at the roots of all the great utopian writings of the past, the belief in the capacity and the splendid future of mankind" with science in the service of the people (275-276), and it is this utopia which Adams will, ultimately, reject, as technology in *Hitchhiker's* serves primarily to vex rather than assist.

It remains only to speak briefly on SF utopias, as much of the theory on the utopia in SF has already been covered in the discussion on worldbuilding. *The Science Fiction Encyclopedia* claims that it "can be argued that all utopias are sf, in that they are exercises in hypothetical Sociology and political science" (http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/utopias). Moylan states that the "literary utopia developed as a narrative form in times of deep change, and it has continued to thrive in tumultuous moments since the sixteenth century" (*Demand the Impossible* 3). Recent critical feminist utopias, such as Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* and Russ's *The Female Man* have, for Moylan, had a positive effect on dystopia: "the subversive imaging of utopian society and the radical negativity of dystopian perception is preserved; while the systematizing boredom of the traditional utopia and the cooption of utopia by modern structures is destroyed" (10). Critical utopias/dystopias can be said to be dynamic, serving to deconstruct utopia while working within it (46). For Russ, the key critical utopias of the twentieth century were, if not feminist utopias, then both feminist and utopian ("Recent
While *Hitchhiker's* is not a feminist text per se, its portrayal of Trillian as usually the only competent character in the group is feminist; like the feminist utopias Russ discusses, utopia for Trillian is unobtainable because the injustices she faces - namely the consistent ineptitude of her companions and the disillusionment of each of her career choices - reflect the injustices of critical 1970s utopias (Russ "Recent Feminist Utopias" 146). The last SF text on utopia this literature review will examine is Suvin's "Defining the Literary Genre of Utopia: Some Historical Semantics, Some Genology, a Proposal, and a Plea" (37-62). For Suvin, utopia is "a territory athwart the roads of all travellers pursuing the implications of the question formulated by Plato as "What is the best form of organization for a community and how can a person best arrange his life?" (37). Utopia is a means of demonstrating a better world, and Suvin goes on to insist on its consideration as a literary genre (37-40). Suvin sees utopia as "historical estrangement", and that utopia must always be predicated on the author's world and yet "a formal inversion of significant and salient aspects" of said world (53-54). Suvin separates utopia from the pastoral (58), however, for the purposes of this thesis, the pastoral will be considered a subset of the utopia, given both Adams's education and the utopian impulses which proliferate in SF worldbuilding. Suvin also presents something of a paradox, which has been alluded to above: utopia is both a subgenre of SF and its literary ancestor (61). While this may at first seem nonsensical, the anamnestic nature of utopia, and to some degree SF, allow for this interpretation to be correct; this is why a great deal of SF criticism is also utopian criticism; the two have sufficiently similar worldbuilding techniques that they can both be understood as a unit.

Given the critical background Adams would have been at least somewhat aware of, it is easy to see why he chose a utopian subgenre, the pastoral, to represent Earth. Once Earth is destroyed, *Hitchhiker's* is an almost traditional pastoral text, attempting to recover
the beloved land which has been lost. However, before the landscapes of *Hitchhiker's* can be examined, it is first necessary to discuss Adams's worldbuilding in the context of the genres of SF and comedy which rule it.
Chapter One:

An Inconvenient Creation
To be able to live a moment in an imagined world, we must see the laws of its existence obeyed. (George MacDonald qtd in Wolf Building Imaginary Worlds 22)

This chapter will examine the construction of Adams's subcreation in Hitchhiker's with regard to identifying the worldbuilding tools he uses and how they inform the laws of the subcreation. Hitchhiker's is complicated by its position as a blend of two genres, SF and comedy, and by Adams's use of comedy, in particular the joke, as the engine of his subcreation. The basic tools Adams uses are drawn from two forms which overlap in Hitchhiker's, and while they have different functions, they operate in similar fashion: from SF, he uses what Suvin termed defamiliarisation, composed of cognition and estrangement; from comedy, Adams uses the joke technique defined by Sigmund Freud as displacement, namely the subversion of the audience's expectation. These techniques overlap and interact with each other, as we shall begin to see in this chapter, allowing the same material to undergo both techniques essentially simultaneously; in fact, there is no instance of defamiliarisation in Hitchhiker's which is not augmented by displacement, as will be discussed later.

Before focussing on worldbuilding, we must first look at Hitchhiker's setting within each of its genres, and, indeed, briefly examine what is meant by "genre". According to Raphaëlle Moine, "We thus invoke the idea of genres... to identify, classify, and differentiate particular works" (1). David Duff defines genre as a "recurring type or category of text, as defined by structural, thematic and/or functional criteria" (xiii); despite Duff's insistence on categorisation, it is possible to see works as exhibiting hybridity between genres, as Hitchhiker's does, existing as both a comedy and SF text. Simply in
reference to structure, *Hitchhiker's* operates simultaneously in the genres of its various media, from radio to computer game; by themes and/or functions, *Hitchhiker's* is situated not only in SF and comedy, but draws across more narrowly defined genres such as travel guides/narratives, space operas, quests, and exploration. In addition, genres can be grouped together from forms to modes to any system of categorisation a critic chooses to engage with, each with its own coherent if not descriptive rules (Duff xiii); while each has also been considered an individual genre with its own rules, SF, fantasy, and horror can be grouped as the speculative genre system, as they all represent extended departures from reality. Further, SF, fantasy, and horror can each be broken down into subgenres with their own conventions, such as the distinctions between dystopias and space opera, high fantasy and paranormal romance, and ghost stories and slasher films. Even these subgenres tend to overlap and borrow from one another, making it virtually impossible to describe distinct boundaries between them.

Genre of course is often used to make one half of the dichotomy which has as its other half realist fiction. By realist fiction, this study means fiction that essentially represents the primary world through mimesis, even though, as Hume points out, "literature has always been more than such a representation", and, "the mimetic process is selective. It is subject to stylization and convention" (xi). Realist fiction, while attempting to represent the Primary World, remains limited in its ability to do so, as "one man's realistic imitation is another's stylization" (xii), and individual interpretations of places and event can lead to radically different texts. Regardless of an author's attempt to realise the Primary World in fiction, it will fail to some extent due to the differences between World-1 and World-2; the interpretation of the Primary World by the author, as we have seen in Hume, is always subject to the reader's own interpretations. Despite these limitations,
realist fiction is often seen as culturally more respectable, which Hume dates to Aristotle and Plato's dislike of fantastic elements:

Aristotle judged literature according to how probable its events and characters were... Although Plato frequently used fantastic myths to clarify his more mystical arguments, he too tended to insist on the mimetic nature of literature. (6)

Le Guin suggests the notion of genre suffers from a dual nature, as "a very useful descriptive tool", and "a pernicious instrument of prejudice" ("On Despising Genres"). Le Guin finds, while genre is useful for classification, as a value category it is dangerous because it places any non-realist fiction into a "ghetto" (ibid). Realist or mimetic fiction, then, has cultural approval and has retained and strengthened its position in criticism ever since, and many works defined as literary tend to be realist fiction.56 In contrast, genre fiction can be understood to mean fiction valued primarily for its entertainment rather than artistic value, and, to extend Hume's definition of fantasy, "is any departure from consensus reality" (emphasis in original 21). There is some blurring between the genres, as realist fiction can often be highly stylised, as in Thomas Pynchon's *Inherent Vice*, which, told from the point of view of a habitual drug user, is at times psychedelic. Whedon's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer's* season five episode "The Body" uses very few fantastic elements, eschewing the usual mode of the series for a stark examination of the aftermath of death. However, Hume does refer to mimesis and fantasy "as impulses behind the creation of literature" (emphasis in original 25); the intention of the author, then, is vital. *Inherent Vice* is intended as a piece of realist fiction, even if it is far-fetched and conveyed by an unreliable narrator, while the vampire attack at the end of "The Body" re-establishes the normal flow of fantasy in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. In the blend of mimesis and fantasy,

56 An obvious exception to this general rule is Margaret Atwood, who, despite working in mythological and speculative oeuvres, is considered a literary author.
one of these elements is normally the primary impulse for the author; it is the nature and levels of interaction between mimesis and fantasy which help create genre definitions. If we take genre fiction to mean any non-realist text, the forms it takes must cover among others otherworld narratives such as SF, fantasy, and horror, as well as heightened or exaggerated worlds, as in romance, comedy, Westerns, and mystery/detective fiction. Various genres, for both authors and audience, presume particular types of worldbuilding. Genre, by its very nature, implies forms and rules; as Martin Amis says, "You have to submit to the huge power of the genre you are in. Genre really does determine outcomes" (qtd in Duff 1). Thus, in a romance novel, there must be an initial meeting, a complication, and a final commitment, traditionally a wedding (Janice Radway 134), while a mystery novel requires the uncovering of secrets and a denouement which is logically constructed from the clues which went before (P.D. James 15). While Duff claims the term genre "seems almost by definition to deny the autonomy of the author, deny the uniqueness of the text, deny spontaneity, originality and self-expression" (1), it is these expectations which make any surprises in the text even more powerful; Adams's subcreation is popular not because it meets the expectations of SF and comedy, but because it both sidesteps and integrates them through the treatment of audience expectation, and so his worldbuilding is unlike anything which came before, although its anarchic quality has inspired later writers. By subverting genre elements, or borrowing from other genres, both of which Adams does with Hitchhiker's, genre fiction can become unexpected and break all its own rules. Jacques Derrida wrote, "as soon as genre announces itself, one must respect a norm, one must not cross a line of demarcation, one must not risk impurity, anomaly or

57 Mystery/detective fictions are considered heightened realities in the sense of individual - often amateur - sleuths continually coming across murders in need of solving. Arguably, Agatha Christie's St. Mary Mead and Murder, She Wrote's Cabot Cove should have international reputations as the most dangerous towns in their subcreations, but in the context of the mystery/detective genre, this preponderance of untimely deaths is acceptable.

58 This will be examined in the Conclusion.
monstrosity" (221). Generic boundaries, therefore, imply strict separation of text, but Derrida continued that the law of genre generates "a principle of contamination, a law of impurity, a parasitical economy" (224). Moine, speaking on cinema genre and the difficulty in placing most films within only one genre, says "it is more interesting to analyze the causes and particular conditions of various states of hybridity, than to try and augment the defining criteria of a genre in order to make simple an object that is not simple" (117). Similarly, in Hitchhiker's, it is more telling to investigate the interaction between comedy and SF, rather than limiting an analysis to only one element of the subcreation, although, as will be examined later, comedy functions as the senior partner of the hybrid. However, while Hitchhiker's construction is primarily comedy and SF, it also includes subgenres of SF, and should also be considered part of the subgenre of space opera. Hitchhiker's borrows further from nonfiction genres such as travel writing as well as reaching back into the literary canon to engage deeply with the pastoral; thus, while the focus of this thesis will be on the interaction of comedy and SF, it is also necessary to examine how various subcategories of SF as well as other peripheral genres are integral to the whole of Hitchhiker's. For example, the nature of genres such as space opera will be relevant when discussing spaceships as landscapes in Chapter Three, while travel narratives are integral to the analysis of alien worlds in Chapter Four.

The division between realist and genre texts is often blurred in the mind of the writer, reader, or critic, often requiring special pleading to claim a place. Margaret Atwood, despite using many SF elements, and using them well, maintains her work is not SF, allowing herself only the label of "speculative fiction" to protect her literary/realist reputation (In Other Words 6). Hume, however, argues against a delineation between realist and genre fiction, arguing literature is not driven by either mimesis or fantasy, but by a range of combinations of both (20). This cannot be overlooked in understanding SF
worldbuilding which, like all fiction, bears the weight of realist expectation and the pervasiveness of the realist method; while it should stand alone, the SF subcreation must also resemble the Primary World or its rules enough to enable the audience to experience defamiliarisation, which is the rendering of the familiar as unfamiliar, but doing so clearly enough the audience can picture the subcreation with relative ease. For example, the laws of physics create causality in the Primary World; a change to these laws, as in *Hitchhiker's*, which allows for time travel among other supposedly impossible elements, disrupts all expectations the audience will have. As discussed in the previous chapter, in SF the author uses cognitive estrangement to accomplish defamiliarisation, subverting expectations based in the Primary World to encourage the audience to see something differently or in a larger context.\(^5^9\) Along with most SF critics, Gaiman claims that referencing the Primary World means SF is not about predicting the future, as many would claim, but about discussing the present, as he claims of SF that "you can always tell when it was written", based on the cultural and scientific elements which appear in the text ("Immortality and Douglas Adams"). Defamiliarising the Primary World is a precise process; the audience's vision of the subcreation must be disencumbered, and so there should be no extraneous material which does not add to the subcreation.\(^6^0\) In *Hitchhiker's*, Adams does this through the concept of bypasses and demolition; the series begins with Arthur's house being demolished with virtually no notice from the council or consultation with him (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 18-19). In the context of the 1970s, when house demolitions were announced in newspapers to the surprise, distress, and helplessness of residents who could not stop them (Hodges 41), it was an all too familiar situation.\(^6^1\) The Vogons' arrival to do the same on a planetary scale for the sake of a cosmic highway introduces defamiliarisation

\(^5^9\) Adams's ability to accomplish this led Gaiman to declare him a true genius ("Immortality and Douglas Adams").

\(^6^0\) However, as discussed in the introduction, there can be elements extraneous to the plot.

\(^6^1\) Brian Harrison explored the era in more depth in *Finding a Role?: the United Kingdom 1970-1990.*
by exploring a relatively common occurrence through a far more drastic version; demolishing houses does not typically kill everyone who lives in them, but the destruction of Earth kills almost every human. The demolition of Earth is simultaneously the same and completely different from the destruction of Arthur's home. This defamiliarisation could not have occurred if Adams and his audience were not aware of the government demolishing homes for bypasses, demonstrating SF, while its main goal is not realism, must involve the Primary World on some level. However, Adams's defamiliarisation is dependent not just on the SF tool of defamiliarisation, but also on the comedy tool of displacement; for an experienced SF audience, defamiliarisation sets up certain expectations, such as the salvation of Earth from the Vogons, whether by human ingenuity or an external salvation. Adams displaces this expectation, and to some extent, the horror of the event, with the Vogon captain's disgust at humanity's apathy. In fact, while it is possible to find displacement without defamiliarisation in *Hitchhiker's* - such as in individual jokes, as when Fenchurch's half-brother Russell loses control of the car in *Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF* and the punchline of the chapter reveals it is because Arthur has grabbed the handbrake (486) - the reverse is not true: at every moment of SF defamiliarisation, Adams introduces comedic displacement; thus, the Vogons torture Arthur and Ford with bad poetry, rather than any expected physical torture (*Hitchhiker's Radio 31-32*). To understand these tools and how they function together to create a world and then use it within a narrative, it is necessary to first examine what SF and comedy are on their own.

While SF is generally called a genre, it has become too broad an area to define as such. SF has perhaps always been notoriously difficult for critics to define, and its popularity with writers as technique means they will use it for a wide range of discourse, including making people laugh, warning them of a problem, or challenging a belief to
name but a few. This range of intention suggests SF can no longer be considered a genre, despite some critics still preferring the comfort of doing so. Patrick Parrinder, in outlining the common approach among the essays in *Learning from Other Worlds: Estrangement, Cognition and the Politics of Science Fiction and Utopia*, defends the generic approach:

> it is not that we claim access to permanent and transcendent truths about the position of SF and utopia in the literary and cultural "anatomy", but rather that we see the generic approach as providing the best available critical hypotheses. (3).

Since Parrinder and his contributors focus on SF and utopia, which can be seen just as easily as a genre within the mode of SF, this generic approach is useful to them, yet to view the whole of SF as a genre is to place undue limits on its aims, methods, and materials. As a body of work SF has both splintered and at the same time absorbed other forms, hijacking content across all discourse, from the Western elements in Whedon's *Firefly* to the semi-historical elements of *Warehouse 13*. Thus, SF may now be recognised as a mode of literature encompassing many genres of its own, including, but not limited to, space opera, time travel, alternate universes, military SF, steampunk, bizarro fiction, and utopia. The organic amorphous nature of SF's branching and absorbing other genres can be seen in Ward Shelley's *History of Science Fiction*, a graphic which incorporates every movement and influence that has been absorbed into SF [See fig. 1], as well as including the genetic/generic literary material shared with fantasy. The graphic shows how the fantastic elements in SF are fed by the Romantics, science, exploration, and folk culture, to name but a few, becoming more complicated as it follows SF's timeline, culminating not in unity, but in an explosion of genres, each like a Galapagos finch filling its own literary niche, confirming Derrida's claim that a genre "gathers together the corpus and, at the same time, in the same blinking of an eye, keeps it from closing, from identifying itself with
itself” (230). Shelley’s graphic embodies Derrida’s idea and SF’s inability to become a closed system; it incorporates so much from other genres and from other pre-existent literary or non-literary texts that its boundaries are fluid, constantly moving and always containing the potential for expansion. However, it should be noted that Shelley’s graph contains some inaccuracies, such as the virtual disappearance of utopian fiction in the 1920s, despite the critical utopias of the 1970s. These inaccuracies showcase not only the potential disagreements between SF fans and critics as to the importance of various movements, but also demonstrate the tremendous difficulty in creating a viable and completely accurate map of SF.

This constant appropriation and cross fertilisation with other genres, as well as its own expanding boundaries, while signalling its cultural health and energy, also demonstrates how SF, like realism or romanticism, has moved beyond genre into a mode which can absorb many topics and even material from other modes like comedy while still maintaining its integrity as SF. The difference between mode and genre can lie in prediction; it is, at present, impossible to predict, without advance knowledge of a text, what can be expected of modern SF, as recognised by Farah Mendlesohn when she argues

> If sf were a genre, we would know the rough outline of every book that we picked up. If it were a mystery, we would know that there was 'something to be found out'; if a romance, that two people would meet, make conflict and fall in love; if horror, that there would be an intrusion of the unnatural into the world that would eventually be tamed or destroyed. (2)

The difficulty which then arises is how can such a mode be defined or characterised with any degree of satisfaction? Further, how can SF be considered as a coherent mode if it is impossible to know a rough outline for any SF text? Is there, in fact, a unified entity

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62 Historical fiction is perhaps the only other form of literature which rivals SF’s ability to incorporate other genres.
which can be referred to as SF? This is particularly important for worldbuilding criticism, because to specify SF worldbuilding as a shared or at least similar set of impulses, SF itself must have a driving force of its own, a set of expectations born of the audience's familiarity with the literature not only of SF but of real world description, which allow the SF author to build a world. The answer lies in the origins displayed in Shelley's History of Science Fiction. The two impulses Shelley identifies as the origins of SF are fear and wonder, and it is a combination of these which is present in every SF text: according to Mendlesohn, "if sf does have an immediately recognizable narrative it is centred on what has been termed the 'sense of wonder'" (3), while Helen Conrad-O'Briain describes SF's use of fear:

The extraordinary and the unreal are not necessarily a retreat from the world around us. Rather they are vehicles to express fears and solutions almost too relevant to a society by transposing them into an extrapolated future where the problems have come to a head and become clear cut, or by removing them to some other setting which creates a suspension of the reader's immediate prejudices. (28)

Conrad-O'Briain's focus is on fear alone, but Mendlesohn integrates both elements, describing an undercurrent which pervades the mode:

entwined with the wonder is a note of alienation. This is a cold romanticism in which we are forever excluded from our object of love, and alienation is as much a part of sf as is the joy of discovery. The alienation at the heart of sf is most evident in the sense of the uncaring universe exemplified in hard sf by the concept of the 'cold equations' (to use the title of Tom Godwin's sf story), those fixed rules that decide whether we live or die, irrespective of whether we love - the universe is a harsh mistress. (10)
To combine Conrad O'Briain and Mendlesohn then, it is possible to say SF is recognisable as such through its integration of fear and wonder into the heart of each narrative. These primal impulses help explain the variety of texts identifiable as SF; *The Man in the High Castle* is a novel based on, and extrapolating from the fear of Nazi rule, while Arthur C. Clarke's *Rendezvous with Rama* focuses on the wonder of first contact with an alien race's technology. As we acknowledge with Hume's blend of realism and fantasy, we must also acknowledge SF depends on a variable blend of fear and wonder underpinning the narrative. However, this is too vague to serve as a definition for SF, although the duality of these emotions can lend an interesting perspective to an SF text, and could possibly assist in identifying the strange attractor as either a positive or negative novum; in the case of *The Man in the High Castle* the strange attractor is the defeat of the Allied Forces in World War II, a feared outcome in the 1940s, while in *Rendezvous with Rama*, the strange attractor is the very existence of the alien race which built Rama, which in the text is a source of wonder for the scientists. With this fundamental understanding of the emotions underlining SF in mind, how then should it be defined for this study?

Author Damon Knight, whether or not tongue in cheek, reportedly once said "science fiction is what we point to when we say it" (qtd in A. Roberts *Science Fiction* 2). Brian Aldiss's declaration "[t]here is no such entity as science fiction. We have only the works of many men and women which, for convenience, we can group together under the label 'science fiction'" (*Trillion Year Spree* 23)\(^63\) reinforces the critical difficulty in defining SF as a genre, but allows the definition of it as a mode; after all, even if the strange attractor and nova are different in each text, audiences still recognise them as SF. A simple definition of SF would describe it as the branch of speculative fiction dependent on science for its principle themes, narratives, and worlds. It is, however, a literature widely

\(^63\) While *Trillion Year Spree* is written by both Aldiss and David Wingrove, it is written in the first person from Aldiss's point of view; as such, quotes from *Trillion Year Spree* will be attributed to Aldiss.
divergent in its particular features. While works potentially identifiable as SF can be found at least as early as Lucian (Jeff Proucher xix), the term itself was coined by Hugo Gernsback in 1927 as scientifiction (Adam Roberts *Science Fiction* 42), and critics have been attempting to pin down a universally inclusive definition since then. One of the earliest critical attempts by Suvin defines SF as:

*a literary genre or verbal construct whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment.* (emphasis in original, Suvin 7-8)

More simply, Suvin sees SF as "a developed oxymoron, a realistic irreality, with humanized nonhumans, this-worldly Other Worlds, and so forth" (viii). For Suvin, SF must embody the familiar and the strange, forcing the reader to simultaneously understand the setting and recognise it as alien. This cognitive estrangement is also termed defamiliarisation, the act of making the familiar unfamiliar, not only through character or action but also in setting. This is achieved in *Hitchhiker*’s in a variety of ways, from the incongruous schoolmarm voice of Eddie the Computer's alternate personality (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 61-62), to Bartledan's astoundingly boring and eerie bourgeois perfection (*Hitchhiker's Novel MH* 673-675). Suvin's use of cognition in his definition is intended to exclude fantasy, which he calls "a genre committed to the interposition of anti-cognitive laws into the empirical environment" and "a subliterature of mystification" (8-9). However, given Tolkien's careful construction of Middle Earth's languages from his own extensive knowledge of philology and geology, Suvin's claims seem unfounded. Damien Broderick provides a more detailed description:

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64 While *Hitchhiker's* is an SF text, Tolkien's work on worldbuilding criticism, and his own use of scientific theory in constructing Middle Earth, means he is a useful critic for understanding all worldbuilding (Hynes 21-36)
SF is that species of storytelling native to a culture undergoing the epistemic changes implicated in the rise and supercession of technical-industrial modes of production, distribution, consumption and disposal. It is marked by (i) metaphoric strategies and metonymic tactics, (ii) the foregrounding of icons and interpretative schemata from a collectively constituted generic 'mega-text' and the concomitant de-emphasis of 'fine writing' and characterisation, and (iii) certain priorities more often found in scientific and postmodern texts than in literary models: specifically, attention to the object in preference to the subject. (qtd in Adam Roberts Science Fiction 10)

This definition of course fails to include SF based on social sciences, focussing on the technological and hard sciences. Hitchhiker's draws on both the half-remembered hard and soft sciences of the audience, relying on what Adams knew from his own childhood education. Hard SF is often afforded a higher critical regard, with Gregory Benford claiming hard SF writers produce more collaborations because "they hold in common the internationalist idealism of scientific bodies, and in their free trading of ideas often behave like scientists" (qtd in Hartwell & Cramer 15), although, as stated earlier, Suvin does believe better SF is based on soft sciences ("SF and the Novum" 68). As early SF was more focussed on scientific innovation rather than cultural interaction, Benford's views can be seen as more nostalgic than accurate. Broderick's definition would seem to indicate he holds hard SF in higher regard, and his definition would exclude Hitchhiker's as an SF text. It is entirely understandable why Adams was not sure he was producing SF with

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65 Proponents of such SF will often use words like "wishful" to describe soft SF while using terms such as "worldly" and "authority" for hard SF, in an effort to put one above the other (Hartwell & Cramer 16). Kathryn Cramer decries SF's dwindling relationship with science in favour of literature and states "Science is marginalized in favour of social extrapolation" (25), however, this trend relates to audience interests. In an era where most scientific information is freely available on the Internet, the average reader no longer needs an SF writer to explain scientific principles to them.
Knight's quote would imply, by Adams's own lack of pointing to *Hitchhiker's* that it is not SF. Although I intend to stress at some points authorial intent, Hume reasonably suggests Adams's opinion is not the only relevant one in this matter (12), as audiences readily interpret *Hitchhiker's* as SF. Even though the strange attractor of *Hitchhiker's* is based in comedy, it is dressed in SF trappings, from alien life to interstellar war and parallel worlds and, as Arthur's responses range between fear, wonder, and annoyance, it can be considered an SF text.

Comedy is as difficult to define as science fiction, and for similar reasons, though for its most able practitioners, it is often seen not as a genre in its own right, but as a "complement" (Terry Pratchett Trinity College Dublin Lecture) or as "a tool. It's like using a light to make film", best used if the writer has "a scientific mind and creativity" (John Lloyd). However, it does have the advantage of being known by its effect; once the audience laughs, comedy has succeeded. Like SF, it can be split into many other genres, such as slapstick, farce, situation comedy, and political comedy. Its forms range in length from short jokes such as Knock Knock jokes to anecdotes, comic sketches, short stories - whether oral, written, or visual - with a punchline, novels, movies, and entire series, as with *Hitchhiker's*. Comedy has many forms, and can be visual, such as Zaphod's glasses which turn black if there is danger approaching so he will not be alarmed (Adams *Hitchhiker's TV*); word play as when Ford describes travelling through hyperspace as "unpleasantly like being drunk", and when Arthur asks what was wrong with being drunk, Ford replies "You just ask a glass of water" (*Hitchhiker's Radio 29*), which forces a change of perspective through semantics; and situational comedy, as in Arthur lying in front of the bulldozer to protect his house and Mr Prosser subsequently being convinced to take his place, to name but a few examples (20-21). The sequence with Mr Prosser is also interested as it shows a development in Adams's interpretation of Arthur and Ford across
media; in *Hitchhiker's Radio* it is Arthur who convinces Mr Prosser to lie down in front of the bulldozer (20-21), but in all other versions, it is Ford who does so; this takes the clever persuasion - Arthur logically pointing out as he intends to lie in front of the bulldozer all day anyway, he does not actually need to be there to do so - away from Arthur and transfers it to Ford, intensifying the sense that Ford has been to many places and talked his way out of many situations, while Arthur has not (*Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2* 24-26). It also reinforces Arthur's position as the character who is dragged into adventures, not as an active participant. The displacement in this scene, in all versions, is not the warped logic used to convince Mr Prosser, but that he agrees to lie in front of the bulldozer; while in *Hitchhiker's Radio* it appears as if Mr Prosser intends to use the opportunity to demolish Arthur's house (20-21), in *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2*, Prosser appears to be more convinced by Ford (24-26); this could be because Ford is more convincing than Arthur, but also because it is funnier for Mr Prosser to, if only temporarily, actually believe he should lie in front of the bulldozer.

Comedy is sensitive to the culture of the time, and what the audience is prepared to laugh at. As well as covering topicality, Lynn also discusses who should be allowed to make jokes, namely that jokes can only be made about those with more sociopolitical power than oneself, and not less (37-38). Elder Olson explored the various definitions and theories of what laughter is in *The Theory of Comedy*. For this thesis, it will be considered as both Hobbes's "rejoicing in one's superiority over another" and Kant's "strained expectation reduced suddenly to nothing" (qtd in Olson, 6).

Comedy is sensitive to the culture of the time, and what the audience is prepared to laugh at. However, unlike SF, there is one universally agreed characteristic of comedy: as Jonathan Lynn says, "If they don't laugh, it isn't funny" (10). John Byrne defines comedy as "whatever makes us laugh" (3), and while Aristotle's definition of comedy does not explicitly exclude laughter, "Comedy is a representation of an absurd, complete action, one that lacks magnitude, with embellished language" (emphasis in original, Janko 93), absurd actions lacking magnitude are usually the standard in *Hitchhiker's*, which is generally understood to make its audience laugh. At first glance, events in *Hitchhiker's*
do not actually appear to lack in magnitude, but Adams expends a great deal of time and energy in diminishing the importance of each situation, as when Ford, in *Hitchhiker's Novel LUE* persistently asks to be allowed to leave and have fun instead of helping to save the universe, going so far as to claim he is medically excused from saving the universe (Adams 339-340). Further, Adams reduces the magnitude of the Earth's destruction in order to make way for a hyperspace bypass from a tragedy to a column filler for the rest of the universe, as not even Trillian appears disturbed by Earth's destruction as, when the mice discuss it, she does not appear upset at all (*Hitchhiker's Radio* 82-83). In *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2*, it is suggested this is because she had never expected to see Earth again anyway, and its destruction "seemed remote and unreal and she could find no thoughts to think about it" (84). Unlike Arthur, Trillian is already disconnected from Earth, and thus its destruction is less jarring than Arthur found it to be; however, the joke of this sequence is, while everyone else who does not care about Earth's destruction is awake, it is Arthur who is fast asleep (84-85). Adams displaces the audience's expectation of the tortured exile with a "terribly tired" man (85).

Amplifying the demolition of Arthur's house to accommodate a local bypass with the Earth's total annihilation by the Vogons equates Earth's destruction with Arthur's dingy home, reinforced by the Earth's entry in the Guide as "Mostly Harmless" (*Hitchhiker's Radio* 30). Earth's demolition becomes associated with Arthur arguing with a council officer while lying in front of a bulldozer, and is similarly involved in mindless bureaucracy and helplessness when the Vogons refuse to listen to humanity's objection at not seeing the plans for the demolition at Alpha Centauri, calling Earth an "apathetic bloody planet" (*Hitchhiker's Radio* 25). The position of bloody after apathetic is telling; it implies a viciousness to the human race, in addition to their apathy, rather than simply

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69 The only version of Trillian who seems upset at Earth's destruction is in *Hitchhiker's Film*, but this was likely intended to increase tension with Zaphod in order to allow for romance between Trillian and Arthur, in addition to providing a romantic obstacle for her and Arthur to overcome.
emphasising it. Reducing the magnitude of what should be epic events is achieved in *Hitchhiker's* by making everything absurd, with the Drive as absurdity made real, which, when it first appears in the narrative, features an infinite number of monkeys who have produced a script for Hamlet (*Hitchhiker's Radio* 42). The Drive lacks magnitude in that its effects do not last; once activated, "normality" begins to be restored almost immediately, although it takes some time, and by then no one can be bothered to care about the changes they have experienced, which, considering it once removes Arthur's limbs, is an unusual attitude (41). On one level, the destruction of earth loses its tragic character, as Marvin, Ford, and even Trillian, rather than reacting to the destruction itself, are merely annoyed with Arthur's mourning of Earth. The embellished language Aristotle references appears in *Hitchhiker's* as the technobabble which characterises many SF texts; convincingly presented, it will allow for the suspension of disbelief and be entertaining to the audience. *Star Trek* is perhaps the best known source of technobabble, with technical advisor Michael Okuda's response to "How does the Heisenberg Compensator work?" summing up technobabble's relationship to reality while simultaneously being an excellent example of a displacement joke: "Very well, thank you" (qtd in Zoglin and Cray, 75).

Simon Critchley claims "Jokes tear holes in our usual predictions about the empirical world" (1), and Adams's subcreation is no exception to this, although Adams is not only tearing holes in the audience's perception of the Primary World, but also in their expectations of how SF reflects the Primary World by amplifying defamiliarisation with displacement. Critchley also reflects SF's interaction with the Primary World when he states "in listening to a joke, I am presupposing a social world that is shared, the forms of which the practice of joke-telling is going to play with" (4). For Critchley, humour in general "might be said to project another possible sensus communis, where jokes can be seen to raise intersubjective validity claims" (emphasis in original 90). Jokes, then, as stated earlier, generate as much of
an other world as an SF subcreation does, intended to both examine and question the Primary World, while at the same time possessing a strong internal logic, without which the audience would not engage with the joke. Joke construction, as much as SF worldbuilding, is dependent on a relationship with the Primary World and the audience's experience of such. It also requires a social contract; the joke teller must provide a punchline, and the audience must wait to hear it (5). Thus, it is not just a willing suspension of disbelief which characterises the audience's interaction with a joke, but also a willing allotment of time and attention. As the punchline of Hitchhiker's simply never happens - particularly as Adams was interested in the extension of a comedy sketch, which requires a permanently postponed punchline (Adams Hitchhiker's Radio CD Disc 8Track 3) - the audience should become frustrated; however, Adams's comedy is a play not only on SF but on humour and its expectations itself. Thus, by constantly postponing the ultimate punchline, Adams is signalling Hitchhiker's is not like other comedies. Humour in Hitchhiker's is typically about throwing social issues into sharp relief, and, in the case of the council demolishing Arthur's house, turning a serious situation into a farce, or surrealising the real as Critchley would have it (10); thus, Adams's approach is not reactionary, or reinforcing a status quo; indeed, as will be examined later when discussing farce, the demolition of Earth defies the possibility of a return to a status quo.

Critchley proposes jokes operate through three theories of comedy: superiority, relief, and incongruity (2-3), and all three are represented in all versions of Hitchhiker's even from the opening sequence. As the humour in Hitchhiker's is more often than not at Arthur's expense, superiority theory is perhaps the most relevant for the series. Superiority theory is the audience reacting to Arthur's dilemmas and finding them funny because it is not happening to them (2-3); they can be relieved their home is safe, even though Arthur's is soon to be lost. For an audience encountering the text for a second time, superiority also
comes in the knowledge the council is demolishing a home to build a road they will never get a chance to use. This would have particular resonance to an audience who has known those whose houses were demolished against their will and possibly forced to move and thus never use the road. This should have been somewhat alienating to audience members whose homes were demolished without their input, but Adams distances this effect and replaces it with relief by making Prosser and his crew foolish, stupidly bureaucratic and generally unlikeable (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 18-19). Indeed, Prosser is the perfect parody of the mid-1970s planners who were "almost universally loathed" and whom Sandbrook compared to Vogons, being callous rather than evil (*State of Emergency* 187-188).

Relief theory is the release of tension, typically through laughing at the punchline (Critchley 3). However, relief is never fully satisfied in *Hitchhiker's*; the audience is left waiting through two seasons of the radio play, one TV series, five novels and a computer game, because the punchline refuses to appear. However, Adams inverts at least part of Critchley's view of humour. Critchley wrote "Humour both reveals the situation, and indicates how that situation might be changed" (16), yet although Adams reveals the plight of those whose homes were demolished without their consent, he subverts the expectation of a solution by allowing the destruction not only of Arthur's house, but also of Earth itself, thus frustrating any relief felt by the audience. However, the destruction of Earth does function to support the superiority theory, as although some members of the audience may have lost their homes, unlike Arthur, they still have their planet.

Incongruity theory is the second most applicable to *Hitchhiker's*, due to the dual effects of the SF elements and *Monty Python's* influence. Incongruity theory lies in the realisation of an unexpected element in a situation (Critchley 3); in *Hitchhiker's* this is achieved through Ford, though it is not carried out as it normally might be; rather than allowing the audience to realise Ford is incongruous, Adams simply announces it: "None at
all' is exactly how much suspicion the ape descendent Arthur Dent had that one of his closest friends was not descended from an ape, but was in fact from a small planet somewhere in the vicinity of Betelgeuse" (Hitchhiker's Radio 20). The audience does not need to work to realise the incongruities, but are presented with them, as, for the most part, they are also SF nova; Hitchhiker's Radio starts with a description of the Guide, and among talk of bestsellers are names like "Oolon Colluphid" and "Ursa Minor". Indeed, the Guide entries, by positing relatively easy travel around the galaxy, serve to obliquely suggest an interplanetary culture which is amenable to regular migration. Adams maintains a delicate balance between the familiar and the alien, ensuring the audience will get the joke while at the same time they are caught short by the strange familiarity. The Narrator's matter of fact description of Ford as being from "somewhere in the region of Betelgeuse" further emphasises the defamiliarisation Adams is displacing with humour, as well as reinforcing how the concept of home is not understood or appreciated by the greater universe. The audience is suddenly forced to expand their definition of landscape, and it creates the expectation of Earth's interaction with the greater universe, which is squashed quickly with the arrival of the Vogons (Hitchhiker's Radio 25). Every literary, comedic, and SF expectation the audience may have is overturned by Adams in an attempt to heighten the humour, and to reinforce superiority theory; the audience can feel better because they are not in Adams's world, where landscape is meaningless, the punchline will not end, and Earth is insignificant and disposable to the rest of the universe.

Critchley also claims humour "is local and a sense of humour is usually highly context-specific", and "humour is produced by a disjunction between the way things are and the way they are represented in the joke" (67, 1). Hitchhiker's, and indeed, all comedy, relies on the Primary World and what the audience experiences every day. It should be noted here humour and comedy are somewhat different; humour is a general notion of
what is funny, while comedy is a conscious creation, designed to appeal to humour. Comedy also takes the real world, looks at it from a particular angle, and makes it more so, as can be seen in the demolition sequence, which has several magnified angles: first, Arthur's lying in front of the bulldozer is a magnification of what would normally be a letter of complaint, while the builders' identification of Arthur as a health and safety hazard is a magnification of the stereotype of the lazy builder which was the result of strikes in the early 1970s (Sandbrook State of Emergency 7). According to Sharon Lockyer and Michael Pickering:

Humour infiltrates every area of social life and interaction, even rearing its head in situations where it is not normally regarded as appropriate, as is sometimes the case with 'sick' or 'black' humour. For this reason, humour is not synonymous with comedy; it extends beyond it and is not exhausted by its more formal stagings in club venues, broadcasting or film. (3)

Humour can arise spontaneously, while comedy must be controlled, carefully timed, but by no means appear to be so; as Lynn says, "Comedy is best when it looks effortless and easy" (94). However, it needs precision, as the comedy writer needs the entire audience to laugh at the same time (161). Comedy is also intended to appeal to as many people as possible, while humour can be found in inside jokes, such as the joke described by Adam Roberts as the funniest he had ever told, which, as we saw in the Introduction, is utterly incomprehensible to anyone who was not there ("42" 63).

Hitchhiker's also used what Lynn saw as the highest form of comedy: farce (6). Farce is a difficult form of comedy; as it associated primarily with physical comedy, and as Ancient Greek plays did not always include stage directions, it is difficult to know to what extent or how it may have been presented, though there are some elements which are obvious (Dobrov 15-31). Gregory Dobrov describes farce in Greek comedy as "largely
physical, violent, improvisatory, and mechanical in nature" (21). When Plautus adapted Greek plays for his Roman audience, he used native traditions, which probably included the use of stock characters, to adapt the plays, altering plots and caricaturising characters in an effort to increase the comedic value (Castellini 55-56). Nineteenth century British stage farce is closer in style to Hitchhiker's: "Like melodrama, it did not presuppose psychological change or development in its protagonists and, as with melodrama again, it was ostensibly concerned with action rather than character"; this is perhaps because farces often had complex plots, and the familiarity of stock characters would have allowed the audience to focus on the plot (Davis 115). Farce is, in effect, melodrama for laughs. Like the traditional characters of farce who do not change, and in some cases, whose actors play the same roles over and over again (116), the characters of Hitchhiker's do not change or develop; Arthur remains the reluctant and complaining hero, Ford remains the Betelgeusan in search of another drink or party, and Marvin remains manically depressed to the end of his life. This is perhaps to provide the audience with some measure of stability in the text; with both SF and comedy expectations being displaced or defamiliarised, the characters help the audience to appreciate the subcreation, and its attendant humour, with greater ease. In addition, the farcical protagonist is often "passive and unheroic in the face of adversity" (116), an accurate description not just of Arthur but of a cast of characters Adams himself referred to as "feckless" (Gaiman Don't Panic 110). Comedy and farce also have to be able to tackle important issues, which matter to the characters (Lynn 6-7), because the audience has to recognise truth in order to laugh (16-17). The recognition of Arthur's predicament in the destruction of first his house and then his planet was particularly poignant in the 1970s, but remains timeless; the loss of home and a place to return to is an experience to which any audience can relate. Lynn describes farce and tragedy as the two elemental forms of theatre, sharing similar structures: "in both genres
events spin dangerously out of control, leading eventually to madness, usually followed by a measure of understanding and resolution" (4). Arthur's troubles could easily be seen as tragic if not surrounded and interpreted by and as jokes. Further, the "important thing to understand is that the events of the comedy are deadly serious and potentially tragic for the characters" (emphasis in original, 5). This is particularly important in Adams's worldbuilding, as, in order for the audience to relate to Arthur, they have to actually care about what happens to him. Farce is similar to SF in regards to the audience's willingness to immerse themselves in the subcreation; in a farce, the audience will accept any premise, no matter how ridiculous, because they are prepared to laugh (89-90). The catch with this, as in SF, is the need for a strict setting, to follow through the absurd premise with "total logic" (emphasis in original, 90). The events which follow on from the absurd premise of Hitchhiker's, that of the last human man rescued from the destruction of Earth by a roving reporter for a hitchhiking travel guide, all logically follow on; the Vogons stay true to their nature and throw them off the ship; the Drive lives up to its name and rescues Ford and Arthur at an extremely high level of improbability; the search for Magrathea leads to the near destruction of everyone involved; and so on.

Adams does not include one element of farce identified by both Davis and Lynn, which is normally crucial to farce: the restoration of the hero to the status quo (Davis 126, Lynn 4). The destruction of Earth means there is no status quo for Arthur to return to. It is important to note the destruction of Earth does not bring about the meaninglessness of life; life in Hitchhiker's was already meaningless, and the destruction of Earth functions as a narrative impetus. However, Adams did not ignore this tradition lightly; instead, the abandonment of the return to status quo is a key component of the primary, universal joke of Hitchhikers: namely the inescapable meaninglessness of life, the universe, and

70 While serial comedy, such as Friends, sometimes appears to abandon the status quo, in the overall story arc, the characters always return to the status quo appropriate for where they are in their lives.
everything. This, in effect, is the status quo to which Adams and Arthur continually return; the lack of status quo becoming the status quo. Arthur is the mirror to Agrajag; over and over again he will be set adrift, and there is no escape from his karma. This meaningfulness is the context for the Ultimate Answer, forty-two, not matching the Ultimate Question, "What do you get when you multiply six times nine?" (Hitchhiker's Radio 126). In Hitchhiker's Novel LUE, Prak claims the Question and Answer are mutually exclusive, and cannot be known at the same time, and if they were ever brought together, they would cancel each other out and bring the universe with them, which "would then be replaced by something even more inexplicable" (455). Although Prak can speak only the truth, even he does not know if this has already happened (455). As meaning can only be achieved by knowing both the Question and Answer, meaning thus becomes not only impossible, but actually dangerous in Hitchhiker's. All other jokes in Hitchhiker's relate back to this absence of meaning, from the loss of Arthur's home, his personal if pathetic Arcadia - which will be explored further in Chapter Two - to Earth's destruction five minutes before the Ultimate Question is revealed, and even down to Zaphod taking Arthur's modesty at face value and disregarding Arthur's cleverness in saving their lives from the automated Magrathean attack (H2G2 99). The universal joke, then, gives birth to and is reinforced by smaller jokes.

To aid in understanding this joke and its children, it is useful to have a definition of a joke: a common definition is "a short humorous piece of oral literature in which the funniness culminates in the final sentence, called the punchline" (Lendvai, qtd in Servaitė 81). Arguably, a joke need not be short, and a punchline need not only be the final sentence. The construction of Hitchhiker's universal joke is unusual, with two possibilities; either the setup is the opening sequence up to Earth's destruction, and the punchline is the

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71 In our world six times nine does equal forty-two if the numbers are translated into base 13 mathematics, however, as humans primarily use a decimal system, it remains absurd to all but mathematicians.
rest of the series, or the entire series is the setup for the final destruction of Earth; while *Hitchhiker's* appears to culminate at God's Final Message to his creation, "We Apologise for the Inconvenience" (Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF* 588), it nonetheless ends only when all versions of the Earth are destroyed in *Hitchhiker's Novel MH*. This unusual construction comes in part from Adams interest in extending a narrative past the end of a sketch (*Hitchhiker's Radio CD* Disc 8 Track 3). The Final Message is a literal admission from God about the meaningless of life in *Hitchhiker's*, while the destruction of all Earths, with Arthur on it, renders everything which happened since the end of the opening sequence meaningless: why should Arthur have endured all trials and horrors of the intervening years if he was only going to die on Earth anyway?

However, to understand worldbuilding, it is important to identify the type of joke Adams uses, in order to examine its interaction with defamiliarisation. In "The Joke and Its Relation to the Unconscious", Freud identifies a number of joke types, from substitution to allusion, but the one Adams employs most often is referred to as displacement, which is "diversion of the train of thought" (43). Unlike wordplay, in which the audience must do work to interpret the joke from the original meaning of the words, "displacement here is made by the work that has produced the joke, and not by the work needed to understand it" (45); displacement thus is reliant on the author knowing how the audience expects the joke to end, and displacing it with something more incongruent. This is significant for Adams as worldbuilder, as he must create a universe which constantly throws characters off the map, often literally; it is up to him to introduce the displacement in *Hitchhiker's*, drawing attention, as Freud says, to the construction of the joke rather than its reception (45), also drawing attention to the constructedness of the *Hitchhiker's* universe itself. It also demonstrates Adams's need to understand his potential audience's expectations and

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72 It is perhaps the longest punchline in comedy history.
73 Adams once produced a sketch for the Burkiss Way which never actually got started, while *Hitchhiker's* is the sketch which never finished ("Douglas Adams at the BBC" Disc 1 Track 2).
backgrounds, and this is how displacement interacts with defamiliarisation; instead of focusing on the potentially ridiculous elements of SF, as parodies do, displacement works on defamiliarisation by taking SF seriously, and wrongfooting the audience's expectations. Thus, Adams is aware of the cultural context he was writing in - although his negative impression of the time does not bear up historically, as discussed in the Introduction - and the SF and comedy knowledge his audience might have. This is usually relayed through Arthur; in the middle of the unfolding tale of the quest for the legendary Magrathea, he is more interested in finding a cup of tea (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio 55*).74 Displacement takes place at all levels of *Hitchhiker's*, and is written into the very mathematics of the universe; when Deep Thought is asked for the Ultimate Answer, it requests seven and a half million years to find it. After all that time, all it provides is "Forty Two!" (*Hitchhiker's Radio 79*). This displaces all philosophical intentions in the search for the meaning of life; not only is it a number, it is out of context, and therefore meaningless. Adams explained his decision to use a number was based in its banality and inexplicability (*Hitchhiker's Radio CD* Disc 8 Track 10). Further, he wanted a number without any popular pre-existing meaning, such as seven or three, and recalled the use of forty-two in one of John Cleese's Video Arts films, in which Cleese shouts it triumphantly to the amusement of the audience (ibid). The ultimate purpose of the Answer is to satisfy Adams's notion of a pathetic punchline, in which the visit to the wise man results not in enlightenment but in ridiculousness (ibid). Thus, forty-two was a carefully thought out piece of displacement, intended to defy the expectations of both mice and audience, taking the excitement and suspense of the revelation of the Answer and refusing to allow any fulfilment. The mice are particularly aware of the depth of this displacement and the disappointment it will cause: "We're going to get lynched, you know that" (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio 79*). If

74 He is not the first literary figure to be resistant to a quest, as Bilbo Baggins demonstrates (Tolkien *The Hobbit*). However, unlike Bilbo, who joins the quest willingly in the end, Arthur is continually dragged along partly against his will.
Deep Thought is analysing the universe for this answer, it is the universal joke which is displacing Deep Thought's response from legitimacy to farce.\textsuperscript{75}

Freud also states "the joke-work makes use of departures from normal thinking, of \textit{displacement} and \textit{absurdity}, as technical devices for creating jokes" (51). Adams relies on his audience expecting heroic actions from the human hero in SF, and instead they are met by Arthur's apathy. There are also other forms of jokes embedded in \textit{Hitchhiker's}, but they all serve the primary displacement joke. A definition joke is:

where a well known word or phrase is defined, or re-defined, with an ironic or humorous twist, and the humor [sic] comes from the definition being correct, but correct only from a particular (and often peculiar) point of view.\((\text{Higashimori 140})\)

This can be seen as a type of displacement joke, with the classic example of this in \textit{Hitchhiker's} being Arthur's exchange with Ford Prefect on the Vogon ship:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{l l}
Arthur: & You know, it's at times like this, when I'm trapped in a \\
& Vogon airlock with a man from Betelgeuse, and about to die \\
& of asphyxiation in deep space, that I really wish I'd listened \\
& to what my mother told me when I was young. \\
Ford: & Why, what did she tell you? \\
Arthur: & I don't know, I didn't listen. \\
Ford: & Huh! Terrific. (Adams \textit{Hitchhiker's Radio 39})
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

This definition joke functions with the same displacement as "forty-two"; rather than the expected ending of a wise saying, set up from the standard interpretation, as evidenced by Ford's response, of "not listening" meaning "not paying attention", the audience is then told Arthur literally did not listen to his mother. Ford's response highlights his expectation there

\textsuperscript{75} Deep Thought's first appearance also predicts one of the more expected tropes of modern computers; as soon as it is activated, it declares itself the second greatest computer in history, thus declaring itself obsolete as soon as it is turned on (Adams \textit{Hitchhiker's Radio} 74-75).
would be wisdom; instead Arthur is providing little of use to the situation. Neither character is able to provide anything to help their situation, and their almost immediate ejection into space reinforces the displacement of the scene; like the destruction of Earth, Arthur and Ford’s ejection is a displacement of the SF expectation of their ingenuity saving them in the end. This displacement is carried forward by their rescue by the Drive; improbable rescues are common in SF, but not at odds of "two to the power of two hundred and sixty seven thousand seven hundred and nine to one against" (ibid). By providing a good reason for the improbable rescue, Adams is showing an internal logic and consistency in *Hitchhiker's*, which is carried through each time the Drive is used, such as the transformation of the missiles into a relatively harmless sperm whale and bowl of petunias (60). The displacement of action and character reaction is equally apparent in the universe and its laws and rules, particularly when Arthur learns to fly, as it is only possible if the expectation of hitting the ground is displaced by surprise (*Hitchhiker's Novel LUE* 400), and so it is not only a displacement of audience expectations, but also a literal displacement of the laws of physics in text.

The business of the comedy writer is to create the laugh: "your main task [as a comedy writer] remains the same: to stare at a blank sheet of paper and try to put something on it that makes us laugh" (John Byrne 4). Aristotle saw laughter as a result of word play and actions on the stage (Janko 94-95), but Adams is working through world play and reactions. Entire planets are literally created on a whim for the entertainment of the masses, with the inevitable collapse of the galactic economy as a result of overspending. Adams produced comedy which re-presented the foibles and failures of humanity on a cosmic scale. Aristotle also defines the comic plot as:

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76 They are only relatively harmless as their impact on Magrathea's surface would have doubtless killed anyone standing beneath them.

77 This reflects Adams's own claim that "Writing comes easy. All you have to do is stare at a blank piece of paper until your forehead bleeds" (Gaiman *Don't Panic* 113).
**structured around laughable events.** Unless there is an artistic purpose, that is, the arousal of laughter, these events should be structured in accordance in probability, although impossibilities and illogicalities can be used comically, as we have seen. (emphasis in original 96)

This is a conundrum in *Hitchhiker's*: as the series is based primarily on Arthur's travels, it is structured around the destruction of the Earth, which is not an inherently laughable event. Nor, for that matter, is the demolition of Arthur's home; however, the audience would have supposed, through expectations from popular SF, that the Earth would have been saved at the last minute by a morally motivated scientific miracle of some kind. Adams uses displacement to upset audience expectations and actually destroys the Earth; it is black humour at its highest, eliciting laughter out of shock and disbelief rather than hilarity. It is also wholly ridiculous in its impossibility, and Arthur's introduction to a farcical universe, where bad poetry is a form of torture. The trivialisation of Earth's destruction by all other characters in the series, even Trillian, the only other surviving human, further strengthens the pathetic comedy of one man who misses his sad little house and his sad little planet. As Adams's universe is a merging of comedy, which requires the audience to laugh, and SF, which requires the audience to invest emotional and intellectual belief, to create both effects, Adams makes the absurdities of the *Hitchhiker's* universe so great the reader feels compelled to believe in them: combined with the consistency of the absurdities, the reader feels both justified and rewarded by their belief. In addition, by setting a universe which has absurd and meaningless universal laws in reference to the laws of the Primary World, the absurdities often hit too close to home for comfort. There is a progression of absurdity: if Arthur's life is - and perhaps always was - absurd, so is every human life, and thus so is the universe.
As a comedy SF text, the first requirement of Adams's worldbuilding is laughter. As difficult as it might be to get the audience to laugh, the standup comedian immediately knows if they have been successful, unlike the writer. The *Hitchhiker's* universe must be comedic and its constituent elements must be so or be made to be so; while there is an overall joke on the inherent meaninglessness of life, there are multiple smaller jokes, all feeding into each other and the primary joke. Going by Critchley's superiority theory (2-3), Arthur is the character the audience are meant to feel superior to; the more miserable he is, the funnier it becomes for the audience. There is a natural alliance between SF and comedy; they both require an acceptance of what is not there, both need a receptive frame of mind and both tell truths dressed as something else, through the techniques of defamiliarisation and displacement. As Gene Wolfe says, "science fiction is interesting because science fiction is fun" (qtd in Proucher xxi), and the link between fun and funny can be a relatively short one. However, *Hitchhiker's*, however funny, is not necessarily fun: happiness may be finding someone more miserable than ourselves, in particular Arthur. In fact, the humour in SF is the equivalent of watching Arthur slip on a banana peel over and over. Like SF's efforts to convince the audience to believe in the subcreation, and the audience's shared acceptance of the SF subcreation, comedy uses estrangement and cognition to convince the audience to laugh, although comedy is more concerned with cognition, the recognition of oneself in the joke (Lynn 18). Just as SF worldbuilding requires the author to consider his audience's knowledge and experiences, so too does comedy; it does not function if the audience does not find the experience funny. By laughing at the joke, the audience indicates that they have understood it because they recognise something which is within themselves (16). Like SF, comedy can be subversive, but not necessarily so (36). According to Lynn, "[a]rt is criticism of life, and comedy is criticism by ridicule", with the boldest comedy attacking societal institutions (43). Comedy
relies on its ability to say "it is just a joke" to engage in subversion, when the comic wishes to. Comedy also needs to strike a balance between buffoonery and solemnity (Janko 99), which Adams does deftly. The destruction of earth is the more shocking because the lead up has been played for farce and is more than a little ridiculous, particularly when Arthur convinces Prosser, however briefly, to lie down in front of the bulldozer for him (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 20-21). As said earlier, in later versions of *Hitchhiker's*, it is Ford who convinces Prosser to lie in front of the bulldozer, but the farce is as ridiculous in either version. The repeated mention of earth's destruction means that the audience never entirely forgets about the tragedy, but the cascading absurdities of a universe where the normal rules are only suggested at least, and can be bent apparently at the will and whim of comedy, serve as a counterweight to the death of most of the human race.

Kaveney has said that the only thing more difficult than producing a good SF film is producing a good SF comedy: "it means juggling three balls rather than two" (21). She attributes this to the fact that most SF comedies are parodies like *Spaceballs* which "never get over the idea that this material is intrinsically ludicrous and therefore automatically funny" (53). *Galaxy Quest* is one of rare examples of SF that is both parody but originally funny in itself.78 She continues:

> With one or two exceptions, comic SF films rarely have anything terribly interesting to say past the jokes. Ideally, comic SF should be just as smart as any other SF; its gags and farcical situations should be ways of looking at the basic questions with which SF has always been obsessed. The fact that it is also in the business of making us laugh should not prevent its making us think. (53)

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78 *Galaxy Quest's* humour lies in its own subversion of its parody; while the cast are playing actors from a hackneyed cancelled space opera, they are revealed in the end to be much closer to their fictional counterparts than they believed themselves to be.
This problem is solved by Adams's almost unique approach; at any point of conflict between SF and comedy, the joke always wins. Arguably, this should allow Adams to break any SF rule or expectation he wished to, but as it had to be funny, it actually imposes limits; as Adams himself realised, being able to do as one wants means that one requires a great deal more control (Gaiman Don't Panic 115). This added to his difficulties with deadlines, undoubtedly limiting the advancement of the overall narrative of Hitchhiker's in any medium except the novels. However, what Adams accomplished despite this apparent freedom to do as he wished as long as it was funny is what is significant, particularly in how he created a comedic universe; Hitchhiker's is internally consistent throughout. Arthur is always the bumbling Englishman, Ford is always feckless, and every time anyone tries to discover any meaning in the universe, they are derailed into comic farce. Adams's strength lies in his use of farce to make it look like he was doing whatever he wanted without control; in reality, while his control is arguably tenuous, it is present, as all farce "must in fact be tightly controlled and logically built" (Lynn 5). At all times, the strange attractor is at the centre of Hitchhiker's, the joke which drives the narrative, the ridiculousness of the search for the meaning of life.

Using comedy as the controlling mechanism and SF as the supporting setting, Adams has populated his universe with funny men and women, but has complicated the notion of straight man/foil. Nicholas Parsons, himself a straight man, has provided two definitions of the role:

There are, traditionally, two kinds of straight man in show business: the conventional one, the character who does not play for laughs but becomes the foil or 'feed' for the comedian's jokes; and the character who plays for laughs at his own expense by being the butt of put-downs from more aggressive types. (2)
In *Hitchhiker's*, the role of straight man is repeatedly reassigned to fit the situation; this is one of the major displacements of *Hitchhiker's*. The straight man is not a static construction, and not limited to obvious characters. The universe fulfils both roles in accordance with the need for the joke at a given moment. When Deep Thought is calculating the Answer, the universe acts as a funny man, feeding Deep Thought a ridiculous answer with no inherent meaning. As the straight man must be aware they are being had, Deep Thought is probably aware there is something wrong with the Answer, which is why he tells the pan-dimensional beings "You're really not going to like it" when they come for the Answer (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 79). Deep Thought then takes on the role of funny man as Lunkwill and Fook take on the role of straight man, proclaiming the Ultimate Answer to life, the universe, and everything could not be "forty-two", with Deep Thought pointing out they did not have the question, and suggesting they build the Earth to find it (79-80). This leaves the universe in a difficult position; based as it is on comedy, explaining its joke with Deep Thought would ruin it, for, as Adam Roberts points out, a joke that is explained is no longer funny ("42" 52). In order to preserve its original joke, the universe makes a second one: the Ultimate Question, "What do you get when you multiply six times nine?"; together they are both deeply absurd, deeply mischievous, and annoyingly irritating, at least to a mathematician. This is not to say that Adams's universe is necessarily sentient; however, it is a comedy universe, and therefore must follow its own rules and fulfil the performance of a joke, either as straight man or foil. God's final message to his creation, the aforementioned namely "We Apologise for the Inconvenience"

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79 Bethke describes how the fastest way to derail a scientific conference is to mention Adams's Question and Answer; this is because, despite the meaninglessness of *Hitchhiker's*, the audience will still search for meaning within it (37-38).
(Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF 588), actually comes from the universe itself, a self-deprecating dig at its own absurdities. 80

The universe is more often in the position of funny man, as when Arthur's words are transmitted through space and time, cause a devastating war, and the fleet which was sent to retaliate against Arthur is eaten by a small dog due to a miscalculation of scale (Hitchhiker's Radio 81-82). However, the universe is the straight man in one notable instance which directly involves the creation of a universe and its laws; to learn to fly, one must miss the ground:

One problem is that you have to miss the ground accidentally. It's no good deliberately intending to miss the ground because you won't. You have to have your attention suddenly distracted by something else when you're halfway there, so that you are no longer thinking about falling, or about the ground, or about how much it's going to hurt if you fail to miss it.

(Hitchhiker's Novel LUE 359-360)

This is an unstable position, as, with any straight man, the universe becomes aware something is up: "Physics glanced at Arthur, and clotted with horror he was gone too, sick with giddy dropping, every part of him screaming but his voice" (Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF 550-551). Where a comedy straight man is constrained by propriety, 81 the foil or funny man is free from social norms or limitations; so too are the inhabitants of Adams's subcreation. Zaphod, even though he has entered a conspiracy to find the ruler of the galaxy, does not have any inherent desire to do so (Hitchhiker's Radio 242). Ford, despite being a researcher for the Guide and presumably invested for personal reasons at least in the continuing survival of the universe is still unwilling to help save it in Hitchhiker's

80 It could be argued that this is actual Adams's attempt to apologise to his own characters, in particular Marvin, who, after living through several lifetimes of the universe in a state of permanent depression finally dies happy after reading the message.
81 In this case, the universe keeps the scientific values going.
Novel LUE (339-340). Trillian and Arthur, despite being in the position of Adam and Eve, are in no way interested in each other, or in the survival of the species, and are both alarmed when Trillian discovers she has actually borne his child in Hitchhiker's Novel MH (701). All the characters, and the universe, buck the SF conventions, and when Slartibartfast attempts to fulfil them by saving the universe, he is made a straight man and the butt of everyone's jokes.

Adams's shifting use of straight men and foils would seem to undermine regular farcical rules, including the unchanging position of specific caste characters (Jim Davis 115), and implies a disrespect for any structure or logic; however he did not take worldbuilding lightly; indeed, he often took it far too seriously. When deciding on the Babel Fish's functions, Adams spent weeks refining the scientific theory behind it in search of believability, doing as Lynn would suggest and following the idea of a universal translator in a fish through to its logical end ("Douglas Adams at the BBC" Disc 3 Track 3). Of course, the Babel Fish becomes an instant source of humour when the Guide reveals it has, by enabling perfectly accurate communication, caused more wars than anything else in the history of the galaxy (Adams Hitchhiker's Radio 29-30); perfect communication, Adams suggests, is not necessarily a safe thing.

Braham Murray describes farce as "only one step away from tragedy. If it didn't work out at the last moment then the leading characters' lives would fall apart" (85). This is particularly true in Hitchhiker's as the characters are often rescued from certain death by spurious and illogical events, such as the transportation to Milliways in Hitchhiker's Novel REU or, perhaps more aptly, Arthur's learning to fly at just the right moment so he would not die in a landslide (Hitchhiker's Novel LUE 400). Murray describes how farce must be played at an enforced speed to ensure that the audience cannot quite keep up and will not see the staging behind the jokes (87), something else that is shared with Hitchhiker's. Not
only do the actors in *Hitchhiker's Radio* speak quickly, events rush on from each other extremely quickly. Mere minutes after Arthur is drinking in the pub with Ford, he suddenly finds himself taken captive and forced to listen to Vogon poetry (*Hitchhiker's Radio* 21-32). Murray's final rules, that "no gag should seem like a gag, and the actors should never seem to be asking the audience to laugh" (88) are observed in *Hitchhiker's*; after all, the loss of Arthur's house in the very beginning is, while hilarious for the audience, extremely upsetting for Arthur (18-19). In fact, nearly all of *Hitchhiker's* upsets Arthur to some degree, and this is vital to Jim Davis's view of farce: "For its audiences [farce] provided an alternative view of how to cope with a threatening incomprehensible world" (115). Arthur's sufferings reflect the real problems Adams perceived in the 1970s and allow the audience to laugh in recognition and relief it is not happening to them.

*Hitchhiker's* was made at the end of an important period in British comedy, in which *Monty Python's Flying Circus* remains the most famous example. Adams, despite citing an inspiration from P.G. Wodehouse and swiping at least one joke (Gaiman "Immortality and Douglas Adams"), was more obviously inspired by the Pythons, and attended Cambridge to follow in the footsteps of most of the troupe by joining Footlights, the Cambridge comedy theatre group (*Don't Panic* 8). However, he was considered so far removed from what Footlights typically produced that he was obliged to start another sketch group, Adams-Smith-Adams, who performed their own successful revues (11). While he did not perform in Footlights, his sketches were included in one of their shows, attended by Graham Chapman, who was taken with Adams's writing style. Unfortunately his collaboration with Chapman did not lead to any significant productions, and Adams's became involved with *The Burkiss Way*, largely unsuccessfully, finding it difficult to

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82 However, Adams did appear in small parts in several *Monty Python* sketches (Gaiman *Don't Panic* 16).
conform to their creative demands (15-24). Adams was too experimental, as in "The Sketch Which Never Got Started", which, while funny, was not what his producers were looking for ("Douglas Adams at the BBC" Disc 1 Track 2). Perkins claimed Adams's skill did not lie with punchlines (Hitchhiker's Radio 9), and Hitchhiker's itself suggests the difficulty lay in how to reach the punchline, which, for Hitchhiker's, took five media and fourteen years.

The biggest contemporary cultural influences for Adams were the Beatles and Monty Python. The Beatles' incorporation of sophisticated harmonies into popular music delighted Adams while he was at school (Salmon of Doubt 4-5), and certainly influenced his interest in making something both popular and complex. What would have interested Adams the most would have been the Pythons' subversion of television comedy:

[Monty Python] was subversive of the idea of television comedy itself. It threw away the idea of separate sketches with laboriously plotted punchlines in exchange for a tumbling stream of consciousness like a hilarious bad dream. (Hewison 8)

Like Adams, the Pythons were among the first generation of British citizens bereft of the Empire, and so they approached both Britain and the rest of the world as something which could be mocked, such as the prancing soldiers in The Meaning of Life or the soldier in India who is missing his leg; for the Pythons, as for Adams, the Empire is gone and is free to be mocked or ignored. The Pythons' comedy pushed boundaries and broke conventions, such as sketches which never actually finished or ran into other sketches, Terry Gilliam's often shocking animations, and subject matter as dark as forced organ donation in The Meaning of Life. Their audience was constantly facing the unexpected ending of sketches, a displacement of comedic expectations Adams both admired and emulated. The Pythons also

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83The exception to this is the magnificent Kamikaze pilot sketch (Gaiman 24-28), which can be found on Youtube.
shared one specific element with *Hitchhiker's*; because Gilliam was writing and performing as well as creating the animation, he would often only complete the animations on the morning of transmission. Producing sketches on such a tight schedule led to animation like the "Monster of Aargh" sequence in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, which ends with the death of the animator played by Gilliam; this came about because Gilliam had written himself into a corner and could not think of an ending to the sequence (Meuwese 46), similar to Adams writing himself into a corner with Arthur and Ford's ejection into space. As Adams worked with the Pythons prior to writing *Hitchhiker's*, and was part of the production of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, he would have been aware of Gilliam's difficulties. While the invention of the Drive is credited to a judo technique (*Hitchhiker's Radio 51*), the motivation for it is to sidestep Gilliam's solution, which was to kill the animator in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. The Pythons' displacement of comedy tropes' traditions, and their flexibility with the ending of sketches was a likely influence on Adams's interest in seeing just how far he could extend a sketch (*Hitchhiker's Radio CD Disc 8 Track 3*). Further, Adams claimed *Hitchhiker's* contained a theme "of the ubiquity of bureaucracy and paranoia rampant throughout the universe. And that is a direct debt to *Python*" (qtd in Gaiman *Don't Panic* 104). Python inspired Adams to examine the universe as a ludicrous creation, and as such, *Hitchhiker's* became an even more ludicrous creation.

As the Pythons were the writers and performers, their texts\textsuperscript{84} were largely uninfluenced by studio interference, as evidenced by their willingness to poke fun at the BBC. Adams's texts were rarely interfered with by editors due to his problems with deadlines; a subconscious desire to retain the kind of control the Pythons had over his own creation may have been part of his problem with finishing his work on time. However, more

\textsuperscript{84} It is debatable whether *Monty Python's Flying Circus* constitutes a thick text, which will be explored later in this chapter. The sketches largely remain in the medium of television - despite the addition of animation - and while there are a number of creators, they are all involved simultaneously and in agreement over the work. A thick text should be influenced, at different times, by figures such as editors and actors who are not writers.
than their comedy and their creative control, Adams was interested in the Pythons’ worldbuilding, namely their ability to take create a world like and yet unlike the Primary World and extrapolate a sketch from that (Hitchhiker’s Radio CD Disc 8 Track 3). A sketch is the comedy equivalent of a short story; Isaac Asimov was famous for the punchlines of his short stories, but unlike Adams, Asimov was unable to transfer his wit to longer forms. Adams’s worldbuilding and dedication to exploring his subcreation through comedic laws meant he was able to extend the sketch, primarily through the extension of the punchline. Instead of simply opening a window on the comedy universe, Adams became interested in walking through a door to it. Adams became interested in what would happen after the traditional end of the sketch, which in Hitchhiker’s case, would have been the destruction of the Earth. The only way to continue the sketch was to keep the punchline going. The comedic nature of the universe is then predicated entirely on the idea of extending a punchline as far as it would go. It explains why, when the medium changed, the narrative restarted; a punchline without a setup would make no sense.

There are two other important influences on Adams’s worldbuilding, which would have affected the imagery, particularly for spaceships and alien worlds: Star Wars and Star Trek. This is because these were the cultural SF artefacts Adams and his audience would have been most familiar with. Given the popularity of Hitchhiker’s, it is reasonable to assume many of the audience were not intimately familiar with written SF, but most of them would have been aware of what Star Trek and Star Wars were, and, more importantly in regards to their use in this thesis, what they looked like. As Adams was subverting expectations, he had to subvert the expectations of the general audience; thus, when discussing spaceships and alien worlds, it is necessary to look to Star Trek and Star Wars to understand the SF context with which Adams expected his audience to be familiar.
To reiterate from the Introduction, SF worldbuilding can be defined as the generation of a sustainable secondary world in which the author employs or accepts a single philosophical, theoretical, mechanistic, or scientific strange attractor, from which the subcreation's physical and sociocultural landscapes must draw their laws in so far as they may differ from those of the primary world. Each subcreation requires a dominant impetus, and to take all of SF as a single genre makes it impossible to focus on any single impetus, although interpreting it as a mode allows us to group texts by their dominant impetus. The worldbuilding of *Hitchhiker's*, with its controlling element of comedy with SF integrated into the joke, is obviously different from the controlling impetus of Le Guin's Hainish Cycle, which uses anthropological investigation as its strange attractor. Thus, while worldbuilding criticism may have limited usefulness in defining SF as a whole, it is useful when examining individual subcreations, comparing subcreations, or examining trends in SF genres. In a critical tradition which, until recently, was concerned with defining SF as a single genre, worldbuilding was considered a given, an aspect of SF so obvious it did not require critical attention. While it was generally accepted worldbuilding must derive from some level of realism, scientific literacy, or both, in its setting, this has, until recently, not been considered a distinct area of study. However, it is in the interaction of realism, science, and generic expectations that worldbuilding can be seen as an important area of study; understanding how these elements interact help to explain the universal laws of a subcreation. With those universal laws identified, it is possible to understand how and why events happen in the subcreation. This is not to say worldbuilding was completely ignored: Wolf identifies a "partial examination" of worldbuilding (*Building Imaginary Worlds* 3), which in SF criticism appears in the works of writer/critics like Samuel R. Delany. Tom Moylan characterises Delany's views:
inexperienced readers do not see that what appears to be the taken-for-granted background (the setting) is actually in sf the foreground (or driving force behind the total creation); for before a story can be followed or a character understood, the fictive world itself must be indulged in, grasped, learned, and detailed in readers' own minds so that the matters of plot or character can literally make sense. (Scraps 6)

Moylan's discussion is an interrogation of how to teach SF in a classroom, often to newcomers to the genre. Similarly, Delany's work, which Moylan is referencing, is on SF reading practices (286, note 7). Moylan describes the experienced SF reader as moving "through a text like a traveler in a foreign culture or a detective seeking clues to unravel the mystery at hand" (7). Moylan's focus, however, is on the interaction of the reader with the subcreation, or the background. Still, by declaring the background is the foreground, both Delany and Moylan are declaring the subcreation, and the mechanisms of worldbuilding, in which the author "must deliver [the subcreation's] substance in sequential bits, appearing as the narrative unfolds", are vital to the reader's understanding and enjoyment of SF (6). Thus, not only is worldbuilding arguably more visible in SF than in realist fiction, it is also more vital; an SF reader must be able to engage with the worldbuilding to immerse themselves fully in the subcreation. Delany clarified his position in an interview in 1996, claiming "science fiction is nothing more than a way of reading; it is nothing less; it is nothing other ", though he acknowledges reading is affected by "publishing policies, printing conventions, economic situations, sociological and historical events, readerly and writerly responses, educational contexts... [and] semantic conventions" (emphasis in original, Delany as Steiner 98). For Delany, only the reader's response to and interaction with SF is critically relevant; from Hume's elements of worldbuilding, Delany can be seen as only applying the reader, World-2, and the Primary World to analysis (Hume 9-10).
However, what Delany and Moylan describe, namely the ability to investigate, interrogate, and accept the subcreation, "the necessary work of learning the complexity of the alternative world in order to understand the characters' actions", which they term "the central pleasure of this imaginative mode", is only one part of the equation of worldbuilding (Moylan 6). In Worlds Of Wonder: How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy, Stephen Gerrold approaches worldbuilding from the other side: the author's, and World-1. Rather than focussing on how to teach the reader to appreciate the subcreation, Gerrold's book is a beginner's manual for SF writers, but it does cover similar critical questions to Moylan and Delany. Where Moylan and Delany presume the worldbuilding has been successful enough for an experienced reader to enjoy the text, Gerrold is interested in what the author must do to produce convincing SF and fantasy, which, in his opinion, is to ask questions. Gerrold presents the two basic questions of SF and fantasy as "What If?" and "If This Goes On?" (13). Specifically, SF must always ask the next question in a series (22) rooting the questions' answers in "the logic of the physical universe" (28-29), therefore an SF writer must build their universe on the social, philosophical, and scientific questions raised by scientific progress, echoed by Gene Wolfe's assertion of SF as "THE... popular literature sprung from the technical branch of the human tree" (emphasis in original Proucher xix).85

Following Gerrold and Wolfe's lead, we may say that where a scientist might ask "How do I create cold fusion?", an SF writer asks "What happens once I create cold fusion?" using just such questions to reverse engineer the subcreation in which it has happened/can happen to explore this: this serves to create not just a physical second world but an ecumene, a social, economic, and cultural secondary world. Adams, for example, performed just such a reverse engineering with the Babel Fish; having decided to solve the

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85 This view is somewhat problematic as it ignores the social sciences which writers such as Le Guin rely on for the construction of their subcreation.
The problem of universal translation with a fish in the ear, Adams's explanation of the Babel Fish is as follows:

The Babel Fish is small, yellow and leechlike, and probably the oddest thing in the Universe. It feeds on brainwave energy absorbing all unconscious frequencies and then excreting telepathically a matrix formed from the conscious frequencies and nerve signals picked up from the speech centres of the brain; the practical upshot of which is that if you stick one in your ear you can instantly understand anything said to you in any form of language - the speech you hear decodes the brainwave matrix. (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio 29*).

Here, Adams has not only solved the problem of communication across alien species - and explained, perhaps more satisfactorily than in most SF, why everyone in *Hitchhiker's* appears to be speaking English - but, by his assertion the Babel Fish "has caused more and bloodier wars than anything else in the history of creation" (30), has also used this solution to reinforce the ecumene of *Hitchhiker's*. Gerrold's assertion can be expanded further to match the definition of worldbuilding above; rather than just asking a specific question, an SF subcreation should be driven by a single impulse, which inspires the main question of the text. In *Hitchhiker's*, this question for Adams, as stated previously, was 'What happens if I write an SF comedy sketch which never ends?';

Given Adams earlier piece for *The Burkiss Way*, "The Sketch Which Never Got Started", the question is perfectly in keeping with Adams's sense of humour ("Douglas Adams at the BBC" Disc 1 Track 2).
result of problem-solving and a good dose of serendipity. *(Building Imaginary Worlds 6)*

The Babel Fish and Drive both indicate Adams was an exceptional problem solver; in fact, the Babel Fish may be one of the most straightforward solutions to the problem of communicating across species in SF, as it is both simple, and, to a degree, sensible. However, this does not mean Adams was a rigorous planner, as the "good dose of serendipity" Wolf references (6) was much more prominent in *Hitchhiker's* than it might have been in other texts:

Writing episodically meant that when I finished one episode I had no idea about what the next one would contain. When, in the twists and turns of the plot, some event suddenly seemed to illuminate things that had gone before, I was as surprised as anyone else. (Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel Guide to the Guide 9*)

Like Gerrold, Wolf acknowledges the author's creative intentions for the subcreation is as vital for its success as the reader's response and interpretation; the author must firstly provide the logic and laws of the world, and then follow them, solving the problems which arise as a result. In "On Fairy-stories", Tolkien describes a secondary world as "what [the author] relates is 'true'; it accords with the laws of that world" (37). While Tolkien's focus was on fantasy, his criticism is sufficiently general and well-founded that it can apply to SF and other speculative literatures. Michael Saler describes imaginary worlds as "autonomous from the real world, avowedly fictional spaces that provide an escape from a disenchantened modernity into self-subsistent realms of wonder" (7), and certainly the landscapes of *Hitchhiker's* are a literal escape from the demolished Earth. However, while Saler's theory reinforces the need for sustainability in subcreations, it introduces escapism as a major element and denies Tolkien's assertion the subcreation
must create and command a "Secondary Belief", moving the reader to willingly lose themselves in the text ("On Fairy-stories" 37). In SF worldbuilding, the secondary belief we suggest is set in motion by a single overarching force or argument which sets in motion or requires the difference between the Primary and Secondary worlds. Conrad-O'Briain argues that, in the construction of an SF or fantasy universe, the author is projecting something which means it will have, if not a law, then the application of a law, which is different from the Primary World; thus, the first thing to establish in studying worldbuilding is if there are different laws, and what they are ("Bookland"). These laws can range from minor to universal, from a difference in a character's behaviour to the very laws of physics which control the subcreation. While the belief in Hitchhiker's is encouraged by the overarching exaggerated nature of comedy, and the joke which powers it, the SF elements are thus carried by the audience's willingness to engage with the joke. Saler's further claim "secondary lives became the means to engage in thought experiments about one's primary life" could speak about either the author or the audience (14), yet to consider subcreations as only thought experiments risks undermining the realism of the secondary creation. The more accurate approach to SF is Moylan's assertion the audience must "read SF on its own formal terms" and accept the secondary creation (Scraps 5). Moylan is pinpointing one of the largest difficulties in SF criticism, as SF subcreations are often taken to be metaphor or allegory, rather than internally consistent universes designed to support themselves (5). However, allegory is intended to point directly at a specific sociopolitical theme or issue, and is arguably different from even a thought experiment, let alone a full realised subcreation. While, as Tom Hutchinson says, SF "is often used as a distancing mechanism to comment upon a contemporary emotion or circumstance, so that some social issue may be explored, some fear brought into the daylight" (5), this does not necessarily imply it is only, or can only be an allegory. Le Guin describes the difference as
mistaking "symbol (living meaning) for allegory (dead equivalence)" ("Myth and Archetype" 76). For Le Guin, SF lies in the realm of typology, not allegory, and is placed in:

the area of the Submyth: by which I mean those images, figures, and motifs which have no religious or moral resonance and no intellectual or aesthetic value, but which are vigorously alive and powerful, so that they cannot be dismissed as mere stereotypes. They are shared by all of us; they are genuinely collective. Superman is a submyth. His father was Nietzsche and his mother was a funnybook, and he is alive and well in the mind of every ten-year-old - and millions of others. Other science-fictional submyths are the blond heroes of sword and sorcery, with their unusual weapons; insane or self-deifying computers; mad scientists; benevolent dictators; detectives who find out who done it; capitalists who buy and sell galaxies; brave starship captains and/or troopers; evil aliens; good aliens; and every pointy-breasted brainless young woman who was ever rescued from monsters, lectured to, patronized, or, in recent years, raped, by one of the aforementioned heroes. (77)

It is from this pool of symbols SF writers in general, including Adams, draw their characters, but their tools for worldbuilding are alien/altered landscapes, spaceships, and the limitless possibilities of the universe; it is the vibrancy of these tools, and their instant recognisability, which lends realism to SF subcreations. Hitchhiker's, while using the engine of a joke on the meaningless of life, is also not a metaphor, but rather a funhouse mirror; it is populated by subversions of the SF symbols, such as Marvin the Paranoid Android, and Trillian's position as both a woman and the most intelligent character in the series. By Adams's intention and final practice, Hitchhiker's is an internally consistent
world, responding at all times to the joke, as in Arthur and Ford jumping on a couch in prehistoric Earth to reach Lord's Cricket grounds two days before Earth's destruction; the entire sequence, including the eddies in the spacetime continuum which move the couch between times, is reverse engineered from the joke of their arrival (Gaiman Don't Panic 114). The production of this reverse engineering was described by Adams:

> What I do now on many occasions is have, say, an inconsequential idea for a throwaway line that seems quite neat, then I go to huge lengths to create the context in which to throw that line away and make it appear that it was just a throwaway line, when in fact you've constructed this huge edifice off which to chuck this line. It's a really exhausting way of writing but when it works... (qtd in Gaiman Don't Panic 114)

This particular sequence works very well; not only is the throwaway punchline funny - "they... emerged unexpectedly in the middle of the pitch at Lord's Cricket Ground, St. John's Wood, London, towards the end of the last Test Match of the Australian Series in the year 198-, with England needing only twenty-eight runs to win" (Adams Hitchhiker's Novel LUE 322) - but the eddies and fluctuations in the spacetime continuum become essential to the plot of the Krikkiters' attempt to destroy the universe, because these fluctuations allow the Krikkit robots to travel both space and time to release their masters. This single joke, built on a throwaway line, reinforces the internal consistency of Hitchhiker's by incorporating itself into the universal laws and remaining consistent. This internal consistency in SF worldbuilding, however absurd, allows the audience to not only suspend disbelief, but also, for the duration of the text, to actually believe. This is true in all genres of fiction, for as Wolf says, to "invite an audience to vicariously enter another world, and then hold them there awhile is, after all, the essence of entertainment" (emphasis in original, 17), but the effect is intensified in SF where, as suggested earlier, the
background is the foreground and driving force behind the creation, and the reader must accept the world first and the narrative second (Moylan Scraps 5-6).

The implications of Tolkien's Secondary Belief is heightened in Hitchhiker's and, indeed, all SF, because the scientific basis for SF should always contain the possibility of the universe being, if not particularly possible, at least probable. Le Guin claims "the writer who composes a universe, invents a planet, or even populates a drawing room, is playing God" ("Do-It-Yourself Cosmology" 121). Le Guin continues: "A great part of the pleasure of [SF], for both writer and reader, lies in the solidity and precision, the logical elegance, of fantasy stimulated by and extrapolated from scientific fact" (122). In this way, SF is similar to the philosophical and scientifically acknowledged concept of possible worlds, the latter of which is composed of four "cases of modality", "possibility... impossibility... necessity... and contingency" (Divers 3, italics in original). These can be defined as that which could happen, such as the Nazis winning World War II in The Man in the High Castle; that which could not happen in any world, such as a room having an odd and even number of chairs simultaneously (Divers 4); that which must happen, such as the truth of basic mathematical principles; and that which is true in some worlds but not in others, such as the Allies winning World War II, which is true in the Primary World but could be false in another world. In philosophy, these four modals interact in a limited number of ways; possibility may be paired with either necessity or contingency but not with impossibility, while impossibility is paired with none of the others (3-4). SF, however, often uses all four forms of this modal, with particular emphasis on necessity; while subcreations such as Star Trek have integrated faster than light travel, which is not entirely impossible but highly improbable, there are still basic rules which apply, from gravity to mathematics. Hitchhiker's, however, displaces even this principle; it is a universe in which six times nine

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87 Le Guin, while acknowledging the differences between SF and fantasy, does not often make distinctions between them when discussing critical theory.
equals forty-two; it is based on an impossibility, that of a universe run by a joke, and thus necessity, that which must be true, is not. This is why Arthur is capable of flying; in the Primary World, gravity is not negotiable, but in Hitchhiker's, gravity relies on the characters remembering it must work. When they forget, gravity is no longer relevant. From the philosophical viewpoint of possible worlds, the Hitchhiker's universe is fundamentally broken, while in SF and comedy terms, its consistency still allows the world to function, as its brokenness is part of its construction. However, although philosophically the absurdity of Hitchhiker's makes it an incomplete parallel world, scientifically Adams is well-placed to alter the laws however he sees fit; in a potentially infinite universe or multiverse (John Gribbin 8), anything could come to pass. Scientific possible worlds are based primarily on quantum theory, which "governs the behaviour of things on small scales - essentially, the size of atoms and smaller" (13). At such tiny scales, Newtonian physics no longer hold true, and it is difficult to determine the actual nature of anything, such as whether light is a wave or a particle (13-14). Much of quantum theory depends on observability, with the most famous example being Schrödinger's cat, which can be described as being both alive and dead, as long as it is not observed (21-22). Multiple worlds, then, can be explained as branches based on different quantum states; thus if anyone were to actually perform the experiment described by Schrödinger, it would create two worlds; one in which the cat was alive, and one in which it was dead (27-29). Parallel worlds also suggest anything that can happen will happen at some point in the multiverse; so not only is Hitchhiker's a theoretical parallel world to the Primary World, but it is also incorporates multiple worlds into its narrative, though it presents them as

88 Adams were certainly aware of Schrödinger's cat and quantum physics, as both are pivotal to Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency.
89 This is often used in SF to handle the consequences of time travel, as changing something in the past can be considered to create a parallel world (Gribbin 29). One of the best known examples of this is supposed to be in Back to the Future Part II; however, the absence of an alternate Marty and Doc imply the timeline of the films are altered, not alternate (Harwood-Smith and Ludlow 240).
problematic. The Plural Zones, which include Earth, are subject to multiple versions of planetary systems contained within the universe, but rather than providing an opportunity for exploration, they instead cause problems when travelling in hyperspace, as a Plural Zone native can simply disappear for no reason, as with Fenchurch in *Hitchhiker's Novel MH* (Adams 646-647). This is common enough for the tickets to include a disclaimer for Plural Zone inhabitants (647); thus parallel worlds in *Hitchhiker's* are not marvellous, but, like all other elements of the subcreation, a joke.

Consistency is crucial to worldbuilding. When the universe is inconsistent to its rules, the audience will not invest their belief; as Tolkien wrote, "[t]he moment disbelief arises, the spell is broken; the magic, or rather art, has failed. You are then out in the Primary World again, looking at the little abortive Secondary World from outside" (*On Fairy-stories* 37). Any author's primary concern in worldbuilding across genres is the world has to make sense, even if making sense means the universe is consistently absurd; thus Adams can have Arthur fly as long as those rules remain intact, or, in the case of the petunias thinking "Oh no, not again", Adams must imply there is an underlying reason for it: "Many people have speculated that if we knew exactly why the bowl of petunias had thought that we would know a lot more about the nature of the universe than we do now. (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 60-61)

It is revealed in *Hitchhiker's Novel LEU* that the petunias are in fact a being named Agrajag which has been unwittingly killed by Arthur Dent in every one of its reincarnations; when Agrajag in its final incarnation attempts to kill Arthur, it does it too soon, capturing Arthur before he is responsible for its death at Stavromula Beta (385-396). This adapted grandfather paradox leads to two realisations about the universe for Arthur: firstly, reincarnation is possible, and secondly, he will not die until he reaches a planet

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90 The grandfather, or, as Gribbin puts it, "granny paradox", describes a person's attempt to kill their own grandparent before the time traveller's parent was born; however, by doing so, the time traveller no longer exists to carry this out (29-30)
called Stavromula Beta. Further, Agrajag is a mirror of Arthur; as will be seen later, Arthur's repeated attempts to find Arcadia are doomed to failure. Like Agrajag, Arthur is doomed to the same experience, although arguably Agrajag’s repeated deaths at Arthur's hands are more traumatic than Arthur's experiences, making Agrajag an amplified mirror image of Arthur, and possibly the only character in *Hitchhiker's* more pathetic than Arthur himself. In the end, Agrajag, enraged at Arthur's apparent insistence on accidentally murdering him, attempts to upend the consistency of the worldbuilding by killing Arthur before he reaches Stavromula Beta, only to be, once again, accidentally killed by Arthur. However, *Hitchhiker's* does not make these laws obvious: firstly, no other character is ever shown to reincarnate, and Agrajag’s constant reincarnation only to die at Arthur's hands serves to drive him insane, rather than provide him with any wisdom from his multiple lifetimes. Second, Agrajag's mouth is so warped by a nightmarish collection of teeth by the time he confronts Arthur, he mispronounces "Stavro Mueller Beta", which, rather than being a planet, is in fact a nightclub in New York, and the final location on Earth in *Mostly Harmless* before all Earths are destroyed by the Vogons. This is not quite a pun but does set up a displacement joke; Arthur and the audience come to expect Arthur will die on an alien world, possibly at the hands of something as monstrous as Agrajag. His destruction on Earth, at a trendy nightclub, displaces these expectations, and makes Arthur's end more than a little sad. Arthur's realisation of this in *Hitchhiker's Novel MH*, of the joke the universe has played on him through Agrajag and his acceptance of his coming death, serve as a pathetic punchline to his pathetic life. The Agrajag sequence is, therefore, not only consistent in the universal laws it presents, but also in keeping with the joke of the meaninglessness of life.

Despite the need for consistency in worldbuilding, it is not necessarily detailed. As Le Guin said:
what artists do is make a particularly skilful selection of fragments of cosmos, unusually useful and entertaining bits chosen and arranged to give an illusion of coherence and duration amidst the uncontrollable streaming of events. An artist makes the world her world. An artist makes her world the world. For a little while. For as long as it takes to look at or listen to or watch or read the work of art. Like a crystal, the work of art seems to contain the whole, and to imply eternity. And yet all it is an explorer's sketch map. A chart of shorelines on a foggy coast. ("World-Making" 46-47)

It is the shadow of a complex coherence and inner consistency which is essential to worldbuilding; Adams does not need to provide scientific explanations for the unnatural physics of Hitchhiker's, nor does he have to provide every example of these physics and how they work under different conditions. He merely needs to make them consistent enough to sustain belief in the audience, to maintain the joke of the meaningless of the universe, which is that universe's first law; if not even physics will work correctly, Hitchhiker's is a universe without order, therefore drained of meaning, and a constant joke played on its inhabitants.

Before discussing Adams worldbuilding and his subcreation's laws in depth, it is important to acknowledge the difficulty the multimedia manifestations of Hitchhiker's presents. They do not, as said in the Introduction, represent adaptation. As Thomas Leitch said, adaptation usually implies a "secondary or derivative" work (qtd in Chuck Tryon, 177); later media incarnations of Hitchhiker's are neither secondary nor derivative. Adams's involvement in virtually all of Hitchhiker's media, as well as using the same actors, producers, and directors as far as was possible makes the movement between media a matter of worldbuilding expansion rather than adaptation. Previous critical works on
Hitchhiker's have focussed solely on one medium, usually Hitchhiker's Novel, ignoring the real contributions of the other versions to the nature of its universe as a whole. I believe a thorough understanding of worldbuilding in Hitchhiker's must rest in an examination of all its media incarnations which involved Adams. To do so, Hitchhiker's will be understood as what Kaveney refers to as a "thick text", for which the "precondition of reading or recognizing a thick text is that we accept that all texts are not only a product of the creative process but contain all the stages of that process within them like scars or vestigial organs" (5). Thus, in Hitchhiker's, the different versions can be experienced not as contradictory, but as component elements of a larger text, a single subcreation, enriched with multiple levels of interaction and interpretation, essentially the media windows onto the subcreation of which Wolf speaks, as discussed in the Introduction (Building Imaginary Worlds 2).

There are three core elements of thick texts which apply to Hitchhiker's; collaboration, the unfinished nature of all texts, and cultural context. Out of necessity, Hitchhiker's Radio involved collaboration with producers, directors, and actors, and although Adams's only significant writing collaborator was Lloyd (Gaiman Don't Panic 37-38), he was heavily involved in the production aspect of the series, with perhaps his most famous and innovative contribution being insisting on a level of background noise hitherto unheard of in BBC radio: "I wanted the voices and the effects and the music to be so seamlessly orchestrated as to create a coherent picture of a whole other world" (Adams Hitchhiker's Radio 12). Indeed, traditionally radio writers were discouraged from using background noise too heavily (Max Kester and Edwin Collier 39), but Adams was determined to make the scenes seem as real as possible. Second is Kaveney's insistence "all works of art are provisional" and essentially unfinished (5); as discussed earlier, Adams's difficulty with deadlines meant Hitchhiker's Radio Season Two and the first novel were more first drafts.

91 For this reason, Hitchhiker's Comic will not be considered as a major element of Adams's worldbuilding.
than what is normally expected of finished products, so *Hitchhiker's* is more provisional than the average work of art. The third aspect of thick texts is their positioning in their cultural contexts; *Hitchhiker's* is best viewed as a phenomenon deeply rooted in the 1970s in Britain; the meaninglessness of life is extracted from the struggles of the recession Adams's audience were enduring. Further, Adams is part of the first true post-imperial British generation (Harrison *Finding a Role*?); this absence of imperialism in Adams's life is reflected in *Hitchhiker's*; as will be explored later, imperialism is notably absent in the series. If life is meaninglessness, the struggles lose their edge and become something which can only be endured with/by laughter. This attitude is linked with the Pythonesque view of life through their comedy, as seen most clearly in the song "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life" in *The Life of Brian*.

As narrative is an integral element in the unfolding of the subcreation, or at least of its presentation to the audience, the definition of narrative for this thesis will be presented as "the representation of at least two real or fictive events in a time sequence, neither of which presupposes nor entails the other" (Gerald Prince qtd in Christian R. Hoffman 2). This definition is useful for studying *Hitchhiker's* because, as Hutchinson said, it prevents narrative from being limited by causal relations, does not require their temporal relationship to be sequential and allows for evaluation of the intention of the author and reader response to the text (2-3). It is a particularly convenient definition in *Hitchhiker's* once the characters begin travelling in time as well as space, causing events, from an outside perspective at any rate, to become somewhat nonsensical.92 Further, Prince does not specify narrative must remain within a single medium, and so the definition allows for a narrative to transfer across media and allows for *Hitchhiker's* restarted narratives to be

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92 This is not to imply that they ever made any great sense to begin with.
relevant to each other despite their lack of temporal continuity. Narrative in *Hitchhiker's* as we might expect is driven by laughs:

> You map out a plot, and you write the first scene, and inevitably the first scene isn't funny and you have to do something else, and you finally get the scene to be funny but it's no longer about what it was meant to be about, so you have to jacc in the plot you had in mind and do a new one...” (Gaiman *Don't Panic* 100)

Narrative in *Hitchhiker's*, then, must not only reveal the worldbuilding, but also serve it; most SF authors have the luxury of choosing what of their world will be revealed and when. When serving the joke, Adams must include humorous elements, such as the whale's internal monologue as it falls to its death; as such, non-comedic elements will not necessarily be shown. Arthur may be overwhelmed by the hyperspace factory floor of Magrathean, but Adams will not show the audience the actual work on planets unless it is humorous. 93 How then, does Adams use a comedy narrative to achieve worldbuilding? Beginning in radio is a particular challenge; where TV and film have an immediate visual for the audience to appreciate, and where novels can include descriptive passages, radio is entirely dependent on dialogue for scene setting and movement. In 1937, Kester and Collier described radio farce not only as "the most difficult type of broadcast", but also "must be ridiculous and incredible, but easy to follow" (18). In addition, radio dialogue "must indicate action and setting" (49), thus putting a great deal of pressure on the script. Adams solved the setting element in part with his use of background noise, particularly in the pub scene and the destruction of Earth (*Hitchhiker's Radio* 21-25) 94 - a practice Kester

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93 Only *Hitchhiker's Film* shows the Magratheans at work, and it is a comedic sequence, as dozens of workers in red jumpsuits rush around making sure all is in place before the Earth is restarted.

94 The original scripts describe the destruction of the Earth as follows: "A LOW THROBBING HUM WHICH BUILDS QUICKLY IN INTENSITY AND PITCH, WIND & THUNDER, RENDING, GRINDING CRASHES. ALL THE NIGGLING LITTLE FRUSTRATIONS THAT THE BBC SOUND
and Collier did not approve of (39). The most direct piece of worldbuilding in *Hitchhiker's*, Arthur's exclamations of wonder at the setting of the Magrathean twin suns, is kept natural
in part by Arthur's genuine delight in the spectacle and Marvin's aggrieved dislike of it (*Hitchhiker's Radio* 65-66). Taking *Hitchhiker's* as a thick text allows this thesis to examine not only the dialogue of the radio series, where it must do all the work of worldbuilding, but also the visual and descriptive elements of TV and novels. The visual elements of *Hitchhiker's* will be covered when the landscapes of *Hitchhiker's* are discussed in Chapters Two, Three, and Four.

The most successful worldbuilding tool in *Hitchhiker's* is not a character or a location; it is the voice of the Guide in the series. The Narrator,\(^95\) essentially the voice of the Guide, interrupts the dialogue constantly to tell the listener about the universe it inhabits, even describing itself (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 18). While most SF deplores the so-called "info dump" (*SF Encyclopedia*), in *Hitchhiker's* the humour of the Guide entries allows worldbuilding information to be both lengthy and entertaining. Instead of simply telling the unwary traveller they will face an unpleasant death at the hands of the Vogons, the entry is as follows:

Vogon Constructor Fleets.

Here is what to do if you want to get a lift from a Vogon: forget it.

They are one of the most unpleasant races in the Galaxy - not actually evil, but bad tempered, bureaucratic, officious and callous. They wouldn't even lift a finger to save their own grandmothers from the Ravenous Bugblatter Beast of Traal without orders signed in triplicate, sent in, sent back, queried, lost, found, subjected to public inquiry, lost again, and finally buried in soft peat and recycled as firelighters. The best way to get a drink out of a Vogon

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\(^{95}\) Voiced by Peter Jones in *Hitchhiker's Radio* and *Hitchhiker's TV*, and by Stephen Fry in *Hitchhiker's Film*. 

EFFECTS ENGINEERS HAVE EVER HAD CAN ALL COME OUT IN A FINAL DEVASTATING EXPLOSION WHICH THEN DIES AWAY INTO SILENCE” (emphasis in original Adams 2003 25).
is to stick your finger down his throat, and the best way to irritate him is to feed his grandmother to the Ravenous Bugblatter Beast of Traal. (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 27)

This departure from facts into analogies is pointed out as the primary difference between the Guide and *Encyclopedia Galactica*, with the Guide's primary selling points being it is slightly cheaper, and has "DON'T PANIC' inscribed in large, friendly letters on the cover" (18). It is not only the hitchhikers of Adams's subcreation who are encouraged not to panic, but also the audience; despite the confusion of this world, the Guide is prepared to explain it.

This reassuring voice explaining what is happening was very much in the style of the BBC travel documentaries, with a strong influence from the 'Telly Savalas Looks At' series. In fact, the Guide's reliance on personal experience of random events is seen in 'Telly Savalas Looks at Birmingham', in which an entire sequence is devoted to the over 40's dance competition the filmmakers happened upon. Ford's entries on Earth, when applied to the Guide in *Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF*, are full of similar apocrypha, including his reassurance that taking a job as a taxi driver in New York will not raise suspicions of being an alien (479). Such travel programs also strongly imply the voice has visited the places shown; while Telly Savalas never appears onscreen, he is presumed to have visited all of the locations in Birmingham and other similar videos. The unchanging narrator unifies the videos and instils a sense of trust in the viewer. Similarly, the voice of the Guide is trusted as the authority on the Galaxy.\(^{96}\) This, coupled with the Guide's assertion that it has the potential to replace *The Encyclopaedia Galactica* as the source of all knowledge in the universe (*Hitchhiker's Radio* 18), is designed to convince the reader of

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\(^{96}\) The text never specifies whether the voice of the Guide is an actor or computer generated, but for the purposes it serves, it is not necessary to know that.
the integrity of the information they receive, despite the contributory and subjective nature of its entries.

Although a combination of deadlines and writing for the joke meant Adams eventually gave up advanced plotting in the radio series, he did use the novels to "make sense" of what he had already written (Gaiman Don't Panic 100). However, while the books did tidy up Adams's plotlines, they did not particularly alter the universe that had already been created in Hitchhiker's Radio. The same is true throughout the medium changes; Earth is always destroyed, there is always a Babel fish to be stuck in Arthur's ear and the Golgafrinchams always send their least useful section of the population away to Earth. The main changes lay in Adams abandoning sections created by John Lloyd, the most notable being in the events after their meal at Milliways, the restaurant at the end of the universe where, in the radio plays, they encounter Haggunenon warships; in all other versions the characters find themselves in a stuntship destined to fall into a sun.

Smaller changes to Hitchhiker's are a result of movement through and reaction to other media. Visual comedy took over in Hitchhiker's TV and Hitchhiker's Film, from Arthur's dressing gown, which is never mentioned in Hitchhiker's Radio but is significant in all later media, to replacing the dismal second head of Zaphod Beeblebrox in Hitchhiker's TV with the somewhat bizarrely placed but much more lively second head in Hitchhiker's Film. In Hitchhiker's Game, nearly all of the minor aspects of the preceding versions were changed, because Adams had the opportunity to move the narrative in multiple directions that did not have to stay true to the previous versions; it is claimed to be the version he most enjoyed writing, most likely because a game gives multiple avenues of

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97 This was due in part to Adams cancelling a collaboration with Lloyd on Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2 (Gaiman Don't Panic 52-53).
98 Hitchhiker's Game cannot be won without putting on the dressing gown.
99 Beeblebrox's second head traditionally sits on his shoulders next to his original, which in Hitchhiker's Radio was a robotic puppet which rarely worked, and which Mark Wing-Davey often forgot to turn on when it did (Gaiman Don't Panic 89); in Hitchhiker's Film, the head appears within actor Sam Rockwell's neck, pushing the original head back and taking over the body.
narrative for every decision by the player, and certainly reconnected with his first idea for "The Ends of the Earth" (Gaiman Don't Panic 150). An exasperating example is Arthur acquiring the Babel Fish in the game; whereas Ford simply hands it to Arthur in the other media, in the game the following instructions must be followed:

Firstly, eat the nuts. If you don't, you will die of protein loss. Take off your gown, and hang it up on the hook. Then, get the towel and put it over the drain. Wait until Ford is asleep, then nick his satchel and put it in front of the panel. Put the junk mail on the satchel, then press the dispenser button. A babel fish will land in your ear, and you will be able to understand all languages. Useful for foreign films! (Hitchhiker's Game Section 3.2: Vogon Hold)

Failure to follow all these instructions will result in the Babel Fish slipping through the panel or down the drain and Arthur - and by extension, the player - dying because he does not understand the Vogon captain. This kind of puzzle was liberating for Adams; what had been a small, though funny moment in all other media becomes a farce in its own right, with the Babel Fish proving fiendishly difficult to acquire. Unlike other media, the game gives the player no room for errors, or mistakes, with it being said getting out of the house at the beginning is considered an achievement in itself, and even accepting the towel from Ford leads to death (Hitchhiker's Game Section 3.1: Earth).

Based on this worldbuilding, what are the general rules of the Hitchhiker's universe, as extrapolated from and supported by the joke? The first, and perhaps most important rule, from which all others derive, is life is meaningless, and a search for meaning is doomed to failure, typically in the form of a displacement joke. The most literal example of this is the Total Perspective Vortex; by showing an individual just how big the universe is, and then just how small and insignificant they are, their minds are broken by
the realisation of just how meaningless everything they do is (Hitchhiker's Radio 163-165).

Seeking a place in the universe is not the noble quest SF would often represent, but is displaced into a death sentence, the destruction of the mind in the face of true infinity. This meaninglessness on the personal level extends to the highest level; the mismatch of the Question and the Answer, as well as serving a joke, demonstrates the meaninglessness of life, not just because they do not match, but because they explain nothing. An incorrect mathematical equation - in all but Base 13 - does not provide a guide on how to live, or what the purpose of existence is, or even form the basis of dogma; instead it is the ultimate displacement of all audience expectations, a meaningless non sequitur, devoid of anything which could inspire even the most skilled philosopher. The meaninglessness of life in Hitchhiker's is not only demonstrated through the big questions, but most often through the life of Arthur; he eschews even the purpose of the typical SF hero as he is not an adventurer, nor is he interested in justice for Earth, or to explore strange new worlds, but instead is dragged along on other people's adventures, an unwilling – and usually unhelpful – participant in events of galactic or universal importance. In fact, when all of creation is dependent upon Arthur not throwing a universe annihilating bomb accurately, Adams displaces expectations of the heroic saviour, as Arthur is still not an active participant; he does not realise the cricket ball in his hand is the bomb until he is in the middle of his bowl, and the destruction of all universes is prevented only by Arthur tripping on a holdall (Hitchhiker's Novel LEU 448). This is, perhaps, the only meaning in Arthur's life; the universe needed him to be in that position so its salvation could be achieved via pratfall.

There is no heroism in this, only farce, compounded by Arthur subsequently forgetting to hit the ground and flying into the air instead (448). Arthur may be dragged into events of immense importance, but, in keeping with the joke at the centre of the universe, he is either unnecessary to such events or else accidentally important, thus rendering these events as
meaningless as Arthur's own life. In this way, Arthur is an anti-Odysseus; essentially abducted during his journey by Poseidon, Odysseus's motivation is the return home to his family. Arthur has nothing to return to, and his Odyssey is made up only of comedic episodes, in which he is the victim of almost every pratfall.

The only time Arthur behaves as a typical SF hero is when, with Fenchurch, he completes the quest to seek God's final message to His creation. However, the start of the quest is not particularly auspicious, and another example of displacement, this time of the expectation of Arthur's need to find meaning. Arthur is told the exact location, "on top of the Quentulus Quazgar Mountains in the land of Sevorbeupstry on the planet Preliumtarn, third out from the sun Zarss in Galactic Sector QQ7 Active J Gamma", at the end of Hitchhiker's Novel MH (458). He receives the quest from Prak, who, after an overdose of truth drug, was compelled to tell the Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth; the result was those listening in the courtroom went mad and it was cleared to prevent Prak's Truth causing further harm (Hitchhiker's Novel LUE 449-451):

> Not only cleared, it was sealed up, with Prak still in it. Steel walls were erected around it, and, just to be on the safe side, barbed wire, electric fences, crocodile swamps and three major armies were installed, so that no one would ever have to hear Prak speak. (451).

This play on justice's need for truth, and the horror of its reality, displaces the idea of truth's desirability. Actual truth does not give answers or relief, but drives people mad. When the Heart of Gold deposits the crew in the sealed courtroom, they find Prak dying, not from telling the Truth, but from laughter; the Truth in Hitchhiker's is all creation is a joke, and Prak literally dies from laughing at it. In fact, upon learning Arthur's name, Prak declares him the funniest thing in the Universe and Arthur cannot approach him without setting off his deadly laughter. Arthur is hilarious to Prak because he is attempting to find
meaning in meaninglessness, and, as the possessor of the Ultimate Question, which is of no use to anyone,\textsuperscript{100} is himself the embodiment of meaninglessness in the universe, the first law of the subcreation made into a man, the butt of every displacement the universe can force upon him. Prak finds Arthur funny because he recognises the meaninglessness of his own life in him; on Prak's world, his people in the forest were routinely savaged by battles between the Princes of the Plains and the Tribesmen of the Cold Hillsides who would choose to fight in the forest (455-457). Prak was the messenger charged with bringing the reason for this back to his people, but it slipped his mind, because there was no reason; like everything else in Hitchhiker's, it is ultimately meaningless. He chooses to give Arthur the directions to God's Final Message so Arthur can realise this truth for himself. However, Arthur's reaction is displaced from the typically heroic or adventurous response, possibly because he was so annoyed by Prak laughing at him:

In the following days Arthur thought a little about this message, but in the end he decided that he was not going to allow himself to be drawn by it, and insisted on following his original plan of finding a nice little world somewhere to settle down and lead a quiet retired life" (458).

Rather than accept the quest, and inform both himself and the audience of what Hitchhiker's is actually about, Arthur opts for the quiet life, to set the quest aside and not go into what could be dangerous. It is not until the end of Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF that Arthur goes to find the final message, at Fenchurch's urging. Once again, audience expectations are displaced; upon their arrival, they find, not a deeply spiritual location with religious orders or challenges to their devotion, but a ticket booth and tourist stops along the way. It is the ultimate farce; the greatest quest possible, discovering God's final message, is a tourist destination in Hitchhiker's. In this way Arthur is again countering

\textsuperscript{100} Particularly not the mice, who would not have made it onto the talk show circuit with the real Question.
Odysseus, but also Aeneas. Like Aeneas, he has been given apparently divine information on what he must do, and a quest to follow. Unlike Aeneas, he is genuinely not interested until Fenchurch wants to do it. Aeneas was driven to find a new homeland for his fleeing Trojans, to restore at least part of their civilisation by starting a new one; Arthur only wishes to retire, a reflection of his choice in the beginning of Hitchhiker's to move to the countryside to escape the rush of London. Unlike Aeneas, who is looking for new lands to settle on and conquer if need be, Arthur is trying to recreate what he once had. Unlike the Enterprise, which boldly goes where no man has gone before, or the ship in Aldiss's Non-stop which is searching for a new home, Arthur's quest is for the known, the ordinary, the dull, and, most importantly, the meaningless. The Final Message, "We Apologise for the Inconvenience", reinforces the realisation of the meaninglessness of life; if there were meaning in it, there would be no inconvenience to apologise for (Adams Hitchhiker's Novel LEU 588). Arthur is at his happiest in the entire series after his crash on Lamuella, revered as a sandwich maker, concerned only with using the right knife and the right bread; the almost religious reverence for his skills is preposterous (Hitchhiker's Novel MH 688-697). The Lamuellans presumably have their own foods, but sandwiches become the focus and prestige of their small community, and Arthur is glorified for this simple, and universally speaking, pointless skill. The displacement in this sequence will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

The second rule of Hitchhiker's is everyone has a connection to their place of birth:

In moments of great stress, every life form that exists gives out a tiny subliminal signal. This signal simply communicates an exact and almost pathetic sense of how far that being is from the place of his birth. On Earth it is never possible to be further than sixteen thousand miles from your

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101 Given the nature of Hitchhiker's, it could also be an apology for the inconvenience for the Message's awkward location.
birthplace, which really isn't very far, so such signals are too minute to be noticed. Ford Prefect was at this moment under great stress, and he was born 600 light years away in the near vicinity of Betelgeuse. (*Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2* 32-33)

Note this does not specify the origin of one's species, only of one's birth. This connection, when paired with the meaninglessness of the universe, becomes a farce in itself; while Ford drunkenly asks for directions home to Betelgeuse before he rescues Arthur from Earth (21-22), he never again attempts to return home. The loss of Arthur's connection to a home is what inspires the darkest moments of *Hitchhiker's Novel MH*, where Arthur travels aimlessly in hyperspace, almost as if he hopes he himself will disappear at some point. In light of an infinite universe to explore, Arthur displaces the expectation of the adventurous explorer in favour of the pathetically funny lonely man. Even Backup Earth cannot restore this connection, as Arthur and Fenchurch can both feel the break between Earth Prime and Backup Earth. This connection also gives a false sense of meaning; Arthur believes finding a new connection like it will create meaning for him. As his daughter Random Dent was born on a spaceship, she never experienced this connection, and has always been subject to the universe's meaninglessness. However, unlike Arthur, this means she has the ability to one day accept the universe on its own terms, and perhaps join in with the joke, rather than being the butt of it, as Arthur is.

The third rule of *Hitchhiker's* is computers and androids are more trouble than they are worth, and will be so helpful they are unhelpful, or impossible to deal with. This is because in a meaningless universe, the intended purpose of computers and androids must always be displaced for the sake of humour and pratfalls. In SF, the sentient computer or android is usually seen as both a marvel and a danger; Adams displaces this by making

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102 This will be explored further in Chapter Three.
all artificial intelligences either unhelpful or downright perversely helpful. Marvin is perhaps the most impressive example of this, as a service robot inexplicably supplied with "a brain the size of a planet" (*Hitchhiker's Radio* 45). Marvin should be marvellous and wise, seeking to better the universe and enjoy all of life with his giant brain; instead Adams displaces this expectation and presents a manically depressed and sulky robot, who is helpful only as much as he needs to be, at one point not bothering to tell anyone they were boarding a stuntship intended to be destroyed simply because they did not specifically ask that (*Hitchhiker's Novel REU* 252). Every attempt made to cheer Marvin up goes awry because Marvin's boredom can never be alleviated, and his depression will never lift, and is actually contagious; in *Hitchhiker's Novels*, he is responsible for the suicides of a police ship and a sentient bridge (*Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2* 148, *LUE* 348-350), and when hooked up to the Krikkiters' system, leaves them sufficiently depressed they perform quadratic equations and sulk rather than going into battle (432-433). Marvin is not behaving as the Krikkiters would have wished:

The Krikkit robots which had salvaged this pathetic metal creature from the swamps of Squonshellous Zeta had recognized almost immediately its gigantic intelligence, and the use which this could be to them.

They hadn't reckoned with the attendant personality disorders, which the coldness, the darkness, the dampness, the crampedness and the loneliness were doing nothing to decrease.

It was not happy with its task.

Apart from anything else, the mere coordination of an entire planet's military strategy was taking up only a tiny part of its formidable mind, and the rest of it had become extremely bored. Having solved all the major
mathematical, physical, chemical, biological, sociological, philosophical, etymological, meteorological and psychological problems of the Universe except his own, three times over, he was severely stuck for something to do, and had taken up composing short dolorous ditties of no tone, or indeed tune. The latest one was a lullaby. (434)

Marvin is one of the most powerful beings in *Hitchhiker's*, able to read the Question from Arthur's mind (*Hitchhiker's Novel REU* 249), and capable of outwitting all other robots, convincing a battle machine to shoot the floor out from under itself (186-189). The scene with the battle machine is a beautifully constructed joke; Marvin is sent against it with no weapons, and, knowing he cannot defeat it physically, begins a guessing game as to what weapons he does have, causing this effect in the battle machine: "Molecule-sized electronic relays deep in its micro-brain flipped backwards and forwards in consternation" (186). The battle machine was not designed for guessing, but takes to it happily, naming some of his favourite weapons, only for Marvin to point out it is not taking into account the relationship between men and robots, and he has, of course, been left there with nothing to defend himself (187-188). The irony of this particular exchange is Marvin's mind is a far more powerful weapon than the battle machine's guns; he makes it so angry on his behalf, the machine shoots out two walls and the floors in its frustration (188-189). The displacement of this scene is Marvin's reaction; rather than pride at his outwitting the machine, he finds it "depressingly stupid", and trudges away despondently (189). His defeat of the battle machine is, for Marvin, as menial a task as every other he has been asked to do. The prototype personality which causes his manic depression, coupled with his expansive mind and longevity, makes everything too easy for him, and makes him sulky and uncooperative to all but direct orders. Arthur and Trillian's attempt to treat Marvin with English politeness are constantly rebuffed by Marvin's inability to take a
compliment. He is also nigh-indestructible, claiming to be thirty-seven times older than the universe before his death at the Final Message (Hitchhiker's Novel MH 586). Marvin's disorders can be used to explain the personalities of the rest of the artificial intelligences on The Heart of Gold: unlike Marvin, they are not overly intelligent, with each door given an individual task, and programmed to enjoy it. The Genuine People Personalities are unanimously sycophantic and irritating to the organic crewmembers, and will not follow orders; on the Heart of Gold, the doors will not stop sighing with contentment from being opened (Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2 74), while in the Guide buildings, the elevators are suffering existential crises and attempting to sulk in basements because they are unable to go sideways (Hitchhiker's Novel REU 182-183). Even the computer on the immortal Wowbagger's ship, rather than having gained wisdom from its own virtual immortality, is gleefully partaking in Wowbagger's alphabetical tour of insults through creation (Hitchhiker's Novel LUE 314-315). The final computer of Hitchhiker's, the Guide Mark II, capable of seeing into all possible worlds, is interested only in destroying all versions of Earth; rather than being a help to humanity, as much SF would speculate, the near omnipotent Mark II is displaced to humanity's end, cooperating with the Vogons to destroy all Earths. This is also a displacement of the Guide's function throughout the series; as Arthur's indirect saviour through Ford, the Guide has always been the element which saves Arthur's life, but in the end, it brings him back to Earth to be destroyed with all of mankind.

The fourth rule is: the Drive will generate staggering coincidences, but will not necessarily achieve the infinite improbability of which it is capable. Zaphod early on complains the Drive never reaches infinite improbability, and it is never shown to do so, with the transformation of the Magrathean missiles into a whale and a bowl of petunias achieved at an improbability factor of "eight million, seven hundred and sixty seven

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thousand, one hundred and twenty eight to one against" (Hitchhiker's Radio 47, 59). However, the Drive is disrupting the universe; being all places at once makes the universe the size of The Heart of Gold; as the universe is unable to pass up on a joke, it is only to expected some things are put back incorrectly. By Hitchhiker's Novel MH, the Drive it is known to have caused massive disruptions to history, making the improbably probable and disrupting the entire universe:

'Listen,' said Trillian again. 'I left you because I went to cover a war for the network. It was extremely dangerous. At least, I thought it was going to be. I arrived and the war had suddenly ceased to happen. There was a time anomaly and... listen! Please listen! A reconnaissance battleship had failed to turn up, the rest of the fleet was scattered in some farcical disarray. It's happening all the time now.' (774).

We may note the use of the word farcical; Adams himself identifies what his subcreation is built on. Trillian goes on to claim hardly anyone has a home anymore, and it is because of the Improbability Drive; the universe's joke on the meaninglessness of life has become physically embodied in the Drive, and it is destroying any sense of stability, and very pointedly, home, in the universe. It is this damage which prevents infinite improbability; if high improbability can do so much damage to the fabric of all things, infinite improbability will likely unravel it completely. The danger of the chaos of infinite improbability is a reflection of how comedy must be constructed; it must only appear chaotic, but must be tightly controlled. Infinite improbability is actual chaos, and, as such, the most destructive force in Hitchhiker's.

The fifth rule is there are Plural zones, and individuals from those zones are subject to universal whims and travel by hyperspace at their own risk (Hitchhiker's Novel MH 646-647). Earth is in ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha, and because of this, Fenchurch disappears from
existence on a hyperspace trip (647). By the term Plural zones, and from the other Earths of *Hitchhiker's Novel MH*, it can be understood these are areas of the universe in which multiple possible worlds are overlapping and coexisting. In a deleted excerpt from *Hitchhiker's Radio*, Ford tells Arthur there are multiple Earths existing simultaneously, but in order to live happily on one, Arthur would need to find the difference from his own; to fail to do so would drive him mad (Gaiman *Don't Panic* 41-43). So even though Arthur is an inhabitant of a Plural zone, he cannot mentally survive in another version of his Earth. The Plural zones also cause problems for the Vogons; despite their efforts to destroy the Earth, multiple versions remain stubbornly in place, presumably preventing the building of a hyperspace bypass. Rather than playing an endless Whack a Mole game with the various Earths, the Vogons instead opt to destroy all of them in one go. This also destroys any hope of the computer program finally solving the Ultimate Question, thus explaining the universal joke and, by ruining the joke through explanation, destroying the comedy engine of the universe. The meaninglessness of life is reinforced through these Plural zones; their inhabitants have multiple probabilities to explore, but are unable to fit comfortably in any others.

The sixth rule is planets can be manufactured, provided there is enough funding available. Far from the majesty of natural planet building, the Magratheans take all the mystery out of the origins of planets, constructing them manually on their factory floor. This undermines every planetary landscape in the series, as it impossible to know which were natural and which were constructed by the Magratheans. Adams's worldbuilding includes literal worldbuilding, dependent upon the economy of the galaxy. Slartibartfast seems genuinely unconcerned at Magrathea's part in collapsing the galactic economy through the sale of luxury planets; indeed, it is implied, as Magrathea's services were at full
use in the days of the former Galactic Empire, they were the ones who destroyed the old ideals, reminiscent of both *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*:

Mighty starships plied their way between exotic suns, seeking adventure and reward amongst the furthest reaches of Galactic space. In those days spirits were brave, the stakes were high, men were real men, women were real women, and small furry creatures from Alpha Centauri were real small furry creatures from Alpha Centauri. And all dared to brave unknown terrors, to do mighty deeds, to boldly split infinitives that no man had split before - and thus was the Empire forged. (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 53).

All the usual trappings of space opera - which will be examined further in Chapter Three - are displaced and undone by the Magratheans, who were, at the same time, responsible for the construction of the greatest computer in the history of creation: the Earth. Literal worldbuilding is then utterly damaging to the economies of *Hitchhiker's*, and, through the risk inherent in bringing the Question and Answer together by constructing the Earth, a danger to the engine of the universe itself.

The seventh rule is if it is amusing and serves the joke, it will happen through the twinning of defamiliarisation and displacement, upending not only the SF expectations the audience is carrying, but also their comedic expectations. *Hitchhiker's* relies on these displaced expectations making the audience laugh: this can be seen with Arthur's words "I seem to be having this tremendous difficulty with my lifestyle" causing a bloody war, with both fleets eventually eaten by a small dog on Earth (*Hitchhiker's Radio* 81). The punchlines are the most important element of *Hitchhiker's*; without them, the universe cannot complete its comedic purpose; thus the final punchline is the Grebulon leader's dissatisfaction with destroying Earth, despite feeling it was the right thing to do (*Hitchhiker's Novel MH* 776). This is a displacement of the destruction of Earth for a
practical or sensible purpose, and of the point of all Arthur's journeys. Earth's final
destruction, with Arthur, Ford, and Trillian on it, not only makes Arthur's struggles to stay
alive and find meaning ultimately pointless, but it also fails to serve the Grebulon leader's
interest:

In spite of having taken what he regarded as an extremely positive piece of
action, the Grebulon Leader ended up having a very bad month after all. It
was pretty much the same as all the previous months except that there was
now nothing on the television any more. He put on a little light music
instead. (776).

Even though he is now missing the entertainment he once had, the Grebulon leader
still does not particularly care; Earth, in the end, was utterly meaningless to him, and to
everyone in the universe. Further examples of the combination of defamiliarisation and
displacement are Agrajag's reincarnations and Arthur's ability to fly; both are nonsensical
in the Primary World, but perfectly acceptable in Hitchhiker's; it is Fenchurch's forgotten
realisation of the meaninglessness of the universe, and thus of physical laws, which causes
her strange condition in Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF, namely that her feet do not touch the
ground (542). Knowing the universe is ridiculous, even on a subconscious level, allows her
to manipulate it at least a little. The Bartledanians appear to share this knowledge of the
joke, but they refuse to participate in it; knowing the universe, and therefore life, is
meaningless, the Bartledanians have stopped wanting anything, to the point where they can
accidentally die of thirst or starvation (Hitchhiker's Novel MH 675). By not wanting
anything, they deny the universe an opportunity to make them straight men or foils, and are
impervious to the joke, although Arthur's attempts to integrate into their culture are
hilarious to the audience, if not to anyone else involved.
Perhaps the ultimate example of this rule is the Ultimate Answer and Question; their mismatch is hilarious in itself, but their exact nature is equally ridiculous: rather than deep judgements about life, they make up a broken equation.\textsuperscript{103} This is far more amusing than if Deep Thought had said, for example, "sausages". Both sausages and forty-two are odd non sequiturs for an Answer, but the number is far more ridiculous because forty-two can be an answer to far more questions than sausages could. It is also, out of context, utterly meaningless, as almost all numbers are. These are all jokes that the universe is enforcing on the subcreation. The nature of the joke on the meaninglessness of life means these smaller jokes are often cruel to varying degrees, making much of the humour superiority humour, and more often than not making Arthur the butt of these jokes. There are even suggestions of other jokes not seen in the text, as when Arthur Dent early on gives the audience what Lynn calls a "tip-of-the-iceberg line", suggesting a complicated story or situation behind it (76): "This must be Thursday. I never could get the hang of Thursdays" (Adams \textit{Hitchhiker's Radio} 22). Presumably, over the course of many Thursdays, the universe has conspired to make things so strange, confusing or distressing for Arthur Dent that he is compelled to give one of the most iconic lines of the series. The jokes of \textit{Hitchhiker's} then did not begin for Arthur when the series begins; they have always been there, frustrating his attempts to find meaning in his life.

Once Adams established these rules in \textit{Hitchhiker's}, they do not deviate, as Adams obeys the comedy setup he has created, even though this cost him to have serious problems with plotting (Gaiman \textit{Don't Panic} 114-115). However, following these rules is not simple: because Adams has written anomalies such as reincarnation and unassisted flight by heavier than air creatures into the laws of the universe, he must maintain total control over them, and over the jokes they are a part of. Flying, in particular, appears to end on a

\textsuperscript{103} If simple mathematics do not work it is clearly an absurd universe.
displacement joke in *Hitchhiker's Novel LUE*, as Arthur takes up flying again on Krikkit, and learns to speak to birds; but rather than hearing anything interesting, he finds them "fantastically boring" (458). The irony of this is the birds are speaking about "wind speed, wing spans, power-to-weight ratios and a fair bit about berries" (458). If Arthur's flight were dependent on his knowledge of aerodynamics, he would have been fascinated, but as it is merely part of the universal joke, he only finds it boring and gives up flying to avoid it (458). The absurdities of *Hitchhiker's* should allow Adams total freedom to do whatever he wished; however, it in fact curtailed him into following the strict laws not only of comedy but of his own creation (Gaiman *Don't Panic* 115). If Adams were to release control of the text, it would become nothing but chaos, and cease to be humorous, becoming nothing more than a confusion of events which made no sense. As Lynn says, "Farce dramatises chaos but it is not in itself chaotic" (6) because it cannot afford to be. Chaos in this comedic SF subcreation must obey the rules Adams created for it; as can be seen from the Drive's destabilisation of the universe through chaos, Adams does not consider chaos funny. Like all comedy writers, Adams knows comedy must be controlled in order to encourage the audience to laugh.

Having identified the rules of *Hitchhiker's* in general, the effects of these laws on the landscapes of the series should further inform us of the nature of *Hitchhiker's* and how Adams's worldbuilding applies in practise. To this end, three types of landscapes will be examined in the remainder of this thesis: Chapter Two will examine all versions of Earth, Chapter Three will discuss spaceships as landscapes, and Chapter Four will investigate alien worlds. As a subcreation built on defamiliarisation and displacement, Adams's landscapes each carry their own literary/cultural significance, but all hearken back to a single landscape, one perpetually lost in literature: Arcadia. The return to Arcadia is the
return to a meaningful existence; thus every landscape in *Hitchhiker's* represents a lost or ruined Arcadia, beginning, as we shall see in the next Chapter, with Earth itself.
Chapter Two:

Destroying Arcadia
"And that will be England gone,
The shadows, the meadows, the lanes,
The guildhalls, the carved choirs.
There'll be books; it will linger on
In galleries; but all that remains
For us will be concrete and tires."

"Going Going" (Larkin 190).

it was always the inherited tradition, reaching back to the myths of Arcadia, Pan's fertile realm populated with nympha and satyrs, that made landscape out of mere geology and vegetation. (emphasis in original, Schama 12)

There are five versions of Earth in *Hitchhiker's*: Earth Prime, destroyed at the beginning of each media incarnation; Prehistoric Earth; Backup Earth, appearing only in *Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF*; NowWhat, an alternate Earth in *Hitchhiker's Novel MH*; and the Earth where Tricia McMillan did not leave with Zaphod Beeblebrox to become Trillian, referred to henceforth as Earth X, also in *Hitchhiker's Novel MH*. The Earths in *Hitchhiker's* serve a very specific function; they act not only as utopias, idealised places which remain problematic, as discussed in the Introduction, but specifically as Arcadias, representations of a perfect landscape which is continually lost to Arthur. In light of this function of the various Earths, this chapter will first examine the landscapes of Earth Prime as it functions as the setup for the joke and the original Arcadia. Earth Prime is initially
presented in the narrative by Adams in *Hitchhiker's Radio, TV, Novel, Film, and Game*, and this chapter will examine the literary and social influences on its construction, and how they are then integrated into the comedy/SF subcreation. It will then consider Prehistoric Earth, Backup Earth, NowWhat, and Earth X, to understand how Adams sustains the joke set up by Earth Prime.

The landscape of Earth Prime is centered on Britain, and for Roy Strong, "landscape runs through the centuries as an emblem of England not for its actuality but as a vehicle for a complex of ideas and emotions" (*Visions of England* 11). Strong attributes the conflation of the British countryside with Arcadia to Edmund Spenser's and Sir Philip Sidney's adaptations of classical arcadies to the Elizabethan English landscape (11). Arcadia, as will be discussed further later in this chapter, is a place lost to the past, and cannot be returned to, an ideal which can be as universal as that envisioned by the Romantics and novelists such as Thomas Hardy (150-157), and as personal as Arthur's home. The British Arcadia is one constructed entirely through literature and art (20); as such, it is a constructed landscape, one no less artificial than any the Magratheans built. It is this constructed British landscape Adams interrogates and points out to the audience through his Earths, embodying the meaninglessness of life in the artificiality of the concept of British landscape.

David Daiches and John Flower stress the importance of landscape to literature, both in terms of understanding the landscape the author grew up in and the landscape they committed to fiction (7-8). While some authors will attempt to immerse the audience in a detailed landscape, others will presume the audience will fill in any blanks with their own landscape. Importantly for this study, Daiches and Flower do not presume the authors are presenting an entirely mimetic landscape, but rather an artificial one constructed from the

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104 The comic books are excluded as Adams insisted on them being a direct translation from the first book, and there is no new material which was not directly influenced by Adams.
specific but shaped by needs of plot, atmosphere, and theme (149). Daiches and Flower also say "any great work of literary imagination has its own life and can be appreciated without a knowledge of the precise places and objects associated with its composition" (7) though their argument goes on to state their belief that, for authors such as the Brontës or Thomas Hardy, a knowledge of the settings of their novels enhances their reading; the same argument could be made for the sociocultural and literary contexts, as all of these provide the knowledgeable reader with, as it were, inside information. Similarly, Jacob Lothe describes Hardy's Wessex as "an imaginary space whose characteristic features are derived in large part from the topography, history and ways of living in this part of Britain in the mid-nineteenth century" (5). However, it is not the apparent realism of fictional landscapes, but rather their obvious fictionality which concerns this thesis. As Conrad-O'Briain says in her forthcoming article on Connie Willis, the British fictional countryside is constructed throughout the literary canon, providing enough material for Willis to set novels in a convincing Britain which is essentially a bookland ("Bookland"). This is significant in Hitchhiker's as all versions of Earth are not only inspired by a literary Britain, but are literal constructions by the Magratheans. A literary landscape is not only physical, composed of topography, geology, and the local ecosystem, but also shaped by society and culture and the needs of any narratives set within it. The landscape also shapes the audience's expectations of what can or will happen in a text; we should not be surprised to find a mad first wife locked up in the attic in a Gothic landscape as in Jane Eyre but it would be out of place in a comedy of manners set in a bucolic countryside written by Jane Austen. The landscapes of Jane Eyre and Austen's novels, while both British, reflect the generic norms of the novels; Jane Eyre's events take place in a grim orphanage and a daunting manor, while the Austen novels are typically set in charming villages and country estates, as in Pride and Prejudice, or resorts such as Bath, as in Persuasion. However, as
with the blurred lines between genres, Jane Austen manages to blur the lines between her works and the Gothic, with the heroine of *Northanger Abbey* hopefully interpreting everything in her life as if it were a Gothic novel because she loves to read them. This is not only a play on Gothic expectations, but also appeals to the informed reader, who, knowing the conventions of the Gothic novel, would enjoy their subversion in *Northanger Abbey*. Thus, to fully understand and appreciate Adams's constructions of his Earths, it is necessary to understand the literary and social contexts he was working from. It is also worth observing that subversion of the landscape expectation has a history, as in the *Star Trek* episode "Shore Leave", in which the Eden-like planet encountered by the crew turns out to be not only potentially dangerous, but home to a technologically advanced species; like *Hitchhiker's* the Eden in "Shore Leave" is constructed, in this case in the hope of pleasing the crew, but a misunderstanding leads to mayhem and temporary deaths.

Adams's own literary formation, particularly in the representation of landscapes, is important. Landscape descriptions have their origins not only in fiction, but also in early verbal maps, which were somewhat different from the modern topographical/geographical map. In verbal mapping, landscape is experienced as a narrative, describing journeys, boundaries, and histories. Nicholas Howe says "a sense of place was far more likely to have been created, transmitted, and preserved in Anglo-Saxon England through the use of language than through any type of visual representation" (3). A verbal map would describe a route through a countryside using landmarks familiar to inhabitants, but also immediately recognisable to visitors, and there were legal implications, as verbal maps also served as boundary descriptions, and accurate descriptions of places and landmarks were necessary to establish and maintain land ownership rights using boundary clauses (MacFarlane 18-22). The earliest pictorial maps of England widely published, compiled by Christopher Saxton, also contained verbal elements, though of a more artistic nature, with a brief
descriptive couplet for each county (Strong *Visions* 20-21). While many texts can and do use pictorial maps to supplement their verbal mapmaking, with *The Lord of the Rings* perhaps the best known example, the texts themselves are a verbal map of the secondary creation.105 As a thick text set in multiple media, *Hitchhiker's* uses both visual and verbal tools in constructing landscape; this changes the presentation of the landscape, though usually not the intended meaning, with Arthur's house in *Hitchhiker's TV* as the rare exception, which will be discussed later. The different media do not change Adams's worldbuilding, as all versions of *Hitchhiker's* must obey the natural laws of the subcreation. However, Adams never provides more detail than is necessary to sketch out his universe; this frees the audience to fill in the gaps based on their own literary, physical, and sociocultural experiences. It is the shared sociocultural knowledge of the *Hitchhiker's* audience which assists in Adams's worldbuilding by way of certain shared references; by trusting the audience to fill in the spaces he has left, he relies on them to assist in his worldbuilding.

A modern comedic example of relying on the audience's own sociocultural expectations is the series *Yes, Minister*, which, according to co-writer Lynn, was often seen as representing the current administration by the public, when the first season at least was based on the previous administration (Lynn 108). This was deliberate; aware they were satirising government, and that they could be accused of satirising the government, the writers were careful to create plausible deniability by focusing not on specific issues of the day but on the nature of government and its forms (117-118).106 They were aided in this by the cyclical nature of politics; invariably the same issues such as education, employment,

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105 This presupposes competency and consistency on the part of the author in their descriptions of the subcreation.
106 They did not go entirely unnoticed; both writers were subject to repeated audits from British Revenue (Lynn 124-125).
immigration, health, and foreign policy, arise again and again (117-118). Comedy, as a heightened or ludicrous version of the Primary World, is understood by the audience not to be in the same world as they are, despite any appearances to the contrary; comedy reflects and amplifies the trivialities of the real world, and this amplification gives comedy an obvious fictionality. Thus the audience would have been aware that while Yes, Minister seemed to be set in the Primary World, it was a fictionalised narrative, like The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville (66-67). SF set in the present can occupy the same "other" space, a world which is nearly mapped on to the Primary World and not quite, for some value of not quite (Conrad O'Briain "Bookland"). Like comedy, SF is also timeless in its themes, with concerns about the nature of science and dystopia/utopia representing only a modern recurrence of topics once handled by theologians and philosophers.

The careful incorporation into fiction of social constructs interacting with the physical world obviously or subconsciously is even more important when the world/worlds increasingly relies on imagination and extrapolation, and so moving away from mundane reality. Adams moves into pure secondary creation through spaceships and alien worlds after destroying Earth Prime, but like Yes, Minister, his Earth Prime is both real and imagined, a what-if Earth intended to be what might be; it bears a close enough relationship to the Primary World that its destruction has an effect on the audience. However, Adams's de-construction of Earth Prime is both violent and literal; not only is Earth Prime destroyed physically, but its very concept is destabilised with the revelation of its true origins as a Magrathean construction. Earth Prime's creation and destruction is constructed in the same way as the alien landscapes of Hitchhiker's. The entire series refers

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107 They were also aided by their contacts in the Civil Service, who gave them accurate information on how political matters were handled (119-120).
108 With the apparent exception of British Revenue, who audited the writers of Yes, Minister (Lynn 124).
109 Stargate SG-1 may be the most notable example of this phenomenon; although the series ran from 1997 to 2007, the 2001 attack on the Twin Towers and its consequences were never referenced, despite it ostensibly being set in the primary world.
110 It should be noted there is a difference between this and cyclical narrative, which can be seen in the 50th anniversary special of Doctor Who, in which the Doctor's quest returned to his original desire to return home.
back to the destruction of Earth Prime; it permeates all of Arthur's experiences, and remains the elephant in the narrative, even on Prehistoric Earth, Backup Earth, NowWhat, and Earth X. Earth Prime for Arthur, and by extension the audience, is the most important landscape in the series, infinitely more so once it ceases to exist. Certainly everything which happens to Arthur, and on a lesser scale, to Ford, is the result of Earth's destruction. Arthur's obsession with Earth Prime is the key to understanding the overarching theme of *Hitchhiker's*: in a meaningless universe, the story of returning home, of finding the lost Arcadia, is impossible. Home is embodied in the landscape of Earth Prime, with both *Hitchhiker's TV* and *Film* panning across the planet to reinforce the terrible silence soon to follow. However, the notion of home, and a place where one belongs, could be considered a type of meaning; in *Hitchhiker's* meaning is impossible and ludicrous; thus the very notion of home must be made both comedic and impossible. All other landscapes become mockeries of home, places where everything represented by home is, to some extent, out of phase. This is particularly evident in Arthur's inability to settle on any alternate Earth, as discussed later in this chapter.

This preoccupation with a lost home could be traced back to Adams's own unstable home life (Jem Roberts 9-14), but it is equally traceable to the British literary canon, which portrays a Britain which never really existed, but is the desired landscape of the British psyche and the image of Britain as experienced through literature and, arguably, and interestingly in reference to this study, tourist guides.111 The same could be suggested of the landscapes of any country's fiction; they represent the countries as filtered through a complicated series of assumptions, ideals, and ideologies - the necessities of state formation. Literary Britain and its inhabitants, Adams accepted, is as much a construction as any alien world, just as Arthur himself is a literary construction. Adams has described

111 To some extent, it can also be understood through *The Lord of the Rings*, whose landscapes, particularly the Shire, are reminiscent of British landscapes.
Arthur not as being based on himself, as many presumed, but rather his conception of what an average English man is (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio CD* Disc 8 Track 7).\(^\text{112}\) Arthur as the conception of the average Englishman derives as much from literature, theatre, and television as it is from life; Arthur's retirement to the countryside could be seen as a nod to and parody of the return of the formerly dispossessed, whether cotter or squire, while his perpetual perplexed amazement is based on Adams's own view of the world (Disc 8 Track 7).\(^\text{113}\) However, as with all aspects of *Hitchhiker's*, Adams places a comedy displacement on Arthur, offsetting the audience's expectations of the English explorer; as one of the first generation of Englishmen without an Empire, Arthur is not interested in either exploration or conquest, but is yet another example of the English preoccupation with a return to the land. Similarly, Trillian, whom the audience assumes is intended to fit the mould of the romantic heroine, consistently fails to be interested Arthur as the hero of the piece and he in her. This displacement of literary tradition is constant throughout the text; Adams never meets expectations of either an SF or comedy audience, denying the SF audience the glorious salvation of Earth Prime, which robs the comedy audience of the return to the status quo normally promised by farce. The almost flippant destruction of Earth Prime displaces traditional SF expectations of the importance of Earth in the galaxy, particularly in its description at the beginning of Fit the Second:

> Far out in the uncharted backwaters of the unfashionable end of the Western spiral arm of the Galaxy lies a small unregarded yellow sun. Orbiting this at a distance of roughly ninety million miles is an utterly insignificant little blue-green planet whose ape-descended life forms are so amazingly

\(^{112}\) *After Hitchhiker's Radio*, Arthur continues to resemble Simon Jones's performance of him, as Adams admired it so much he wrote all other versions with Jones in mind (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio CD* Disc 8 Track 7).

\(^{113}\) This sense of fascination makes Arthur the perfect Innocent Abroad for Adams, and allows him to comment on things other characters would not.
primitive that they still think digital watches are a pretty neat idea. (Adams

*Hitchhiker's Radio* 35)

This insignificant Earth Prime is markedly different from popular Earth-centric SF, such as *Star Trek*, in which the Earth is the centre of an interplanetary Federation. In addition, Earth Prime is revealed in *Hitchhiker's* to be a literal construction, a means to finding the meaning of life, the universe, and everything, at which it is a dismal failure. Earth Prime in *Hitchhiker's* is not important in and of itself, but only in how others use it. Humanity's abilities are nothing compared with the rest of the universe, hence the Vogons' disgust at humans not bothering to visit Alpha Centauri to see the hyperspace plans (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 25). It is this emphasis on the insignificance of Earth which makes it so important to Adams's worldbuilding, for in draining its quality, glory, and meaning, or at least our definition of such, it is undone, and denies meaning to all other homes. The difference between Arthur and everyone else is the meaninglessness bothers Arthur, while no one else cares. The very idea of home is presented as a human preoccupation; Ford and Zaphod never make any attempt to return to their homes, while even Trillian rejects Earth Prime before its destruction. Home, Adams implies, is only a human construct. Arthur's home is a microcosm of the planet; it represents everything familiar and what he wants out of life. When Prosser describes the house as "not a particularly nice house", Arthur says he happens to like it, but never denies the accusation (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 19). The house shares the shabbiness of Earth Prime, and indeed Arthur's relationships, but it is all Arthur has, and so it has value, which the rest of the universe does not share. It is, for Arthur, Arcadia, which is a further displacement of SF expectations, in which utopia is often a more likely location than Arcadia. Utopia is a perfect society, often set in a city or else culturally centered upon one, while Arcadia is usually set in the countryside. Utopia is also forward looking, typically set in the future, as
with Earth in *Star Trek*, or else a work in progress, as in Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*. By comparison, Arcadia is in the past, the place lost which cannot be found again. Suvin connects SF to the pastoral in sharing SF themes, particularly its "imaginary framework of a world without money-economy, state apparatus, and depersonalizing urbanization", with some SF absorbing pastoral themes, such as the "triumph of the humble" (9). *Hitchhiker's*, with its beginning set in a bucolic English countryside, is an SF pastoral, with the destruction of Earth representing the traditional loss of Arcadia.

Marinelli describes the pastoral as "the art of the backward glance, and Arcadia from its creation the product of wishful and melancholy longing. The pastoral poet reverses the process (and the 'progress') of history" (9). The pastoral reaches towards a nostalgic past which, even if it existed once, cannot be revisited. Hume groups the pastoral with escapist literature such as mysteries and pornography, which "offer the reader the chance to relax in hospitable and flattering realms" (xiii), though she does claim some pastorals, along with some picaresques\(^1\) and novels, simultaneously attempt to avoid fantasy while providing escapism (25). The pastoral can be marked by a tendency to ignore the realities of country living, providing "a convenient way of writing about life in the country without facing up to the unpleasant harshness of rural labour" (Picot viii), in keeping with the concerns Hume identifies as "sensory experience and escape from responsibility" (60), although authors such as Theocritus and Virgil do not always neglect a strand of reality. To view the harshness of rural labour as demeaning, and unworthy, is to undermine the pastoral’s escapist intent.

The pastoral is a particularly productive landscape in the worldbuilding of *Hitchhiker's*. In fact, it could be argued it is the foundational landscape of all of *Hitchhiker's*, and it is to a pastoral, however non-standard, that Adams returns again and

\(^1\) *Hitchhiker's* could also be interpreted as a picaresque, though for the purpose of studying its worldbuilding its pastoral elements are of more interest.
again. Arthur is a pastoral hero, as his relocation to the countryside is to escape London, which made him "nervous and irritable" (Adams Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2 17), albeit a comic one; unlike the traditional shepherd, Arthur is working at a radio station, though he did have a dog, and his plan for the day of Earth's destruction is something of a middle class pastoral, namely reading and brushing the dog (Adams Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2 58). However, Adams's pastoral is far from Marinelli's description of a world in which the "golden haze diffused through its summer air is ultimately a long reflection of the intenser light of the golden age" (Marinelli 37). Arthur's pastoral is instead closely related to the Arcadia of Virgil's First Eclogue, which rebooted and politicised the form. However unlike the beautiful countryside of the First Eclogue, Arthur's house is his Arcadia: a landscape under threat by the endless march of progress and political decision, as represented by the bypass about to run through Arthur's house (Hitchhiker's Radio 18-19). As Simon Schama points out:

though environmental history offers some of the most original and challenging history now being written, it inevitably tells the same dismal tale: of land taken, exploited, exhausted; of traditional cultures said to have lived in a relation of sacred reverence with the soil displaced by the reckless individualist, the capitalist aggressor (13)

The capitalist aggressor in this case is the local council, disregarding those whose lives will be upended to save others a few minutes' journey. Arthur and Virgil's Meliboeus share the same enemy in the government, and are both unable to save their homes. While Meliboeus has no one to complain to, or at least no one who will act - unlike Titirus (Virgil 27) - Arthur's objections are foiled by the council "advertising" the bypass plans in the basement, "on display in the bottom of a locked filing cabinet stuck in a disused lavatory with a sign on the door saying 'Beware of the Leopard'" (Adams Hitchhiker's Radio 19).
Both are denied dignity and left essentially destitute, though Meliboeus at least has his flock, while Arthur only has his dressing gown and towel. Unlike the First Eclogue, in which Arcadia has already been lost, at least for Meliboeus, Adams shows Earth Prime's actual destruction. However, instead of making the opening scenes dramatic, Adams makes them humorous; Prosser is the perfect foil for Arthur, as neither can take the other seriously. The addition of Prosser's ancestral line to Genghis Khan in *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2* further emphasises Arthur's inability to stand against the council (18). While Prosser may not be as formidable as Khan, his tactics are as effective. For Arthur, the imperfect landscape is something to be loved, regardless of its shabbiness, while Prosser considers it necessary to change the landscape to something more functional, serving both the government's needs and his. The shabbiness of Arthur's house is reminiscent of Meliboeus's cottage "with its turf-clad roof" (Virgil 29), though the latter might sound much more appealing when compared to the post-war austerity monstrosity described in *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2*:

> The house stood on a slight rise just on the edge of the village. It stood on its own and looked out over a broad spread of West Country farmland. Not a remarkable house by any means - it was about thirty years old, squattish, squarish, made of brick, and had four windows set in the front of a size and proportion which more or less exactly failed to please the eye... On Wednesday night it had rained very heavily, the lane was wet and muddy, but the Thursday morning sun was bright and clear as it shone on Arthur Dent's house for what was to be the last time. (Adams 17)

Neither Arthur nor Meliboeus are rich men and their houses, while humble, are valuable to them on many levels. Arthur's house in particular could be any house on any lane anywhere in the British countryside. However, there is a significant difference between the
house as described in *Hitchhiker's Radio* and *Novel*, and the house as it appears in the TV series, as shown in fig. 2:

![Fig. 2. David Dixon as Ford Prefect in front of Arthur Dent's house in *Hitchhiker's TV.*](image)

While the house of *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2* is a utility house built in the late 1940s as an attempt to speed up the restoration of the British housing stock after the Second World War, the house in *Hitchhiker's TV* is actually a traditional half-timbered house, possibly even listed, and worth lying in front of a bulldozer for, as compared to the descriptions in all other versions. It also elicits a different reaction from Mr Prosser, who in every other version says "It's not as if it's a particularly nice house", a line conspicuously absent from *Hitchhiker's TV*, in which Prosser does not say anything about the house. Given the animosity between Adams and *Hitchhiker's TV* director Bell over virtually all aspects of production (Gaiman *Don't Panic* 75-98), it is impossible to know who is responsible for this difference; however,
it changes the view of Arthur's house, and by connotation, Earth Prime, significantly. Arthur is not trying to protect what others see as a dump, but a house with actual value, not only to him, and one which represents human history; it is the microcosm of all Earth. As the destruction of Arthur's house is the small scale representation of the destruction of Earth, it is implied there is value to Earth in *Hitchhiker's TV* after all, but, like Mr Prosser, the universe does not care about destroying something beautiful to create a bypass. The half-timbered house therefore serves as an unfortunate break in the overall joke on the meaninglessness of life. *Hitchhiker's Film*, taking the first novel's description of Arthur's house to heart, comes much closer to Adams's intention as can be seen in fig. 3:

![Image of Arthur's House surrounded by bulldozers](image-url)

**Fig. 3. Arthur's House surrounded by bulldozers, *Hitchhiker's Film*.**

This is a far more nondescript house, and more in keeping with the joke; it is ridiculous Arthur would be so worked up over its destruction. It is boring and uninteresting, functioning as an Everyplace rather than an actual location, somewhere each member of the audience would imagine differently but with the same level of shabbiness applied. Further, the location makes the demolition of Arthur's house even more ridiculous; given how much empty space there is, the bypass could have gone anywhere. The director and producers found it relatively easy to find a suitable location for Arthur's house:
'Arthur's house comes straight out of the book,' Garth says. 'Our location manager drove around Hertfordshire for two days, and pulled up at the side of the road where he could see this farmhouse. Not only visually was it what I wanted in terms of being ordinary and having fields around it, but 500 yards up the road, it had a farm area with the perfect space for a unit base where you could turn trucks round. There was also a space which was remarkably similar to the house in the book with nothing on it, where they were perfectly happy for us to build Arthur's destroyed house' (Jennings qtd in Stamp 18)

Arthur's house is an Everyplace, like Theocritus's Sicily, which "is little more than a cartographical pretense, a cypher for the locus amoenus with its brooks, its pastures, its groves of oaks and willows, and the occasional beach" (Rosenmeyer 232). Arthur Dent's county is never named in Hitchhiker's, and the name of the village, "Cottington", is clearly not intended to be understood as a real place, and is meant to connect the village to the word "cruddy" (Hitchhiker's Radio 23).115 Indeed, in Hitchhiker's Radio, the village is barely described, leaving it to the audience to fill in any necessary details. There are oblique clues to the landscape: the council want to build a bypass, which means Arthur and the neighbours who protest in Hitchhiker's Radio are most likely on the outskirts of a village, if not in the countryside itself, probably within the encroaching commuter belt of London. While Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2 gives the location of Arthur's house as the West Country (17), implying the bypass is needed for tourism, in Hitchhiker's Film it is filmed in Hertfordshire, north of London, and in Hitchhiker's TV, Arthur's house is filmed in Haywards Heath, Sussex, south of London. Hitchhiker's Computer is not as specific as the novel, but its description of a country lane visible to the south when the "look around"

115 The village is only named in Hitchhiker's Radio (23); Adams clearly intended it to be vague, as he never named it again.
command is given further reinforces a generic country setting (Section 3.1 Earth). However, Adams's West Country identification in *Hitchhiker's Novel* H2G2 upends Daiche and Flower's supposition of author's using their own landscape experiences, as Adams grew up in Essex, much further up the East coast and not nearly so beloved of tourists. This supports the Everyplace Adams was creating, and also the literary construction Adams was aiming for; although he was not from the West Country, he was comfortable enough with the idea of the British countryside to construct it and allow the audience to fill in the rest. Limiting the specific details of landscape dates back to the Homeric epics, where it is impossible to draw a map of the plains in front of Troy, but the audience can construct it from a few landmarks as they wish based on their own experiences (Andersson xxx). The only real place names mentioned in the beginning of *Hitchhiker's* are Guildford, where Ford claims to come from, and Rickmansworth, where Fenchurch solves the Ultimate Question moments before the planet is destroyed. Adams's choice not to name Arthur's specific county, and to only name the village in *Hitchhiker's Radio*, is rooted in more than just the need to create an Everyplace to go with the Everyman Arthur; it is an attempt to represent all of literary Britain. As a graduate of Brentwood Public School and Cambridge, Adams would have been more than familiar with the literary canon, and would have known authors such as Hardy and the Brontës constructed a large part of the British literary concept of landscape, from Hardy's bucolic countryside of under the greenwood tree to the haunting desolation of the heath in *Wuthering Heights*. The countryside of *Hitchhiker's* is intended to appeal not only to the audience living in Britain, but also an audience familiar with the literary constructs of Britain. According to Schama, "inherited landscape myths and memories share two common characteristics: their

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116 According to bibliographic librarian Fiona Colbert, Adams is on record as having studied the following at Cambridge: "Practical Criticism", "Chaucer and/or Shakespeare", "English Lit 1300- (no date given)", "Essay topics", "French Translation", and in 1973 he was originally going to write his dissertation on "Psalm translation – a comparative study" but then changed it to "Paradise Lost". He also studied "Pinter's use of language – stylistic or naturalistic?"
surprising endurance through the centuries and their power to shape institutions that we still live with" (15). Adams thus relies on the audience's knowledge of a literary canon which he can both defamiliarise and displace, such as *The Return of the Native* 's first chapter, which describes Egdon Heath, in a manner which is quintessentially British:

> The face of the heath by its mere complexion added half an hour to evening; it could in like manner retard the dawn, sadden noon, anticipate the frowning of storms scarcely generated, and intensify the opacity of a moonless midnight to a cause of shaking and dread. (Hardy 3)

It is the confluence of imagery which makes Egdon Heath a real place in the mind of the reader; they do not need to visit it to confirm its place on the map. In comparison, Arthur's house and village are not detailed enough to make the area distinctive. *Jane Eyre*, while content to give a description of the landscape, eschews place names entirely, replacing them with names like "____shire", making her locations both place and nonplace; the reader can interpret it as their own landscape if they wish. The literary British countryside is deceptive in its representation of wild nature in Britain, as in *Wuthering Heights*' heath, as there are few areas of Britain free from human interference. Adams is more honest about this, further displacing Arcadian expectations; at no point does his countryside lack for human interference, as from the building of bypasses to the pub, humans are manipulating the landscape. It is this interference from humans, and later from Vogons, which sets Arthur apart from Meliboeus further, and displaces the ultimate pastoral ideal; while Meliboeus might have the chance to see his home again, still owned by a Roman soldier, Arthur's is gone for good, both in the destruction of his house and of Earth. Even Backup Earth, with a backup of Arthur's house, is not sufficient to satisfy Arthur's desire for home, as discussed later in this chapter.
Hitchhiker's also uses another technique as ancient at least as Homeric epic, as they will often use a "single apt impression" to make their point (Andersson 35). In Hitchhiker's, the single apt impression of British culture is created by the pub. Hitchhiker's Radio was revolutionary for its use of background noise, beginning with the low hum of bulldozers when Arthur is trying to save his house, and continuing with the pub, which is filled with the hum of conversation, glasses clinking, and a jukebox (21). The sounds, like Arthur's house, imply this could be any pub in Britain, both equally representative. Hitchhiker's Novel does not describe the pub physically, relying again on sound: "the dull sound of a rumbling crash from outside filtered through the low murmur of the pub, through the sound of the jukebox, through the sound of the man next to Ford hiccupping over the whisky Ford had eventually bought him" (Adams Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2 32). Hitchhiker's Game has more detail:

The pub is pleasant and cheerful and full of pleasant and cheerful people who don't know they've got about twelve minutes to live and are therefore having a spot of lunch. Some music is playing on an old jukebox... Behind the bar is a shelf. It is full of the sort of items you find on shelves behind bars in pubs.

(Adams Hitchhiker's Game Section 3.1 Earth)

Again, Adams provides no identifying details. He is relying on the audience to decide what a British pub looks like. This could be any pub anywhere in the Britain countryside, and Hitchhiker's TV is no more specific, as fig. 4 shows:
Fig. 4. Ford Prefect ordering 6 pints and 4 bags of peanuts in the pub in *Hitchhiker's TV*.

The pub in *Hitchhiker's Film* is similar in appearance, with set designer Kate Beckly declaring it "almost perfect as it was" when the crew first discovered it (qtd in Stamp 19), and fig. 5 is very similar to fig. 4:

Fig. 5. Pub in *Hitchhiker's Film*. 

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What the pub represents is the most important thing: it is the centre of village society. It is homely, and cosy, with a bartender who serves the beer quickly. It is noisy but not rowdy, with snacks readily available. It is an idyllic pub, an Arcadian pub, as it were, the idyll before its destruction. This is the dishrag pastoral, with a bartender endlessly cleaning the glasses when not pulling a pint. As with Arthur's home, and Arthur himself, it is a place recognisable to anyone who has experienced an English pub in real life or in literature. Unlike Arthur's house, which is unusual in that it is about to be knocked down, the pub represents life going on as usual. As the patrons of the pub are not the people protesting the bypass, it can be assumed it has not affected them or their homes. It is a place of safety and security, which Ford's claim of the end of the world upends, and the patrons do not leave even when the Vogons begin their demolition. The pub, in *Hitchhiker's*, serves the same function as the grove does in the pastoral: it is the source of food, water, and safety. The bartender is the first to accept Ford's claim the world is about to end; by calling last orders, he is closing the pub forever, and saying goodbye to all mankind. The last orders call is the most apt impression of Earth before its destruction, encompassing an end to all the cultural norms of the planet.

Jakob Lothe describes Hardy's countryside as "an imaginary space whose characteristic features are derived in large part from the topography, history and ways of living in this part of Britain in the mid-nineteenth century" (5), a landscape which has subsequently been lost. Similarly, Adams's Earth Prime is constructed from the society of the 1970s, which is about to become past with extreme prejudice. The main concern Adams raises with Earth Prime, namely a belief in an uncaring government, the uncaring universe writ small, is a theme which could apply to any period of history, as could many of the other social concerns of the era. Earth is abject, unimportant, and small in the face of the universe. Like Melibeous, Arthur is living in a time and place when the government was difficult to
deny; despite the relative wealth of the period, Arthur is a reflection of Adams's experiences of the 1970s, which were not positive (Gaiman Don't Panic 23). The concerns over industrialisation and the environment, identified by Sandbrook in the Introduction, are also evident in the poetry of the time, such as Philip Larkin's 1972 poem 'Going, going', in which Larkin bemoans the loss of the countryside "except for the tourist parts". Larkin thought it would last my time-

The sense that, beyond the town,

There would always be fields and farms,

Where the village louts could climb

Such trees as were not cut down; (109)

Even in Larkin's idealised countryside, there is the intimation of construction in the landscape, that village louts climbed trees which were not cut down. However, Larkin understands the social construction of the landscape as the physical embodiment of British culture, slowly being changed not by the people themselves but by an uncaring government. The construction of highrises replaces older, and to Larkin, more valuable, constructions on the landscapes, such as the meadows, lanes, and guildhalls mentioned in stanza eight. Further, Larkin says "There'll be books; it will linger on/In galleries" (109); all that will be left of the England built in the past will be its records. Adams speeds this destruction in Hitchhiker's, the demolition of Earth representing the demolition of the Britain of the past.

Adams, like Lynn of Yes, Minister, understood that sociopolitical problems were not specific to his time; they would remain relevant, and future audiences would continue to appreciate them. However, Adams's effectiveness in embodying specific problems of the 1970s lies in not directly referencing them. Arthur owns his own home, and has a job. The pub is bustling, and therefore its patrons are apparently comfortable enough. There are no comments on how Ford, a supposedly out of work actor, can afford to pay for the drinks at
the pub. However, concern with modernisation is clearly at the forefront of Adams’s Earth; Arthur’s house is only thirty years old and is already slated for demolition (Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2* 17). The politician selected to speak at the construction of the bypass, with her pseudo-aristocratic tones, is a clear stand-in for Margaret Thatcher, with the jeers from the crowd reminiscent of the discontent she had already caused by 1978 (*Hitchhiker’s Radio* 23). The workers who, in *Hitchhiker’s Novel*, start to wonder if Arthur represents a health and safety issue, and Prosser’s nervousness about them, reflect trade union tensions of the 1970s.

Adams’s own circumstances must also be examined for its influence on the landscape; by the time he wrote *Hitchhiker’s Radio*, he had already had several failed projects. He was, in Gaiman’s words, "a twenty-four year-old flop" (*Don’t Panic* 18). His chance to work with Graham Chapman failed because of Chapman’s alcoholism (16). This would have jeopardised not only Adams’s hopes for his career, but also likely his opinion of Chapman himself. A failure in the work he loved, his first major project was *Hitchhiker’s*, but its original premise of various ways the world could end is telling. Adams’s world, and expectations, had fallen apart around him. Only in those circumstances could he have written so convincingly about the end of the world falling on an unsuspecting world, though despite, or perhaps because of his circumstances, the end of the world is a funny event. Even when convinced of the end of the world, the people in the pub can only act comically, putting paper bags over their heads, despite Ford’s assertion of its uselessness (Adams *Hitchhiker’s Radio* 24). As everything else has been meaningless, so too is the way they die, so even the end of the world looks ludicrous.

Prehistoric Earth in *Hitchhiker’s* should be the ultimate pastoral ideal, having been designed as paradise by the Magratheans, and Arthur’s arrival there should satisfy his

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117 In an impressive and rare show of discretion, this character never appeared again after Thatcher’s election to Prime Minister.
pastoral desires. This in itself is an oddity; the pastoral, as a bucolic and, more importantly, farmed landscape, is not a true wilderness, yet Adams specifically calls it a pastoral paradise (Adams Hitchhiker's Novel LUE 316). This is because both Arthur and the audience are aware Prehistoric Earth is a construction; its beauty is not natural, and therefore can be called pastoral if Adams wishes. Prehistoric Earth only appears in Hitchhiker's Radio, Novel REU, Novel LUE, and Hitchhiker's TV, thus there is only one visual representation of it which Adams was involved in. Hitchhiker's TV was filmed in the Peak District National Park - see fig. 6 - a heavily cultivated landscape as opposed to a relatively natural one, despite the apparent lack of human influence:

Fig. 6. Arthur and Ford on Prehistoric Earth in Hitchhiker's TV.

In Hitchhiker's Novel REU, Ford and Arthur are stunned by the planet when they first crash, unaware of where they have landed:
A wonderful stillness hung over the world, a magical calm which combined with the soft fragrances of the woods, the quiet chatter of insects and the brilliant light of the stars to soothe their jangled spirits. Even Ford Prefect, who had seen more worlds than he could count on a long afternoon, was moved to wonder if this was the most beautiful he had ever seen. All that day they had passed through rolling green hills and valleys, richly covered with grasses, wild scented flowers and tall thickly leaved trees, the sun had warmed them, light breezes had kept them cool, and Ford Prefect had checked his Sub-Etha Sens-O-Matic at less and less frequent intervals, and had exhibited less and less annoyance at its continued silence. He was beginning to think he liked it here. (284)

Their positive reaction to the landscape implies it is not natural features they enjoy, but constructed beauty; it is only when they discover where they are that they become disenchanted, though arguably this is because they know it will not last. In particular, Ford's enjoyment of Prehistoric Earth, and his subsequent anger at what will happen to it, is indicative of Ford's strange relationship with the planet. Although he complains about being stranded on Earth, Ford seems to truly like the planet, even the 1970s culture he considers primitive, returning to Backup Earth in *Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF* to finish watching *The Magnificent Seven* (583). Even in this eminently pleasant setting, Ford glimpses part of the joke, when he and Arthur encounter a pear tree, and Ford declares it would not have made any difference if Adam and Eve had not eaten from the Tree of Knowledge, because "if you're dealing with somebody who has the sort of mentality which likes leaving hats on the pavement with bricks under them you know perfectly well they won't give up. They'll get you in the end" (287). What Ford attributes to the human god is in fact the very nature of the entire universe; slapstick and a fall are more amusing than perfection in the Garden of Eden.
It is not surprising the idyllic view of Prehistoric Earth is destroyed by two elements: the first is how Arthur and Ford realise they are on Prehistoric Earth. Having travelled north, Ford and Arthur see the following in the ice:

a network of shadows in the ice, about eighteen inches beneath the surface. Looked at it from the right angle they resolved into the solid shapes of letters from an alien alphabet, each about three feet high; and for those, like Arthur, who couldn't read Magrathean there was above the letters the outline of a face hanging in the ice.

It was an old face, thin and distinguished, careworn but not unkind.

It was the face of the man who had won an award for designing the coastline they now knew themselves to be standing on. (290)

If Ford and Arthur had recognised Earth from the stars, they might not have been so traumatised; instead Slartibartfast's face and signature in the ice brutally and instantly reminds them not only of the artificiality of Earth Prime, but also its coming destruction. Even though there are two million years left until the destruction of Earth Prime, Arthur and Ford can no longer enjoy the beauty of Prehistoric Earth; they are angry about the fate which awaits such beauty, not only at the hands of the Vogons, but from the descendents of the Golgafrinchams. The joke of the meaninglessness of life is also contained in the Golgafrinchams; there is no nobility in Arthur's ancestry, just awkwardly useless people cast out of their own world. Furthermore, despite the perfect pastoral beauty of Prehistoric Earth, it becomes inextricably linked to the grubby Arcadia it will become and Arthur has already lost. The future of Prehistoric Earth is history to both Arthur and Ford, summed up as by the undistinguished phrase "Mostly Harmless" (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio 30*). For Arthur and Ford, anything they or the Golgafrinchams do on Prehistoric Earth is inherently meaningless, as the planet is going to be lost and largely forgotten anyway:
"It doesn't matter a pair of fetid dingo's kidneys what you all choose to do from now on. Burn down the forests, anything, it won't make a scrap of difference. Your future history has already happened. Two million years you've got and that's it. At the end of that time your race will be dead, gone and good riddance to you. Remember that, two million years!" (Adams Hitchhiker's Novel REU 299)

The joke in this is Ford's position as Cassandra; he is telling the Golgafrinchams their future, but they are more interested in having a committee meeting. The second element which destroys the pastoral idyll of Prehistoric Earth is the presence of the Golgafrinchams themselves. They are literal intruders on this bucolic landscape, useless exiles from their own homeworld, having been convinced they were being evacuated from their homeworld because of an impending apocalypse. Instead they were sent away because they were, in the words of Ford, "bloody useless loonies" (Adams Hitchhiker's Radio 120). In keeping with the universal joke, the non-useless Golgafrinchams' attempt to improve themselves backfired spectacularly; having sent away all the Telephone Sanitizers, they were wiped out by "a virulent disease contracted from a dirty telephone" (121). Their reactions to the landscape of Prehistoric Earth are preposterous, from random bagpiping (Hitchhiker's Novel REU 291) to holding a meeting while simultaneously styling hair, as in fig. 7:
The Golgrafrinchams are, in large part, pleased with their pastoral landscape, with the Captain searching for his own unlikely Arcadia: "a hot spring, preferably one in a nice leafy glade, and if it was near a soap mine - perfection" (*Hitchhiker's Novel REU* 291). The Captain's apparently complete lack of understanding of natural landscapes is representative of all the Golgrafrinchams; they have landed in a pastoral haven, and, in the spirit of the joke at the heart of *Hitchhiker's*, have no idea what to do with it. Unlike the brave settlers of most SF, Adams has displaced the Golgafrinchams into embarrassing ancestors. The Captain finds the landscape, or at least the Golgafrincham influence on the landscape, pleasant, though like Arthur's Arcadia, it would not be to everyone's taste:

What else was pleasant, he asked himself? Well, so many things: the red and gold of the trees, now that autumn was approaching; the peaceful chatter of scissors a few feet from his bath where a couple of hairdressers were exercising their skills on a dozing art director and his assistant; the sunlight gleaming off the six shiny telephones lined up along the edge of his rock-
hewn bath. The only thing nicer than a phone that didn't ring all the time (or indeed at all) was six phones that didn't ring all the time (or indeed at all).

(291-292)

Already the Golgafrinchams are behaving like modern humans, imposing themselves and their culture on the prehistoric landscape. Indeed, they could be seen as the colonials creating their own utopia while simultaneously causing a dystopia for the locals as described by Sargent in "Colonial and Postcolonial Utopias" (200-222). By comparison, the natives live in homes made of mud and branches, as much a part of the landscape of the planet as they can be (Adams Hitchhiker's Novel REU 285). They are resistant to Arthur and Ford walking through their village because they sense it could disrupt their connection to the planet, and reward the hitchhikers with fruit "fatter and riper than any Arthur had ever seen, even in ice cream commercials" (287). The landscape of Prehistoric Earth, with the natural proto-humans intended to fulfil the program, is near perfection; this is why the Golgafrinchams happened to land there. The universe needed to keep the joke going, and throwing what amounts to a computer virus into the works makes the search for the Ultimate Question even more meaningless than it already is in a comic universe. When Arthur and Ford return from Norway, they see the results of the Golgafrincham invasion, as the natives are listless and morose, aware they are dying out and the program is failing. Their connection to the program is confirmed when one native, who only has a rudimentary language of his own, spells "forty-two" with Arthur's Scrabble tiles (Hitchhiker's Radio 126). For Arthur, the loss of the natives and the presence of the Golgafrinchams means Earth Prime has not only lost its future, but also its past (125). For Ford, it means the program has been corrupted for two million years, and the Question is either wrong or a distortion (126). Instead it is actually the revelation of the joke to Ford and Arthur, a reward of sorts for their quest, though it is not the reward anyone expected to receive. Arthur soon realises he shares a connection to the
Question similar to the natives' connection to the Answer, and uses the Scrabble tiles to identify it as "What do you get when you multiply six times nine?" In *Hitchhiker's Radio*, Arthur and Ford resign themselves to the doom of the program (126). However, the results in *Hitchhiker's Novel REU* is much different; first:

The sun came out and beamed cheerfully at them. A bird sang. A warm breeze wafted through the trees and lifted the heads of the flowers, carrying their scent away through the woods. An insect droned past on its way to do whatever it is that insects do in the late afternoon. (306)

At the moment of the revelation of the meaninglessness of life, and that it is something to be laughed at, idyllic beauty surrounds Arthur and Ford. The second result is the true reward of all comedy, for both author and audience: Arthur and Ford rolling on the ground, laughing (306). For a moment, Arcadia is in place, because Arthur and Ford, having discovered and confirmed the joke of life's meaninglessness, are laughing at it. Ford goes on to describe "contemplating the meaning of life" as a "frivolous exercise" (306). The beauty of the landscape reflects this clarity; unlike the Golgraffinchams bagpipe, which terrifies local squirrels, Arthur and Ford's laughter is a natural component of this world. *Hitchhiker's Novel REU* ends thus on a vaguely positive note, with Arthur and Ford meeting up with two promising Golgafrincham ladies (306-307). However, this has changed by the beginning of *Hitchhiker's Novel LUE*, where Arthur greets each day with a scream and contemplates going mad. Arthur's life has gone somewhat downhill:

It wasn't just that the cave was cold, it wasn't just that it was damp and smelly. It was the fact that the cave was in the middle of Islington and there wasn't a bus due for two million years. (311)

The landscape of Prehistoric Earth has not become less appealing; indeed, it remains as beautiful as when Arthur and Ford understood the joke, but Arthur can no longer see that:
The air was clear and scented, the breeze flitted lightly through the tall grass around his cave, the birds were chirruping at each other, the butterflies were flitting about prettily, and the whole of nature seemed to be conspiring to be as pleasant as it possibly could.

It wasn't all the pastoral delights that were making Arthur feel so cheery, though. He had just had a wonderful idea about how to cope with the terrible lonely isolation, the nightmares, the failure of all his attempts at horticulture, and the sheer futurelessness and futility of his life here on prehistoric Earth, which was that he would go mad. (316)

Arthur is not rejecting Prehistoric Earth because it is not pastoral enough, but rather because it is too pastoral, too obviously perfect and constructed, and because he knows how it will end. Still, Arthur's own Arcadia is somewhere between Virgil's and the city. Ford has coped by going mad, deciding he was a lemon and jumping in and out of a gin and tonic which was actually a lake (317). Leaving Prehistoric Earth, in both *Hitchhiker's Radio* and *Hitchhiker's Novel LUE*, is a return to the absurdity of the greater universe. In *Hitchhiker's Radio*, Ford and Arthur are picked up because they waved at a potential spaceship with a towel, which then floated away into a lava stream, to become a meteorite upon the Earth's destruction, which was then picked up by *The Heart of Gold* (153-158). *Hitchhiker's Novel LUE* is arguably more ridiculous: a Chesterfield sofa appears in the field, leading Arthur and Ford to career "wildly through the grass, leaping, laughing, shouting instructions to each other to head the thing off this way or that way. The sun shone dreamily on the swaying grass, tiny field animals scattered crazily in their wake" (321). The comedy of this particular sequence is Arcadia is often about shepherds, and Arthur and Ford are in a pastoral landscape, but instead of herding sheep or cows, they are herding a sofa. These differences are down to plotting differences between *Hitchhiker's Radio* and *Novels*; because Adams
moved Prehistoric Earth in the novels to the end of *Hitchhiker's Novel REU*, and after the meeting with the real Galactic President when it was originally long before that, he had run out of plot left over from *Hitchhiker's Radio*. Thus, the beginning of *Hitchhiker's Novel LUE* is the beginning of the only new material since *Hitchhiker's Radio*, and thus the only landscapes which are purely verbal.118

Arthur spends the rest of *Hitchhiker's* searching for a way to return to his Arcadia, the one which is embodied in his original village, and for a time in *Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF*, he appears to have found it on Backup Earth, commissioned by the dolphins, in gratitude for all the fish they had received from humankind.119 This also appears in *Hitchhiker's Film*, but Arthur abandons it almost immediately in favour of travelling with Trillian.120 In *Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF*, Arthur tries living on Backup Earth, even finding his house is just as he left it and, despite eight years of travel, only four months have passed. Arthur's restored house is also in *Hitchhiker's Film*, as in fig. 8, and benefits from the visual comedy of the presence of the Magrathean construction workers:

![Fig. 8. Slartibartfast returns Arthur to his rebuilt home in *Hitchhiker's Film*.](image)

118 While *Hitchhiker's Comic* did adapt *Hitchhiker's Novel LUE*, it will not be included here as Adams was not involved or interested in its production, as stated earlier.
119 It also shows an impressive capacity for forgiveness due to humanity's frequent mistreatment of dolphins.
120 The filmmakers' choice to have an actual romance between Arthur and Trillian is confusing given their relationship in the book; aside from flirting at the party, they never show any real interest in each other. This change in the film is one of the problems with it, as it is not true to the source material, or the nature of the *Hitchhiker's* subcreation, as it undermines the joke that Trillian and Arthur, while being the last humans, are not romantically interested in each other at all.
It is worth noting the difference between Backup Earth and the Earth the mice have Slartibartfast begin in *Hitchhiker's Radio* and *Novel H2G2*; the latter is intended as a complete restart of the program, so Slartibartfast is using glaciers to form his coastlines, albeit in Africa this time, although it should be noted the Earth was never as old as the fake dinosaur bones would have humanity believe (124). However, the Backup Earths are simply the final save points, and are not capable of completing the program themselves; this is why in *Hitchhiker's Film* the mice must integrate Arthur's brain into Backup Earth, while in *Hitchhiker's Radio* and *Novel H2G2* the mice only need Arthur's brain. Backup Earth then, while an excellent replica, no longer fulfils its original purpose, and is, in some ways, a pathetically funny continuation of what was a useless endeavour to begin with. Without the final moments of Earth Prime, Backup Earth it is simply a copy of a failed computer program.

Arthur's arrival on Backup Earth in *Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF* is less than heroic, and, as is often the case with Arthur, actually quite pathetic; caught in the rain in a now incredibly threadbare towel, he finds himself splashed first by a Porsche and then by a truck (466-467). This is a displacement of the return of the SF hero, which should be heroic and magnificent. Instead Arthur is soaked. His house, despite having been demolished on Earth Prime, is exactly as Arthur has left it, with the exception of the accumulation of junk mail, a dead tabby cat, and a fishbowl left by the dolphins into which Arthur places the Babel Fish (490-492). On the first night of his return, Arthur finds himself able to connect to Earth on a level he had never experienced before, the connection to the planet of his birth:

The night seemed like an alive thing to him at this moment, the dark earth around him a being in which he was rooted.
He could feel like a tingle on distant nerve ends the flood of a far river, the roll of invisible hills, the knot of heavy rainclouds parked somewhere away to the south.

He could sense, too, the thrill of being a tree, which was something he hadn't expected. He knew that it felt good to curl your toes in the earth, but he'd never realized it could feel quite as good as that. He could sense an almost unseemly wave of pleasure reaching out to him all the way from the New Forest. He must try this summer, he thought, and see what having leaves felt like. (493-494)

This connection is disrupted, however, by the break between Earth and Backup Earth, which Arthur can sense:

And now he was flying through a land of light; the light was time, the tides of it were days receding. The fracture he had sensed, the second fracture, lay in the distance before him across the land, the thickness of a single hair across the dreaming landscape of the days of Earth.

And suddenly he was upon it.

He danced dizzily over the edge as the dreamland dropped sheer away beneath him, a stupefying precipice into nothing, him wildly twisting, clawing at nothing, flailing in horrifying space, spinning, falling.

Across the jagged chasm had been another land, another time, an older world, not fractured from, but hardly joined: two Earths. He woke. (495)

This is a displacement not only of the audience's expectations, but of Arthur's; all he wanted was to return to Earth, to regain the small meaning his life had. However, he cannot help but sense the fracture which severed his connection to his home, and cannot reconnect fully again. As often happens in *Hitchhiker's*, what Arthur wishes for results in a pathetic
comedy. Arthur is one of only three people on the planet capable of sensing the fracture between Earth Prime and Backup Earth; the other two are Fenchurch, who realises the Ultimate Question right before Earth Prime's destruction, and Wonko the Sane, whose inside out house is designed to enclose the madness of not just Earth, but the whole comedic universe (564). The joke in this is both Fenchurch and Wonko have had their sanity questioned, and Arthur dares not tell anyone his story for fear of the same; the truth, then, is coupled with the presumption of madness. The connection to Fenchurch is probably what led Arthur to remain in the unpleasant cave in Prehistoric Earth, as it is the exact location of Fenchurch's apartment; across the fracture, he could sense someone else like him. This connection goes further, as Arthur lands right where Fenchurch's brother could pick him up on the road, with Fenchurch asleep in the back seat (471). Arthur, Fenchurch, and Wonko are examples of how "landscape descriptions reflect our feelings about the relationship between Man and Nature in a peculiarly intense manner" (Picot xi); the fracture between Earth Prime and Backup Earth has disrupted their connections to the landscape to the point where Fenchurch is no longer able to even walk on the ground (542). Their leaving is inevitable as they can no longer connect to their world, and must look elsewhere for meaning.

The pathetic humour at the meaninglessness of Arthur's life is tied in to this lack of connection, which follows Arthur and Fenchurch through their wandering, up to Fenchurch's disappearance and Arthur's attempt to return to Backup Earth. Instead he finds NowWhat, whose spaceport features a sign reading "Even travelling despondently is better than arriving here" (Hitchhiker's Novel MH 644). According to the brochure:

the planet of NowWhat had been named after the opening words of the first settlers to arrive there after struggling across light years of space to reach the furthest unexplored outreaches of the Galaxy. The main town was called OhWell. There weren't any other towns to speak of. Settlement on NowWhat
had not been a success and the sort of people who actually wanted to live on NowWhat were not the sort of people you would want to spend time with.

(Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel MH* 645)

If the audience thought Arthur's damp arrival on Backup Earth was the most pathetic he could endure, they could not have been prepared for NowWhat. It is such a dank, horrible, miserable world, the only native species left are boghogs who randomly attack people, as all others had "long ago died of despair" (645). NowWhat is an Earth which never connected to any settler; presumably it has also been constructed by the Magratheans, but it is likely the Golgraffrenchams died along with the natives.\(^{121}\) With the program so disrupted, it had failed, and life on NowWhat had shrivelled and died. Arthur is not immune to the despair: "This, he realised, was about as close to home as he was likely to get. Which meant that he was about as far from home as he could possibly be" (646). The pastoral joy of Earth Prime, Prehistoric Earth, and even Backup Earth are all lost on NowWhat; Adams has displaced all expectations of Arthur's return to his home by making Earth a literal hell-hole, as far as Arthur is concerned.

The final Earth in *Hitchhiker's* is Earth X, whose only difference appears to be that Tricia McMillan went back for her bag and Zaphod left without her; however, she and Trillian otherwise have had similar lives, with both women becoming reporters, albeit a time travelling reporter in Trillian's case. Tricia is restless on Earth; knowing the rest of the galaxy is out there to be explored, and she missed her chance at it, has made her ready to leave whenever she needs to. However, rather than rural Britain, Adams focuses on New York, namely its seasonal faults: too cold in winter, too hot in summer, a disappointing spring, and an autumn in which "the air smells as if someone's been frying goats in it" (608). The pastoral beauty of Earth Prime, Prehistoric Earth, and Backup Earth are all gone, replaced by

\(^{121}\) At the beginning of *Hitchhiker's Novel LUE*, it is revealed that many of them did not survive the first harsh winter in prehistoric Britain and left to go on holiday (319).
modernisation. While earlier Earths all used outdoor locations, Earth X is almost entirely indoors, from Tricia's hotel to Stavromula Club Beta, the only exception being Tricia's lawn, with marks on it from either a lawnmower or an alien spaceship (625-626). Literary Britain is condensed into the space in front of her house, mostly because Tricia is trying to get away from it.

Tricia's disconnection with Earth X is shared by Random, Arthur and Trillian's daughter; she ran away to Earth X to find a sense of belonging. However, Random was born on a spaceship between destinations, and her parents' Earth Prime was long gone (711): "This is not your home,' said Trillian, still keeping her voice calm. 'You don't have one. We none of us have one. Hardly anybody has one any more'" (Adams Hitchhiker's Novel MH 774). Tricia goes on to explain that the Grebulons, who are about to be responsible for the destruction of Earth X and all other possible Earths, do so because they too have no home as they have all lost their memories (774-775). This reinforces the cultural nature of home; after all, if it is not cultural and built into the shared experiences of their society, the Grebulons would not have been able to lose it. Earth X's destruction is, as with the destruction of all Earths, completely pointless, and orchestrated by Vogon captain Prostetnic Jeltz, in an effort to finally fulfil his demolition order. The hope of Arthur's happy ending as Random's father is displaced by the ugly reality of Vogon bureaucracy. Unlike the hapless Grebulons, the Vogons are sure of their purpose, although

Anyone who knew of his purpose might have said that it was a pointless and ugly one, that it wasn't the sort of purpose that enhanced a life, put a spring in a person's step, made birds sing and flowers bloom. Rather the reverse in fact.

Absolutely the reverse. (Adams Hitchhiker's Novel MH 770)

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122 The club is located at number forty-two on its street (Hitchhiker's Novel MH 772).
123 The Grebulons lost their memories because they had been stored in their ship's main and backup cores; the first of these was knocked out by a meteorite, and the second lost when it fell through the hole the meteorite had made in the ship, because the sensors meant to detect a meteorite strike had been knocked out by the same (604-607).
However, Jeltz does not see the destruction of all Earths as pointless, even though the quest for the Ultimate Question was long abandoned and the Drive supposedly made hyperspace obsolete; for Jeltz, the only reason he needs for destroying the Earth is to tick off a box on his demolition order (771). The universal joke is particularly strong in this; there is no meaning in the universe beyond completing paperwork. Earth X and every remaining probability of Earth, and everything that could come out of those worlds, matters less than completed paperwork. Further, all of Arthur and Ford's travels have been meaningless, as after all their travels and work to stay alive, they are going to die on an Earth anyway. Even Ford's extensive entries on Earth in the updated Guide are soon to be useless, as they are about to describe something which no longer exists anywhere. Humanity's home, the string of probability sausages the Guide Mark 2 demonstrates to Random (726), is destroyed, "Options collapsed, possibilities folded into each other, and the whole at last resolved itself out of existence" (776), and all to fulfil a work order. It is both pointless, and pathetically funny.

This ultimate destruction of the possibility of returning home, or to something like it, or of making a home elsewhere, is a displacement of the pastoral, which typically holds the hope of return, even if it is constantly frustrated. It is also the greatest displacement of SF in *Hitchhiker's*; beyond all else, SF utopias holds the hope of a better or grander fate for humanity and for Earth, with even dystopias representing a hope of avoiding a dismal future (Sargent *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction* 9). *Hitchhiker's* is the embodiment of the fears of SF without any of the hope. Earth, then, is utterly meaningless; from its destruction for an obsolete form of transport, its Golgafrincham-infected program, the fracture which stops the program, the versions of Earth which are nothing but places of despairs, and finally to the end of all Earths. It is a place where the pastoral and literary Britain does not even register anymore, overshadowed by the need to find a home which does not exist anywhere.
These are worlds without any deeper meaning, in a universe where deeper meaning is a joke, and all exists to be laughed at. What then can be said of other landscapes? Is there meaning to be found in them? This meaning could, perhaps, be found in the landscapes of spaceships, and the freedom to travel the universe at will.
Chapter Three:

Mobile Landscapes
The ultimate SF dream - a spaceship to do what you want with and go anywhere. (Steve Higgins, 'Descending on a Point of Flame: The Spaceship in Science Fiction'. 18.)

Although spaceships as a means of travel are not the focus of this chapter, as vehicles they do force us to look at two important elements of worldbuilding which require some discussion; what an SF travel narrative is, and mapping, or, more precisely, the inability to map the journeys spaceships take in SF with any degree of accuracy. Travel SF, or space opera is not necessarily a straightforward genre, as it can focus either on the journey or destination, or both. While Hitchhiker's includes details of several space journeys, and the events which occur while on the ships, they are not a necessity in SF overall, which often prioritises the destination over the journey. In the 2nd century Lucian of Samosata in the wrote one of the Western world's first novels and, arguably, one of the first works of SF, True Histories, in which he and a number of adventuring heroes find themselves whisked away to the moon and involved in a war between the kings of the sun and the moon over Venus, referred to as the Morning Star. However, Lucian's actual journey to the moon in True Histories takes place in only a few lines:

a whirlwind suddenly arose, spun the boat about, raised her into the air about three hundred furlongs and did not let her down into the sea again; but while she was hung up aloft a wind struck her sails and drove her ahead with bellying canvas. For seven days and seven nights we sailed the air, and on the eighth day we saw a great country in it. (259)

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124 Note: the University of Liverpool library website sometimes has a misspelling of "Steev" instead of "Steve".
125 The original Latin title is Verae Historiae and is sometimes referred to as A True Story.
The journey was irrelevant to Lucian, because there was nothing to describe outside of the ship, and he was not interested in describing the ship itself, only telling the reader it was "a pinnace" (253). However, space opera need not be exclusively about other planets, as True Histories is, but rather about the journey through space on the ship. As the realities of space travel became better known, leading to tragic tales of doomed stowaways such as Marilyn in "Cold Equations" (Godwin), the late twentieth century saw a rash of fictional SF journeys, including Star Trek, Blake's 7, Clarke's Rendezvous with Rama, and Aldiss's own Non-stop, where the destinations, while interesting, had to contend with the ship itself. By focussing on the journey, space opera of this kind shifts the spaceship from essentially a conveyance to an enclosed landscape, and there is an entire SF subgenre exploring the effects of such a landscape on the human psyche (Higgins 16). There are two main types of ship in Hitchhiker's, namely sentient spaceships, which function as character as well as locus, and non-sentient, which function only as a locus, both displaced from SF expectations; once given sentience, ships become unreliable and behave in unexpected ways, reinforcing the Hitchhiker's comedic universal rule that artificial intelligences, whether they take the form of ships or robots, will never respond the way they are supposed to; unlike SF ships like Doctor Who's TARDIS, the sentient ships of Hitchhiker's are not particularly interested in keeping their crews alive. By contrast, ships without AI are reliable almost to a fault, performing their duties perfectly even when they should not, which in the case of the Disaster Area Stuntship, proves almost fatal for the organic stowaways (Hitchhiker's Novel REU 252-256). Nonetheless, insentient ships are seen as inherently more trustworthy; the character, and character defects, of the sentient ships then become as much a part of the visible worldbuilding as other planets, as we will see in the

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126 Arguably the most recent example of this is Christopher Nolan's 2014 film Interstellar, in which a journey through a wormhole must be undertaken to save all of mankind from extinction.

127 Indeed, AIs in spaceships are notoriously murderous, with 2001: A Space Odyssey's HAL the most famous example.
ships of *Hitchhiker's* later. First, in order to understand Adams’s fascination with travel SF, and its purpose in his worldbuilding, it is necessary to discuss just what it involves, both in terms of the types of travel and the characters which inhabit it.

Travel SF consists of three primary categories: the unintentional travel or extension of travel, as in *Out of the Silent Planet* and *Lost in Space*; interstellar travel, as in *Star Trek*; and the quest, as in *Star Wars*. The last of these categories can range from finding a new home for humanity, as in *Battlestar Galactica*, to saving the universe from an evil ruler, as in *Star Wars*. Arguably *Hitchhiker's* uses all three categories of SF travel while simultaneously displacing them for comedic purposes. Like Elwin Ransom, the protagonist of *Out of the Silent Planet*, Arthur never intended to leave Earth, and is, to all intents and purposes, abducted by Ford. But where Ransom is intended as a sacrifice, Ford’s purpose is not particularly clear in *Hitchhiker's Radio*, or even very noble; while later versions reveal that Arthur saved Ford’s life, at first it seems Ford only brought Arthur along for some company, and to help him write the revisions for the Guide. Ships for Arthur then become landscapes in which Arthur finds both salvation and fear; as a literal refugee, they are the only homes Arthur can have, but what they represent is Arthur’s loss of home. Arthur is a displaced SF traveller because he conforms to none of the expectations of SF travel, most particularly the trope of a human finding themselves at the centre of momentous alien events. This displacement of Arthur from the centre of action is central to the joke of *Hitchhiker's*; not only is life in general meaningless, but Earth in particular is meaningless to everyone else in the universe. Arthur is a small Earth writ small.

Once Arthur leaves Earth, *Hitchhiker's* is more than a text defamiliarising and displacing expectations surrounding Arcadia; it becomes an SF travel narrative, a space opera, a genre whose history goes back to the earliest examples of the mode, such as *True
However, many critics do not consider *True Histories* an early SF text, with Aldiss giving perhaps the best critical reason; he claims that SF only began to be written when mankind, and the protagonists of SF narratives, started to truly embrace scientific progress and innovation on a cultural level, and is impossible prior to Sir Isaac Newton's work (*Trillion Year Spree* 84). As Lucian was not in control of his journey or the science behind it, Aldiss can consider him an ancestor to SF, and not a part of the mode. This only applies if Aldiss's definition of SF is taken as correct, but it would seem to be countered by the sheer number of SF texts which involve the hero's abduction from Earth, from C.S. Lewis's 1938 novel *Out of the Silent Planet* up to 2014's *Guardians of the Galaxy*. While Arthur is saved from Earth's destruction by Ford, he is not a willing or witting participant in his own escape. For Aldiss, SF is characterised by human endeavour to understand, control, or overcome scientific realities; hence his willingness to accept Shelley's *Frankenstein* as the mother of SF (*Trillian Year Spree* 44-65). Lucian and Arthur, as the objects rather than the subjects of their own adventures, defy Aldiss's preference for the hero as an active participant in the plot. Indeed, in *Hitchhiker's*, humanity's lack of scientific progress, particularly in space travel, is their doom; with space travel, humanity might have been able to stop or delay the demolition of earth - presuming the plans to do so were not in the Vogon equivalent of "a locked filing cabinet in a disused lavatory with a sign on the door saying 'Beware of the Leopard'" (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 19). However, as discussed in Chapter Two, the destruction of the human race is a displacement of SF expectations, and if Aldiss's view could be taken as the expectation of many SF readers, then having Arthur, the sole survivor of the human race, as the unwilling participant in space travel further displaces SF expectations. Arthur should be looking for vengeance, as in Douglas Hill's *The Last Legionary Quartet*, or a way to retroactively save

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128 See above.
Earth via time travel or something at least cerebral or mildly heroic; instead he resigns himself to the realities of the bureaucratic universe which not only destroyed Earth, but did not particularly care about doing so. Arthur is a true hitchhiker: unlike the SF hero, he has no specific purpose beyond having a quiet life. Aldiss's critical dismissal of *Hitchhiker's* does not only stem from the lack of human ingenuity also shown in *True Histories*, but also because Adams "grew rich doing the Sheckleyan things which appeared to keep [Robert] Sheckley poor", namely "irreverence... [and] iconoclastic shiftiness", and employing exaggerated metaphors which he did in such novels as *Mindswap* (412-413).\(^{129}\) Aldiss's negative reaction to *Hitchhiker's* could also be linked to his objection to the popular interpretation of SF interpretation as "mainly a series of imaginary voyages to the Moon and other planets" (28).\(^{130}\) Aldiss's discomfort with pigeonholing SF as solely about space voyages is undoubtedly a reaction to the outcome of Hugo Gernsback's search for a symbol to represent all SF in 1928 (Westfahl "Wanted" 1-4), which ultimately resulted in the spaceship arising above almost all other symbols and becoming the popularly understood image of the genre (6-14). While Aldiss does not necessarily object to the use of the spaceship in SF - as evidenced by his own novel *Non-stop* - it was the limitations the spaceship as symbol imposed on the perception of the genre as a whole. For Adams, the spaceship was not necessarily a symbol in *Hitchhiker's*, but rather a necessity; his use of them as landscapes which represent their cultures instead of merely conveyances serves to transform them. This disinterest in the spaceship can be seen in their waning use in *Hitchhiker's*; as will be discussed later, by *Hitchhiker's Novel MH*, they are barely mentioned as compared to earlier in the narrative. This could be related to Adams's own

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\(^{129}\) The irony of this view is Adams himself was dismayed, on first reading Sheckley, to discover someone else had already done comedy SF so much better than he himself had done; as Adams had not read Sheckley prior to producing *Hitchhiker's*, it is not necessary to presume any influence here (qtd in Shirley 177).

\(^{130}\) This view helped Aldiss argue for Shelley as the origins of SF, as, according to Adam Roberts, early SF from a variety of countries was about trips to the moon, including texts by Johannes Kepler and Cyrano de Bergerac (*Science Fiction* 47-59).
development as a writer, and possibly a reaction to the presumption of the spaceship as a juvenile symbol; as Adams's interest in ecology grew with *Last Chance to See*, so too did his interest in writing about ecological issues rather than having his characters haring across the universe at a moment's notice.

The second element which needs to be examined prior to spaceships themselves is the difficulties inherent in travelling to another planet in space, whether in reality or literature. The primary difficulty is in the lack of an external landscape to illustrate movement. Mila Vulchanova and Emile Van Der Zee claim "it is not always possible to understand descriptions of static situations without considering notions of movement" (1). An example they use is "The hotel is right behind the church" (emphasis in original 2). While this is an inherently terrestrial example, it can be extrapolated to celestial levels. The necessity of movement, or at least the possibility of movement, allows the reader to picture objects in relation to each other. In space travel, this cannot be easily represented visually, as the speeds and distances involved are too great to represent accurately either through language or on a two-dimensional map. *Star Trek* represents speed by blurring the stars around the ship, but planetary distances are not as simple. Tolkien can put Middle-Earth on a map, but Adams cannot do the same for the Plural Z zones, and not merely because they are in flux. It is the difference between describing a country as being one hundred kilometres away and a planet being one hundred light years away, the latter of which converts into $9.4605284 \times 10^{14}$ - or 946,052,840,000,000 - kilometres. The other difficulty is, while countries on Earth do not move in relation to each other, intergalactic bodies do. Jeffrey Zacks and Barbara Tversky claim the objects involved in a discussion determine the scale understood by the audience (123), thus, a discussion of a house encourages the audience to think on a much smaller scale than a discussion of a mountain. However, aside from a basic theoretical understanding, human beings cannot have the necessary
experience to discuss the movement of objects on a galactic scale and cannot hope to create a comfortable mental picture of this. Adams pounces on this inability to understand cosmic distances for humorous effect; the Guide's entry on space goes: "'Space', it says, 'is big. Really big. You just won't believe how vastly, hugely, mind-bogglingly big it is. I mean, you may think it's a long way down the street to the chemist, but that's just peanuts to space'" (Hitchhiker's Radio 39). The unknowable vastness of space is a necessary part of the Total Perspective Vortex, which destroys the mind by showing it just how insignificant it is in a universal context (163-165). The vastness of the universe serves to make anything which happens in it meaningless; Earth's destruction can never mean more than a leaf fall, though, given Earth's position as a gravitational source in the solar system, its removal should have gravitational repercussions from the solar system to the greater galaxy. This concern is ignored in Hitchhiker's, as it would possibly give the Earth meaning on a larger scale, which is unattainable in the series.

Identifying the text as a space opera is important for the audience's ability to form mental maps of the secondary universe, and to anticipate difficulties in mapping. Holly A. Taylor and Tad T. Brunyé describe three ways of picturing a physical environment: via a moving route through the landscape; a "gaze tour" from a fixed position; and a survey tour from a bird's eye view (11-14), and these can all be applied to a discussion of how an author enables their audience to picture their subcreation. Route descriptions, or a description of an area by taking a journey through it, are common in literature which does not use maps, as the narrative tends to follow characters through a location rather than map it out, such as Arthur and Ford's journey through the corridors of The Heart of Gold, as their examination of the ship reveals its interior almost as if it is a tour (Adams Hitchhiker's Radio 44). The audience understands Magrathea's construction floor from Arthur's entry into and travel through it, and in Hitchhiker's Radio from his awe-struck
reaction to it (68–69). While gaze representation may be more common in visual media, where the audience is given a fixed overall view of the *mise en scène*, either from the camera or character's perspective, route description still holds true, as the movement through places is dependent on moving with the characters. However, Taylor and Brunyé claim route descriptions use more working memory resources, and therefore take longer to process (20); this means the description of a landscape by moving through it is more difficult for the audience to hold in their minds than a single overview. Working initially in radio, however, Adams has no choice but to use route descriptions, but, importantly, the audience also appreciated how much mental work was required to picture the locations of *Hitchhiker's*, as they were already familiar with the medium and its limitations. When dealing with space opera, which often has no maps to assist in surveying the perspective of the universe at large, and sometimes with places such as ships and alien planets, the audience must do a similar kind of work to understand the environment; the audience thus expends more mental energy in constructing the secondary world in their minds than they might with a realist novel. For the most part, this mental work is the construction of simple scenery and stage dressing, as the differences between artistic renditions of *The Heart of Gold*³¹ demonstrate; without an accurate description of the ship's exterior in *Hitchhiker's Radio*, it was originally an unknown quality, and artistic interpretations are a constant source of surprise, with *Hitchhiker's TV* using the rough shape of a shoe because it is mentioned briefly in *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2* (42). Thus the work required to immerse oneself in the secondary world is greater and, for some, not enjoyable. This is further complicated by the constant movement of celestial bodies relative to each other mentioned earlier. Sea fiction has the advantage of continents and islands remaining in situ; however, travelling even to the moon requires an acknowledgement that Earth and the moon are in

³¹ These will be examined later in this chapter.
constant movement. When the map is constantly moving, there is no fixed element to rely on, and thus the reader's ability to form the map falls short of reality.

Fortunately, a map is not always necessary for space opera, as its writer usually replaces distance and sometimes direction with travel time. This is a comfortable method for measuring distance for the audience, as distances are considered in terms relative to time. In Star Trek distances are referred to via time taken or time taken with distance, rarely distance alone. These, like the church, are relative locations. The hotel being right behind the church is dependent upon the angle one is looking at both. In general, space opera, as will be expanded on later, tends to ignore such concerns in favour of advancing the plot; an interested audience will take the time to work out such elements themselves. In Hitchhiker's, this is further displaced by the Drive, which allows for instantaneous travel across the galaxy, deconstructing the universe as it occupies every point in Adams's subcreation simultaneously. With the Drive, Adams is tackling one of the biggest necessities of space opera, namely the faster than light drive, or FTL drive, currently considered a physical impossibility. Higgins describes the levels at which FTL drives can appear in SF texts:

FTL drive, whatever form it takes, can cover a wide range of treatments, from being a mere convenience, a lip service to Einstein contained in a throwaway clause, or less, to a seriously considered piece of technology whose affect on a society possessing it are well considered and explored.

(14)

Faster than light travel, then, is simultaneously scientific on a hopeful and theoretical level and an SF novum; given sufficiently convincing technobabble, and a strict adherence to the laws said technobabble generates, the audience is prepared to accept a
vaguely scientific source or explanation. This is a necessity for SF, as interplanetary travel helps take the narrative out of the solar system and beyond its clear limitations, as well as the ultimate dream of real world space travel, though it will not be as easy as SF makes it look: "interstellar exploration will probably be an immense task involving vast amounts of man-power and thinking in terms of planetary sizes and aeons of time" (Higgins 14). Many space opera writers, such as Clarke, approach interplanetary travel with rigorous scientific reasoning, with Rama functioning not just as a text but as a thought experiment on the kind of spaceship an alien race might produce; further, the slow journey of the empty ship implies a lack of FTL drive. Others, like Gene Roddenberry, are content to invent warp drives to solve the problem, despite their current improbability in the Primary World, to serve the narrative requirements of Star Trek's premises of interplanetary contact. Adams avoids all need to invent a means of interplanetary for most of the human species, partially by annihilating almost all of them; hitchhiking, for him, is not just the only option, but it is simultaneously more practical and more amusing. Arthur does not have to do any work to get into space; he only needs to stick out his thumb and he will get a lift. It is a complete displacement of the expectations of virtually every space opera author; SF has always expected humanity to find a way to travel from Earth, typically through their own ingenuity. Adams, by making Arthur a hitchhiker reliant on others' technology rather than a scientist or engineer, has displaced all of SF's belief in humanity's inherent capabilities, and replaced it with the parasite Arthur essentially becomes. However, while humanity lacks ingenuity in Hitchhiker's, other races do not, and Adams gives the rest of the universe credit for their engineering skills. In the spirit of space opera, particularly texts like Star Trek, which Adams expected his initial audience to know, the Drive, and the outmoded hyperspace, are unexplainable miracles designed to serve the

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132 Sometimes even no technobabble is required, as the oft-repeated Star Trek joke implies: "How does the Heisenberg Compensator work?" "Very well, thank you" (75).
plot, though their function has bearing on Adams's worldbuilding. In addition, hyperspace in *Hitchhiker's Film* is implied to be a series of pathways through space, as shown in fig. 9:

![Hyperspace as represented in Hitchhiker's Film.](image)

If hyperspace is indeed this complex, distance and direction become an expression of dilatory confusion in *Hitchhiker's*, as there is no way to move in a direct line between any two points; further, it implies hyperspace bypasses are a necessity, though, given the aforementioned vastness of space, demolishing planets seems unnecessary and over the top unless hyperspace follows some sort of space escarpment or gaps. Adams's universe is wilfully unreliable and unmappable for a number of reasons, the first being the comedic need to use whatever setting would be appropriate to the joke he wanted to tell. This arises from sketch comedy in general and *Monty Python* in particular; Adams was an ardent admirer of the Pythons, who would change scenes as soon as sketch appeared to become boring (Hewison 8). Like *Monty Python*, Adams can move from a location as soon as it stops being funny, or to heighten the humour; this also allows Adams to delay the

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133 While this image does present some complexity, it is a sadly obvious joke.

134 *Hitchhiker's Radio* and *Hitchhiker's Film* both indicate Earth was destroyed due to an order signed by Zaphod Beeblebrox. Due to the limits of the film, it is the only version which does not explain this was in order to stop the Earth's program from discovering the Ultimate Question, though it is never explained why the rest of Zaphod's conspiracy wanted to do that.
punchline as far as he wishes, as in Zaphod's sudden decision at the end of *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2* to visit Milliways instead of seeking out the ruler of the universe (149). Secondly, Adams upends all traditional notions of motion in space and its representation using time. Adams makes no effort to even provide a technobabble explanation of hyperspace; he merely shows or suggests it is over-elaborate and of questionable usefulness. While travelling in *Mostly Harmless*, the audience is never told how long any of Arthur's trips take, or even provided with how such journeys are measured in either time or space.

The awe the audience should feel at the vastness of space is gone, replaced by the underwhelming banality of tourist travel; in *Hitchhiker's* it is neither adventure nor exploration, but following paths well-worn by others. While Adams does not present a map, the *Hitchhiker's* universe has already been mapped in its entirety. In addition, the invention of the Drive should render all notion of distances between planets irrelevant and, indeed, invalidate mapping on any level beyond the planetary, as one of the primary purposes of maps is to guide a journey. However, by *Hitchhiker's Novel MH*, hyperspace is still in use on spaceliners, perhaps because of Adams's assertion that the arrival of the Drive had upset history by randomly transforming planets into banana fruitcake, to the point where "the great history faculty of the University of MaxiMegalon finally gave up, closed itself down and surrendered its buildings to the rapidly growing joint faculty of Divinity and Water Polo" (604). This collapse of history, by disrupting the normal rules of causality, implies the reason behind the lack of use of the Drive for general travel: it is simply too unreliable and destructive compared to hyperspace. By combining all places in the universe in a single instance, the Drive deconstructs the very idea of separate locations, merging the whole universe into *The Heart of Gold*. Whenever it is activated, the ship becomes, for that moment, the entire universe. All distances and mass are collapsed into
one point, almost as if they are being sucked into a black hole, and it is no wonder they are misplaced when the Drive is switched off, especially as the *Hitchhiker's* universe never lets the opportunity for a joke pass it by. Despite its disruption to the existence of the universe, the Drive allows for instantaneous changes of position rarely seen in literature, and reinforces the unreliability of Adams's worldbuilding, as well as highlighting its inheritance from sketch comedy.

Despite the difficulty in understanding universal distances, Adams does attempt to help the audience make the jump from the Earthly to the universal. He accomplishes this with bypasses: first the one being built through Arthur's home, and then the one to be constructed through the Earth, help move the reader from their customary level of reference to a larger one. Bypasses are the representation of overcoming an obstacle, and serve as the linchpin of the *Hitchhiker's* universe, but an eternally frustrated one. Mr. Prosser is frustrated by the destruction of Earth; the Vogons are frustrated by the invention of the Drive, which is supposed to make bypasses obsolete, but eventually fails to do so. The persistence of the alternate Earths in later *Hitchhiker's* further frustrates the Vogons, as their records say they destroyed the Earth, and yet it remains, in multiple states, to the point where they use the Guide Mark II to destroy all incarnations of Earth. The construction of Deep Thought and of Earth to solve the Ultimate Answer and Question could also be seen as a bypass; rather than seeking wisdom from their own resources, the mice are attempting to bypass it in favour of the ultimate get rich quick scheme. As a comedy universe, *Hitchhiker's* obstacles are in-built, which is perhaps why Colfer's *And Another Thing...* fits so well into the series. While the Vogons do destroy all Earths, they cannot succeed in completely destroying humanity itself, because the universe has set them - and indeed, all of its inhabitants - up to fail. Working around a problem rarely works in *Hitchhiker's*; on the stuntship, contacting the concert organisers does not stop the
stuntship’s descent into the sun (Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel REU* 254). By returning repeatedly to the frustrated bypass, Adams is not only reinforcing his comedic universe, but also allows Arthur, Fenchurch, and Marvin to feel relief at the revelation of God’s last message (*Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF* 588). All three have faced universal obstacles, and all three appreciate at least the acknowledgement of their struggles. This, of course, does not stop the universe from continuing such inconveniences, namely by making Fenchurch literally disappear from Arthur’s life (*Hitchhiker's Novel MH* 646-647).

The bypass, in all its literal and metaphorical incarnations, is essential to the series, and reinforces the universal joke on the meaninglessness of life.

Space in *Hitchhiker's* therefore is something to be moved through as quickly and efficiently as possible, and not necessarily a place to appreciate, displacing the expectation created by *Star Trek* in particular, and SF and astronomy in general, of the desirability of enjoying scenery on the cosmic scale. In this *Hitchhiker's* returns to one of space opera's, indeed SFs, ancestors, sea fiction. In *Moby-Dick*, when Ishmael tells Captain Peleg he wishes to see the world on their whaling voyage, Peleg instructs him to "take a peep over the weather-bow, and then back to me and tell me what ye see there" (Melville 81). Ishmael describes the view as "unlimited, but exceedingly monotonous and forbidding; not the slightest variety that I could see" (81). Size is arguably the most common defining feature of sea and space, but Ishmael points out something the Guide does not; between landmasses, there is nothing to look at while at sea. According to NASA, it has been estimated that matter in the universe takes up only five percent of the total available space ("Dark Energy, Dark Matter"), so like the sea, outer space is marked by vast areas of nothingness. This, perhaps, is why everyone in *Hitchhiker's* is looking for a bypass; there

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135 Given the nature of the *H2G2* universe, it probably increased ticket sales.
136 Colfer’s understanding of this aspect of *Hitchhiker’s* is demonstrated at the end of *And Another Thing...*, when Fenchurch reappears, only for Arthur himself to disappear (337-339).
137 This relates to surface appearances only, as the sea is far from empty under the surface.
are no generational ships in the series, because everyone is attempting to avoid the monotony of passing through seemingly endless empty space. Adams also displaces one of the primary elements of sea stories, which John Peck describes as about essentially returning home (11-12). He goes on:

The ocean represents a place of danger as the seafarer ventures forth; this is true at the literal level, but also has a metaphorical dimension in that the sea can represent chaos, a terrifying destructive force, and the unknown and unpredictable. Set against this, the idea of returning home will always represent a return to security. (13)

Outer space is an equally dangerous and destructive force; the ship stands between the characters and nearly instant death. Thus, spaceships must be seen as places of security and solidity, but they also reflect one of the earliest SF and sea fiction concerns: exploration. Exploration has always been a feature of early and proto-SF, inspired by voyage literature, which presupposed practical extrapolation of other landscapes, whether it be travelling to utopia and reporting on it, as in The Voyage of St. Brendan, or exploring Hollow Earth, as in Verne's Journey to the Centre of the Earth. As the map of Earth was filled in – Joseph Conrad's famous white spaces disappearing (8-9) – and scientific knowledge of the makeup of the planet's core became more accurate, an Earthly utopia and the hollow earth made way for space exploration. These texts made up the literary and, to some extent, cultural expectations Adams was working with; while he did not expect every audience member to be intimately familiar with SF in general and space opera in particular, he did expect his audience to be aware of its popularly understood image, and this needs to be briefly examined. As rocket technology caught up to the SF imagination, SF itself became overwhelmed by narratives of travel into the outer reaches of space, with the journey into space perhaps the most recognisable narrative for non-devotees. If, as
Aldiss would have us believe, SF is about exploring and conquering the natural world, the spaceship serves as the literal embodiment of such an impetus (*Trillion Year Spree* 81). Apart from its juvenile connotations, it represents freedom from the planet of origin, wealth, bravery, and depending on the text, intellectual, political, or military power. Its appeal to younger readers is not only in this freedom, but in its representation of a fresh start or, as Steve Higgins would have it, a general sense of escape (18) - perhaps from authority figures, beginning with parents - and its appeal to older readers lies in the challenges this fresh start creates, from imperial colonialism to ideology, as can be seen in Le Guin's *The Word for World is Forest*, in which human imperialism and ideology infects the natives. In *Hitchhiker's*, this exploration is replaced with hitchhiking, with walking the trails others have already been on, and finding the universe just as ridiculous as the Guide would suggest it is.

The spaceship is perhaps the most immediately recognisable SF novum in the genre's history, particularly for casual viewers, and how "non-readers tend to think of [science fiction]" (Higgins 13). From Jules Verne to *Flash Gordon*, and from the *Enterprise* in *Star Trek: The Original Series* to the *Millennium Falcon* of *Star Wars*, the spaceship can both represent an entire subcreation and, to non-SF fans, act as a symbol for the genre as a whole. Certainly it is central to the entire concept of *Hitchhikers*; how could anyone hitchhike the galaxy without ships? No hitchhiker expects to walk the whole way, even on Earth, and Galactic hitchhikers simply could not. In the Primary World, the shape of the spaceship is limited, as they are dependent on rockets for propulsion; in SF, the spaceship can be any shape the worldbuilder wants, particularly those ships which are not intended to land on planets, and therefore do not need to worry about aerodynamics. *Star Trek* is notable for this; although Federation ships are usually sleek, the separate and

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138 Arguably *Star Trek's* Enterprise represents all of these, as Captain Kirk's ship is capable of travelling long distances in space, can afford to resupply anywhere it needs to, has a heroic and intelligent crew, and has the political and military might of the United Federation of planets behind it.
delicate looking warp nacelles on the Enterprise make it clear it is not designed to handle atmospheric stresses. Despite this freedom in design, many SF spaceships remain associated with the shape of the rocket, not just for the practicalities of explaining their propulsion, but also because it is recognisable. Nevertheless, the spaceship has a loaded history, and is problematic as a symbol for SF. The spaceship was first used as an SF symbol in 1934, originally as part of the emblem for the Science Fiction League launched by Hugo Gernsback (Westfahl 8). In the 1940s and 1950s, a number of SF publishers began to use the spaceship as part of their logo, particularly in titles aimed at younger readers (9-11). Two problems arose from its use: not only does the image of a spaceship - and other symbols used by early SF magazines and publishers, such as atoms or planets - provide only limited reflections of the genre, spaceships in particular came to be associated with juvenile SF (14). According to Gary Westfahl, symbols for SF spring not from the literature itself, but are "created by people with specific opinions about the nature and priorities of that literature" (18). As seen earlier, creating a verbal definition of SF is a difficult task in itself, and choosing a single symbol to encompass the genre is much more difficult; one of Gernsback's earlier attempts was a spectacular - if somewhat overloaded - image of an eye filled with various technological achievements and labourers (2-3). Simpler images may be easier to take in at a glance, but they are subject to excluding many texts within the mode, with Aldiss concerned symbols like the spaceship ignored and/or concealed the diversity of SF (Trillion Year Spree 28). Harlan Ellison found the exclusionary result of the spaceship as symbol particularly upsetting:

The public image of what is, and what ain't, science fiction film-an image as twisted as one of Tod Browning's freaks-is the result of decades of paraloga, arrogant stupidity, conscious flummery, and amateurism that have comprised the universal curriculum of milieu that passes for filmic
education for a gullible audience. If it goes bangity-bang in space; if it
throbs and screams and breaks out of its shell with slimy malevolence; if it
seeks to enslave your body, your mind, your gonads or your planet; if it
looks cuddly and beeps a lot, it's "sci-fi."... Thus, when one is asked by
the Director of an upcoming Film Festival what mov-ies should be
scheduled as peachykeen for the "Sci-Fi Section," and you suggest Charly,
Seconds, Wild in the Streets [1968], and Yellow Submarine [1968], expect
the querulous stare and the reply, "But that ain't sci-fi." Not a cranking
spaceship or giant arachnid as far as the eye can glom.' (qtd in Westfahl 14).

The spaceship then, along with its associated genre of space opera, rightly or
wrongly, is often associated with a negative view of SF as a whole, with Westfahl
concerned the symbol not only influenced reader expectations, but also whether,
consciously or not, it influenced what editors would look for, particularly in the Winston
juvenile SF books, for whom the spaceship was the overriding symbol (16). However, it is
an important worldbuilding tool, if only as the means for characters to reach other worlds,
and explore the subcreation's physical laws not only on other planets, but also in space.
The spaceship can also be a distillation of SF technology; showcasing what is
technologically possible and impossible in a subcreation.\textsuperscript{139} \textit{Star Trek} was particularly
adept at such exploration of its subcreation via the \textit{Enterprise}, such as when the ship is
used to time travel by means of a slingshot around the sun in "Assignment Earth"; without
the ship, there would be no way to represent this or any other representation of physics in
\textit{Star Trek}. Indeed, without the ship, and Roddenberry's strange attractor of FTL and a
densely populated universe, \textit{Star Trek} could not have been written.

\textsuperscript{139} Perhaps the greatest difficulty in creating spaceships is in how far scientific prediction can go: after a
certain point, the technology in an SF text reaches the limits of the writer’s imagination and risks entering
into pure nonsense or fantasy, making it difficult or impossible to extrapolate into the future of the text; this
can be seen from the lack of in-text SF narratives in texts such as later series of \textit{Star Trek} (Harwood-Smith).
Despite his wariness of the symbol, Aldiss could still seem enamoured of it: "The Starship is the key that unlocks the great bronze doors of space opera and lets mankind run loose among all the other immensities" (Space Opera 235). However, it was not until 1995 that Aldiss seemed to have softened, if not reversed his opinion on the spaceship; responding to Gary Westfahl's article "Wanted: A Symbol for Science Fiction", Aldiss said spaceships "are still the treasures of our imagination" ("On Symbols" 298). The reason for this, which Aldiss developed, is spaceships embody "the belief that one day we might travel by means as yet unknown to distances as yet unknown" (298). This last point is the most relevant for worldbuilding; the spaceship is the means of reaching other worlds, giving the author the opportunity to experiment with worldbuilding on a scale realist genres may not reach. In Hitchhiker's the spaceship is a point of escape, not just from the destruction of Earth Prime, but also for Arthur and Fenchurch when they decide to leave Backup Earth (Adams Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF 571). The joke of Hitchhiker's, however, is Arthur and Fenchurch will never find the meaning absent for them on Backup Earth, as the entire universe is meaningless.

While the spaceship does not - and should not - represent SF as a whole, it is certainly the symbol for the genre of space opera, of which Hitchhiker's is a member if a peculiar one. Space opera, like its mode of transport, has suffered from the presumption of its juvenile trappings. Csicsery-Ronay Jr defines space opera as

spectacular romances set in vast, exotic outer spaces, where larger-than-life protagonists encounter a variety of alien species, planetary cultures, futuristic technologies (especially weapons, spaceships and space stations), and sublime physical phenomena. (218)

Certainly Adams was familiar with this view of space opera, as evidenced in the description of the time of the Former Galactic Empire: "Far back in the mists of ancient
time, in the great and glorious days of the Former Galactic Empire, life was wild, rich, and on the whole tax free (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 53). Like Csicsery-Ronay's definition, Adams's description implies great and grandiose adventures, and stereotyped characters, but with displacements unique to *Hitchhiker's*: the tax free comment is meant to anticipate and mock the bureaucracy of the present of *Hitchhiker's*, and to imply, unlike their adventurous antecedents, the modern inhabitants of Adams's subcreation lack an enterprising spirit, while "to boldly split infinitives" is a friendly dig at *Star Trek*'s grammatically incorrect motto "to boldly go where no one has gone before". The line about starships, italicised because it was cut for time, helps to identify the difficulty with Csicsery-Ronay's definition, which emphasises action rather than on setting. Adams and the producers of *Hitchhiker's Radio* were confident enough to remove this line because in a space opera, across all media, the spaceship is fundamentally implied; the audience will always presume a ship is involved in space opera because, with few exceptions, it has to be. Worldbuilding in space opera is typically associated with action; in *Rendezvous with Rama*, it is the appearance of the alien ship and its subsequent exploration which exposes Clarke's worldbuilding, while *2001: A Space Odyssey*’s visuals are generally associated with movement of some kind, such as the finale, in which David Bowman appears to fly through a range of cosmic structures. Le Guin's Hainish Cycle, while descriptive, is dependent upon the action of exploring another planet and its culture. Setting and action in space opera are permanently intertwined, however, the critical focus on action, and presumption of setting as a matter of course, leads not only to a general disregard of the genre, but also contributes to the gap in worldbuilding criticism. Further, the characters of space opera need not be larger than life, though their actions can be, as with the intellectual and realistically drawn characters of *Rendezvous with Rama* and *2001: A Space

\[140\] The most notable exception to this is *Stargate SG-1*, in which travel across the galaxy is achieved via the eponymous Stargate. However, it should be noted ships play a significant role in the series as well.

\[141\] This is also true of narrative fiction in general, as landscape theory is relatively recent.
Odyssey; while both feature alien technology, if not aliens themselves, and sublime physical phenomena, they are almost everyday in their approach to science and characterisation. If Csicsery-Ronay Jr's definition is seen as a strict description of space opera, both *Rendezvous with Rama* and *2001: A Space Odyssey* are arguably eliminated from the genre on these grounds. This goes back to the assumption of the juvenility of spaceships and space opera; there is a presumption that space opera must include something more akin to fantasy, particularly sword and sorcery, than SF. It should be swashbuckling, reducing the distance between stars to mere days rather than years, and with a whiff of the pulp magazine about it, and certainly should be concerned with careful worldbuilding. There was a time when space opera actually was a relatively juvenile genre, notably in the days before John Campbell took over the SF magazine *Astounding* in 1937 (A. Roberts *Science Fiction* 75-78). Campbell was famous for his influence on all SF, encouraging writers whose science was excellent but whose storytelling was dire to improve the latter skill, and vice versa. Certainly later writers showed space opera could be intellectually and writerly on a higher level, from Clarke and Kubrick's work to Frank Herbert's *Dune* saga, which touches on issues of religious and political significance, and Le Guin's anthropological Hainish Cycle. Le Guin's secondary world involves realistic portrayals of interstellar travel alongside fantastic aliens, while Herbert's *Dune* saga uses the semi-mystical melange to make space travel possible. At the heart of both Herbert and Le Guin's subcreations are relatively ordinary people, living in extraordinary circumstances, just as Arthur does in *Hitchhiker's*. However, unlike Arthur, Herbert and Le Guin's characters generally act as driving forces, Arthur is simply dragged along, a reluctant non-hero in his own story, beside whom Bilbo Baggins in the opening chapters of *The Hobbit* looks heroic. While Csicsery-Ronay Jr's definition is a useful beginning, and certainly points to the popular understanding of the genre, Clarke, Kubrick, Herbert, Le
Guin, and a host of other space opera writers point to a depth the genre can possess far beyond that of *Flash Gordon*. Even *Star Trek*, while maintaining a level of sensationalism necessary to keep an audience, used space opera to explore race and gender inequality, and to imagine a culturally utopian human society. For this thesis, space opera will be considered not just as a juvenile genre, but one which ranges from the juvenile sensationalism to the thoughtfully constructed fable, and will be understood to mean any text which is set on a spaceship or alien planet, or both; thus, *Hitchhiker's* is unarguably a space opera, and demonstrates Adams's understanding of the genre; by placing the quintessential Englishman in the central role, and juxtaposing wondrous and impossible places and technology with the fecklessness of characters such as Zaphod Beeblebrox, he both acknowledges and reinvents space opera, displacing the expectations of sensational heroism with farce and Arthur the reluctant adventurer. In *Hitchhiker's*, space is no longer a place where a great Empire, a lost Golden Age (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio 53*). It is a bolthole for the last everyday Englishman; with the exception of a cup of tea and, in *Mostly Harmless*, gainful employment beyond selling DNA samples, Arthur generally finds everything he needs, to the point where he has a bag of souvenirs on his return to Earth in *Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF* (466). In addition, Adams acknowledges the scope space opera presents; with the exception of high fantasy as in *The Lord of the Rings*, there are few genres with as much worldbuilding potential as space opera; without the need to use familiar surroundings, the space opera writer has total freedom within the bounds of their universal laws. The universe can be as close to the Primary World or as far from it as the author can convince their audience; this conviction rests on the author's skill in conveying their world and remaining consistent in their worldbuilding. Le Guin cannot allow her characters to have FTL travel, but allows the invention of faster than light communication

142 There is, of course, a hole in the bag and Arthur has lost much of its contents (*Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF* 466).
in *The Dispossessed*, and Adams can legitimately invent a species capable of inventing deodorant before the wheel (*Hitchhiker's Novel REU* 155).

It is the almost infinite potential of the genre which is the prime or chief appeal of space opera for writers and audience alike; it aligns itself with both voyage narratives and the epic, commingling the quest with the desire to see a different place. It is a genre which admits hitchhikers and stowaways, although Adams approaches worldbuilding in space opera not from a position of exploration and wonder, but from humour, so his hitchhikers are neither fugitives nor adventure seekers expected in space opera, but are instead that traditionally hapless creature, tourists. Unlike conventional space opera, *Hitchhiker's* does not, from the point of view of anyone but humanity, have any strange new worlds left. Unlike *Star Trek* or the Hainish Cycle, there are no blank spaces in the map which hitchhikers will fill in; instead of mapping, Arthur is encountering a fully realised verbal map through the Guide, and has no useful function on the voyage. And while Ford asks Arthur to help him with the next edition of the Guide, it is intended only as an update to the existing map; thus the entry on Vogons needs to be changed to mention they have hired the Dentrassi as cooks, thus allowing hitchhikers to board a Vogon ship, though presumably there will be a note added about being blasted into space once discovered (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 27, 39). This alters the dynamic of worldbuilding for Adams; rather than having the audience feel they are exploring an unknown universe with Arthur, encountering strange new worlds and epic adventures, they instead feel as if they are being shown a known universe with him on what is, essentially, an enforced and extended holiday. The Guide and Narrator are the perfect tools for accomplishing this particular type of worldbuilding, namely as the ostensibly already experienced traveller; just as an earthly hitchhiker relies on their travel guides and fellow hitchhikers for information on what to expect from place to place, the audience relies on the Guide to fill in the worldbuilding
gaps in the text, particularly in *Hitchhiker's Radio*, whose worldbuilding potential is limited by the need to present everything as dialogue. Without the Guide, Adams would have needed the characters to describe their surroundings constantly, which would often only make sense for Arthur, as Ford, Zaphod, and Trillian would not comment on anything familiar. Instead, the narrative is repeatedly interrupted by the Narrator filling in physical or historical details, and on one occasion, to reassure the audience of the immediate safety of the main cast of characters, to reduce stress (*Hitchhiker's Radio* 55-56). While hitchhiking tends to deny Aldiss's need for human scientific ingenuity, or, indeed, Steve Higgins declaration of spaceships as "symbols of Man's power over nature and the universe, or equally of unity and camaraderie between men" (13), there is ingenuity in *Hitchhiker's*, albeit alien, and not human. The presence of a Former Galactic Empire, quests for the meaning of life, and actual green bug-eyed monsters confirm *Hitchhiker's* is functioning as a displacement of the space opera.

There are two main features of space opera, which, for this thesis, will be examined separately. The first, which is the focus of this chapter, are the spaceships themselves, already arguably a defamiliarisation of the ship in sea fiction, and are displaced in *Hitchhiker's* for comedic effect. The second feature of space opera, which will be examined in Chapter Four, are the other worlds, which in *Hitchhiker's* function as a displacement not only of the expected SF worldbuilding but also of travel writing, coming at a time when foreign holidays were becoming more common for the average Briton. Before examining the spaceship, it is important to understand what it defamiliarises, namely, sea fiction.

Worldbuilding in sea fiction is as reliant upon the ship as in space opera; in both, the ship becomes both a vessel and a locus in its own right. They also share the same
difficulties; the ship acts as a world in both, but needs resupplying, in terms of food, or with fuel. Sea ships in older sea fiction rely primarily upon the wind, while spaceships rely upon their engines and both depend on the ingenuity of their crew to keep in working order. Ships in both genres also serve as showcases for technology; the Pequod of Moby Dick is as much a demonstration of whaling technology as The Heart of Gold is a demonstration of the Drive. Like the Pequod, Adams's ships all have a function, but as they exist in a comedy universe, these purposes are often either ridiculous, as in the stuntship whose only purpose is to be destroyed, humourously cruel, as in Golgafrincham Ark B, whose only purpose was to strand the useless elements of the population on a prehistoric planet, or at odds with all common sense, as seen with the strange effects of the Drive and the Bistromath. To give a ship a function in Hitchhiker's immediately adds a comedic element to said function; the most beautiful ship Zaphod and Ford can find is one which is dangerous to the crew (Hitchhiker's Radio 99), while The Heart of Gold and Bistromath, which both seek to sidestep the laws of the universe, can only do so while making themselves look ridiculous. One of the most magnificent ships in Hitchhiker's, naturally named Starship Titanic, intended to be near-indestructible, is destroyed because of a misguided though innocent attempt to use improbability fields to prevent anything unlikely going wrong with the ship (Hitchhiker's LUE 370); however, in Hitchhiker's, attempting to prevent the improbable, particularly if it would be funny in some way, always leads to it happening, and thus, upon its launch, undergoes "a sudden and gratuitous total existence failure" (370). Like all other ships, its function is twisted to meet the comedic needs of the universe; thus it is only fitting the most astonishing ship in Hitchhiker's, rather than being The Heart of Gold or The Bistromath, is in fact the rather

143 Star Trek sidesteps this issue by using food reconsituters - replaced in later series with replicators - but the majority of spaceships in fiction need actual food supplies.
144 The Pequod also has literal whalebones adorning the hull.
145 Adams was so enamoured of this idea, there is a video game Starship Titanic, in which the player explores the doomed ship in an effort to discover what happened, and a novel of the same name.
slipshod *Krikkit One*, and then only because it was designed and built in a back garden in a year (371). *Krikkit One's* only function is to demonstrate the existence of the rest of the universe to the people of Krikkit, to incite their xenophobic violence against it; however, it only fulfils its function because it is helped by the supercomputer Hactar. That it works is in defiance of the entire history of spaceflight on any planet, and it is a preposterous marvel. However, it is not just the function of individual ships which *Hitchhiker's* displaces for comic effects, but the general notion of travelling on ships, dating back to sea fiction.

Sea fiction is heavily invested in colonial discourse, British sea fiction more than any other. Bert Bender distinguishes British sea fiction from its American counterpart in that the former "emphasizes glorious extensions of empire or national victories at sea in war and commerce" (233). In this way, space opera is the descendent of British sea fiction in particular, as it is awash with:

- dominant Alliances, Hegemonies, Ekumens, Foundations, Empires,
- Cultures, and Federations, and their unassimilable rebels, turning the cosmos into a scene of political conflict between competing interests endowed with distinct technologies representing their motives. (Csicsery-Ronay Jr 224-225)

Whether benevolent or otherwise, space opera is inclined towards imperial tropes; in a way, *Star Trek: The Original Series* could be interpreted as *Hornblower* in space,\(^{146}\) though the Federation's intent of peaceful co-existence is at odds with Imperial Britain's assumption of superiority over the undeveloped world, bringing the world the benefits of common law, Christianity, and Shakespeare. It is the Prime Directive, which forbids interfering with another culture, which mitigates *Star Trek's* imperialist impulses, but few

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\(^{146}\) The showrunners were clearly aware of the similarities, as 1994's *Star Trek: Generations* features a holodeck scene in which a promotion ceremony is carried out on the bridge of an 18th century British military vessel.
space opera texts are so altruistic, with *Dune* and *Foundation* both featuring conquering cultures, whether by force or social manipulation. Further, because "of the astronomical scale of its physical setting, and the requirement that its plot involve plural worlds, social and political matters in space opera tend to expand to imperial dimensions" (Csicsery-Ronay Jr 223). Adams was clearly aware of these imperial tendencies and possibilities in space opera, and used Arthur to displace them. Arthur cannot be accused of imperial yearnings: despite being British; the universe of *Hitchhiker's* simply does not do post-colonialism. Britain does not haunt any non-human's understanding of self, and, aside from his desire for tea, Arthur is not interested in any sort of cultural reconfiguring. The closest Arthur comes to trying to reorganise the universe around British cultural norms is his attempt to explain tea to the Nutri-Matic, which naturally becomes a farce:

He told the Nutri-Matic about India, he told it about China, he told it about Ceylon. He told it about broad leaves drying in the sun. He told it about silver teapots. He told it about summer afternoons on the lawn. He told it about putting in the milk before the tea so it wouldn't get scalded. He even told it (briefly) about the history of the East India Company. (Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel REU* 161)

The Nutri-Matic's response is "You want the taste of dried leaves boiled in water?" (161). However, it shortly takes up all the computing power on *The Heart of Gold* to try to figure out how to synthesise tea, because Arthur has not just described tea, but the cultural expectations behind it, which carry all the weight of British colonial power. Arguably, Arthur's inability to find a cup of tea is not because there is no tea, as the Drive was created in part from a cup of tea; rather, Arthur cannot find British tea, and nothing can taste like it as Britain, and its tea, are gone. It is the only instance of Arthur attempting to impose vaguely colonial values on the greater universe, and almost results in the death of everyone.
aboard The Heart of Gold, as the computer is so caught up in trying to produce tea which will match Arthur's cultural expectations. Cultural colonialism, Adams implies, is incomprehensible, ridiculous, and dangerous, and should not be released on the universe at large. American sea fiction, though not overtly imperial, did develop "nationalistic and progressive patterns similar to those found in narratives of exploration" (Lenz 29), and the ideal of improving oneself and one's culture through exploration is one which also appears in more utopian space operas, like Star Trek, though this can be inverted in series like Battlestar Galactica in which contact with the only other sentient species, the Cylons, invariably leads to war.

There are shared expectations in both sea fiction and space opera; both can involve a ship at some point, a voyage, a reference to a point of departure, descriptions of daily life aboard ship, other countries/planets, sea/space as a force to be overcome, and encountering other ships, to name but a few. On a purely physical level, there can be huge differences between sea ships and spaceships; sea ships are, generally, at the mercy of the elements, with limited space for crew and passengers. While real spaceships share the claustrophobic setting of the quarters in sea fiction, fictional spaceships are free to be more luxurious, closer to modern cruise ships than maritime whaling ships. The Heart of Gold is beautiful, spacious, and comfortable, and the crew hate it. It, and most of the ships in Hitchhiker's, are everything sea ships were not: climate controlled, with stable floors and food on demand. However, the luxury in Hitchhiker's only serves as an irritation; there is no challenge to the spaceships, and unlike the sea, space is not being conquered but politely stepped across. The dangers in space in Hitchhiker's come either from other sentient species, as in the Vogons or the Haggunenons, or from the ships themselves, as in the stuntship. While ships in sea fiction are often tasked with protecting their civilisation, it is very rarely only one ship which must carry the burden; in space opera, the lone ship
standing against the destruction of entire worlds is not uncommon, with the *Enterprise* often facing battles against giant amoeba or insane space probes on its own. However, in *Star Trek* there is a strong implication there is a fleet of ships ready to take over should the *Enterprise* fail; while *Hitchhiker's* does feature a single ship attempting to save the galaxy, Slartibartfast's *Bistromath*, it is doing so as part of an historical conservation movement rather than any sense of justice or duty.

The ship in SF has two primary functions: it is a place for the characters to inhabit between other places, and therefore a locus in itself as well as a means of travel to other loci. As this thesis understands worldbuilding to be written into the landscapes of *Hitchhiker's*, spaceships will be considered as landscapes in their own right, as they are not only physical spaces, but also, like planetary landscapes, representative of their culture's aesthetics and technology. It may seem counterintuitive to call a spaceship a landscape; landscapes should have weather, ecosystems, and the palimpsest which demonstrate how the landscape has changed over deep time, and how events in the past have shaped the surface (Goudie and Viles 2). This long history is superficially absent in the spaceship but it does represent the whole history of its home planet, and though there is nothing natural in its construction, we shall see that this is also true of many of Adams's worlds.¹⁴⁷ Unlike planets, spaceships are a contained space which encapsulate in their construction an encyclopaedia of culture, physics, and science of a world. Indeed, the Earth itself has often been referred to as a spaceship, with the earliest example from Henry George in 1879: "We sail through space as if on a well-provisioned ship. If food above deck seems to grow scarce, we simply open a hatch—and there is a new supply" (136). While a spaceship is not as sturdy as a planet, in deep space, there is no other landscape surrounding the characters, and despite the thin hull, it supports life just as much as a planet does. For the

¹⁴⁷ The exception to this is organic spaceships in SF, such as *Doctor Who's* TARDIS and *Farscape's* Moya, both of which have evolved into spaceships.
duration of a journey, the ship is the only landscape. It is a travelling island, the characters experience and interact with as they would an island, with all the narrative possibilities that implies. Peter Conrad says on "an island, you are disconnected, with water all around you... The location is by definition eccentric, because it acknowledges that there is a centre elsewhere" (6). This other centre is also felt from the spaceship, as it carries the culture of its creators with it, while at the same time acting as its own place. This travelling sense of place is one of the most unusual aspect of spaceships in SF, and as such, the spaceship as locus, and not as a means of travel, will be the primary focus of this chapter.

However, the spaceship as locus is further complicated and seriously destabilised when it is paired with an inhabiting Artificial Intelligence, or AI. While spaceships are generally seen as positive, if *jejune*, elements in SF, the AI is again and again depicted negatively, particularly when it controls a restricted space. Even when an AI is unthreatening, whether apparently or actually, it still makes human characters uneasy, as in R. Daneel Olivaw in Asimov's *Caves of Steel*. By placing AIs into ships in *Hitchhiker's*, Adams is both giving his audience something they would have come to expect, but he is treating them as narrative devices comparable to a set of *genii loci*, or spirits of the place, powerful inhabitants of the ship landscapes, particularly on *The Heart of Gold*, which is intentionally infested with literally hundreds of AIs. By treating them as *genii loci*, Adams is creating characters benign or otherwise which are servants, and yet which are in some ways little gods who must be negotiated with or placated; Eddie's initial refusal to allow the crew to disembark on Magrathea is an example of pleading, though in this instance, it is the threat of reprogramming via axe rather than petitioning. However, the integration of AI into ships is the equivalent of making a landscape a sentient and potentially dangerous entity, with agency of its own. While ships are already potentially liable to accident or attack, sentient ships add another layer of danger, a fear of an enemy among them, because
they theoretically have the ability to kill the crew on a whim. To the extent it controls the space of the ship, AI can be interpreted as the SF equivalent of a god in Arcadia, with the inherent fear of a god's unfathomable moods. AIs integrated into the ship see the ship as their bodies; rather than them infesting the ship, the crew infests the AI's body. AI then transforms ships from merely physical locations with character into actual characters; thus, sentient ships can be considered conscious landscapes. As such, when discussing the landscape of ships which have at least one AI in *Hitchhiker's*, the inhabiting character of the ships is as important as the ship's physical reality.

When examining spaceships in *Hitchhiker's*, two of the three types present in SF must be considered: the non-sentient technological ship and the sentient technological ship. The difference between these is the difference between character and characterisation. The relevance of ship character in *Hitchhiker's* relates back to the rules of Adams's subcreation; as spaceships are, essentially, robots, they will not behave as expected, but rather conform first to the laws of comedy in the subcreation. The meaninglessness of life is reinforced by the inability to make computers work as they should, particularly when they are sentient. Insentient ships can also have character, as was often seen in sea fiction. Consider Ishmael's first description of *Pequod*:

you never saw such a rare old craft as this same rare old Pequod. She was a ship of the old school, rather small if anything; with an old-fashioned claw-footed look about her. Long seasoned and weather-stained in the typhoons and calms of all four oceans, her old hull's complexion was darkened like a French grenadier's, who has alike fought in Egypt and Siberia. Her venerable bows looked bearded. Her masts - cut somewhere on the coast of Japan, where her original ones were lost overboard in a gale - her masts stood stiffly up like the spines of the three old kings of Cologne. Her
ancient decks were worn and wrinkled, like the pilgrim-worshipped flagstone in Canterbury Cathedral where Beckett bled. (Melville 77)

Of his other two choices for whaling boat, Ishmael gives no description. It is the sight of Pequod, the character of the ship, which is important to him. There is no way to know if the other two ships were in better condition; indeed, it is Pequod's trophies which appealed to Ishmael: "She was apparelled like any barbaric Ethiopian emperor, his neck heavy with pendants of polished ivory" (78). The openness of her whaling history appeals to him, as does what he perceives to be her character: "A noble craft, but somehow a most melancholy! All noble things are touched with that" (78).

The direct SF corollary to the traditional sea vessel is the non-sentient technological ship, which will never interact directly with the crew, but which appears to have character. The difficulty in SF is often to find a literary ship as well-known as those in visual media; while Rama is described, it is an extended, and, for the average reader, perhaps over-detailed description; in an effort to keep the narrative from stagnating, the author must sometimes sacrifice description, which is why the exteriors of The Heart of Gold and the Golgafrinchem Ark B are never described in Hitchhiker's Radio. Two of the best known examples of visual spaceships, Enterprise in Star Trek, and The Millennium Falcon in Star Wars, would have been familiar to Adams. Both ships have character, but of a different kind; Enterprise is sleek and filled with five hundred crewmembers, the halls bustling with activity, and the circuitry hidden. By comparison, The Millennium Falcon is apparently falling to pieces, but like Pequod, has an appeal to those who live aboard. Enterprise would be considered the pride of the United Federation of Planets, yet its systems fail on a regular basis, and on some occasions, are sabotaged. It is more common in SF for a rundown ship to possess character. In an ideal world, only top of the line ships would be used for space travel, for safety if for no other reason; however, it would appear, as with The
Millennium Falcon, there is a symbiotic relationship between a ship and her crew. Regardless of how run-down the ship is, they will value it above any better ship, simply because it is their run-down ship.

This contradiction of the unreliable ship as a safe haven is perplexing. If the ship is a landscape, surely stability is a major requirement? Such ships could be equated to Arthur's house; it may not be attractive to others, but it has appeal to those living aboard. It is the landscape equivalent of living next to a mildly dangerous natural feature, such as an irregularly flooding river. If proper precautions are taken, it is possible - and possibly even pleasant - to live there. Han Solo may not always have the resources to repair The Millennium Falcon, but he does what he can. Captain Kirk may have the full resources of the Federation to repair Enterprise, but he is often far from a starbase and must make his repairs on the run. Ultimately it is the character of the ships, their faults as well as their strengths, is what engenders the loyalty of their crew.

Unlike The Millennium Falcon, there is no fear Adams's non-sentient ships will not respond as they are expected. Adams, perhaps frustrated by his own difficulties with technology (Salmon of Doubt 85-91), envisaged a world where it functioned as advertised, even to the point of being unhelpful to the characters. The cost, however, is the character of the ships. They do not endear themselves to anyone by needing love; rather they simply exist and function. As landscapes they are bland and inoffensive, mildly comedic but not as farcical as they could be, and are certainly the least amusing locations in Hitchhiker's. Therefore, the ultimate appeal of non-sentient technological ships in SF may be the ability to control them, regardless of how run-down they are. For Adams, the comedic value of these ships lies in too much control, to the detriment of people's lives, displacing the reassuring safety of non-sentient ships with impossible to defeat danger.
How then does Adams include non-sentient technological spaceships in the space opera genre and humorously displace the meanings described here, and how do they function as landscapes? The three main non-sentient ships in *Hitchhiker's*, the Vogon ship, the Haggunnon flagship/*Disaster Area* stuntship and the Golgafrinchem Ark B, are always identified either by their species or purpose. They have no names of their own, and therefore no inherent character to them. The Vogon flagship in fig. 10 immediately displaces Arthur and the audience's expectation of the marvellous spaceship, as it is dingy and unpleasant:

Fig. 10. Arthur and Ford in Vogon ship interior, *Hitchhiker's TV*.

*Hitchhiker's TV* makes it appear almost unfinished, while *Hitchhiker's Film* plays up the drabness, even dressing the Vogons in cardigans to emphasise the sense of dull, mindless bureaucracy, as can be seen in fig. 11:
Hitchhiker's Illustrated alters the dynamic somewhat; rather than simply being drab, there is water on the floors of the Vogon ship - see fig. 12 not only reflecting their frog-like appearance, but implying a sense of rot and mould:

The joke of these images is this is Arthur's first introduction to the universe outside of Earth with its amazing technology, and it is squalid and depressing. Arthur's first reaction puts this into words:"It's a bit squalid, isn't it?" (Adams Hitchhiker's Radio 26).
When asked what he expected, he replies "Well I don't know. Gleaming control panels, flashing lights, computer screens. Not old mattresses" (26). *Hitchhiker's Game* has a similar description: "a squalid room filled with grubby mattresses, unwashed cups, and unidentifiable bits of smelly alien underwear" (Section 3.2 Vogon Hold). While the old mattresses are in the cooks' sleeping quarters, it is not difficult to imagine the Vogons' quarters are not much better. However, there is further comedy in the Vogon ship, as it is surprisingly efficient, despite the bureaucratic nature of its creators. The destruction of Earth is carried out with ease, as is the expelling of Arthur and Ford into space (*Hitchhiker's Radio* 36, 62). There are no misfires, no malfunctioning doors; it operates exactly as it should, without causing any problems for the Vogons, even if its proper functioning is a problem for Arthur and Ford. As Ford points out when Arthur complains about the mess, the Vogon ship is a working one (47); it is not intended to be beautiful, it is intended to function properly. Aside from its reliability, as a landscape there is nothing comfortable about the Vogon ship; the airlock from which Ford and Arthur are expelled is as bleak and unforgiving as the rest of the ship, behind "a large circular steel hatchway of massive strength and weight" and is "a brightly polished cylindrical chamber about six feet in diameter and ten feet long" in *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2* (60-61). The comedy of this is in comparison with the rest of the squalid Vogon ship, the airlock sounds like something Arthur might have appreciated if it were not the intended instrument of his death. *Hitchhiker's TV* and *Film* do not use this juxtaposition, instead opting to keep the airlock as dank and ugly as the rest of the ship:
Fig. 13. Arthur and Ford in the Vogon airlock, *Hitchhiker's TV*.

Fig. 14. Arthur and Ford in the Vogon airlock, *Hitchhiker's Film*.

The visual joke shared by fig. 13 and fig. 14 is the square shape of the airlock in both, coupled with the complete lack of instruments or hatches. Unlike in other space operas, there are no useful panels for Ford to uncover and save them - although he does, inexplicably, pretend to find one and gives Arthur false hope - and, indeed, his plan, in all versions, depends on being on the other side of the hatch into the airlock. It is a place of
complete hopelessness, an inescapable death trap.\(^{148}\) It is an unforgiving and as unrelenting as the Vogons themselves, and, for Arthur and the audience, a depressing and worrying introduction to the greater universe.\(^{149}\)

The second non-sentient ship, Haggunenon warship, later the Disaster Area stuntship, is as efficient as the Vogon ship though at first glance it lacks even the basic character of its creators, an anonymity raised to the comedic sublime; "When you try and operate one of these weird black controls which are labelled in black on a black background a small black light lights up black to let you know you've done it" (Hitchhiker's Radio 103). In both versions Adams presents valid reasons for the unusual layout of the black ship, quite subtly so in Hitchhiker's Radio, in which it is the Haggunenon Admiral's ship, head of the Chameleoid Death Flotilla. The Haggunenons experience evolution remarkably swiftly, literally evolving within moments to meet their specific requirements; Adams's example is of their evolving into something with longer arms in order to reach a coffee spoon, but, as this is the Hitchhiker's universe, once they do so, they are probably no longer able to drink coffee (112). The Haggunenons are another example of a frustrated bypass; their chromosomes, described by Adams as "impatient" (112), are an attempt to bypass the inconveniences of life, such as getting up to get the coffee spoon. The result, unfortunately, is the new inconvenience of being unable to drink coffee. The other result of the Haggunenon's physical instability is visible in the ship's design; the black ship is culturally blank, emitting light neither in the physical nor the cultural sense. Like the Haggunenons, it has no real meaning, and no real sense of place,

\(^{148}\) Ironically, it is this space which inspired Adams to create the Drive; its very inescapability led to a writer's block which only ended when Adams watched a program on judo, which describes using an opponent's strength as its weakness (Hitchhiker's Radio 51). The very improbability of Arthur and Ford's escape from the airlock, and their certain death, helped create the Drive, and informed the universal laws of Hitchhiker's.

\(^{149}\) It also has an obvious successor in British SF TV, in the form of the mining ship Red Dwarf in the series of the same name. While the officer levels of Red Dwarf are suitably advanced and futuristic for the time, the lower levels are usually dark, characterised by grimy gratings, and are typically where the various alien monsters the crew encounters go to hide. The lower levels are reminiscent of the Vogon vessel because they are the signs it is a working ship, whose concerns are about efficiency rather than aesthetics.
and, presumably, is invisible against the blackness of space, appearing only as black patch among the stars. This is further emphasised by the discovery the chair is a Haggunenon, which promptly attempts to eat Arthur, Ford, Zaphod, and Trillian (113-114). There is no space on the Haggunenon ship which can be relied on as safe and secure; it is a black landscape filled with monsters and, apparently, nothing else.

In *Hitchhiker's Novel REU*, the black ship is emblazoned with the logo of the band *Disaster Area*, and it is meant to be dropped into the sun as a climax to a rock song (254). However, unlike the Haggunenon warship, the stuntship's design is meant to be cool and stylish, a black mark intended not to hide among the stars, but to stand out against a sun. Like its owner, Hotblack Desiato, who wears platinum suits and is spending a year dead for tax purposes, the stuntship is garishly stylish, designed primarily to make an impression, as can be seen in fig. 15 and fig. 16. Aside from the visual joke of a functionally inoperable spaceship, it is obviously a nod to the shock rock performances of certain bands; but unlike the Who, who only broke their guitars, *Disaster Area* create solar flares with their stuntships. The choice to steal the stuntship says more about Ford and Zaphod's desire for style than their knowledge of ships; rather than take a reliable ship, they steal the *Hitchhiker's* equivalent of a Ferrari. Leaving aside the problem of stealing such a recognisable ship, which Zaphod had already done at least once, they inadvertently steal the deadliest ship possible:

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150 A *Disaster Area* concert is so loud, the technicians testing the sound equipment have to stay in orbit, as "Anyone within five miles of the speaker silos wouldn't have survived the tuning up" (*Hitchhiker's Novel REU* 251).
The stuntship, arguably, is a pointless, meaningless creation, beautiful but intended for nothing but destruction, a displacement of the noble purpose a stylish SF ship should possess. Like the Vogon ship, the stuntship follows its programming to the letter, and
appears to be unchangeable. When the ship returns from Milliways to its own time, it appears impossible to rescue Arthur, Ford, Zaphod, Trillian, and Marvin from falling into the sun, or, if not impossible, then the stage crew are not actually interested in doing so (Hitchhiker's Novel REU 254). There are not even any escape pods, as on the Hagggunenon warship, as the stuntship is never intended to carry passengers; its only purpose is to be destroyed spectacularly and pointlessly (254). As this purpose is comic enough, the universe is content to allow it, with the addition of the inadvertent creation of a paradise on the nearby planet, in direct contradiction to the prediction of environmentalists (256-257).

The third major non-sentient ship in Hitchhiker's is the Golgafrincham Ark B, a sequence which was originally written for a Ringo Starr show but did not get used (Adams Hitchhiker's Radio 127). The Ark B is populated by those considered most useless by their society, including hairdressers, phone booth cleaners, insurance salesmen, personnel officers and management consultants (Hitchhiker's Radio 118). They are set apart from the political leaders, scientists, artists, and those who did the actual work, who are permitted to remain on Golgafrincham (119). Their attempt to improve their society by removing the useless members is derailed and displaced by the subcreation's humorous nature when they are wiped out by "a virulent disease contracted from a dirty telephone" (121). The Ark B is programmed to crash into a primitive world, stranding the useless Golgafrinchams; the funniest part of this is the planet is Prehistoric Earth. During their escape from the Hagggunenon warship/stuntship, Arthur and Ford could have ended up anywhere and anywhen; however, the universe, constantly in search of a joke, chose to transport them to the Ark B. At first the Ark B appears to be a ghoulish ghost ship, as it seems to be carrying the corpses of telephone sanitisers and advertising account executives, who are soon revealed to be cryogenically frozen. It is an unusual ship; not only is the exterior shaped
like a flying saucer with corners, but the interior features such amenities as a bath on the bridge, as can be seen in fig. 17 and fig. 18:

Fig. 17. Golgafrincham Ark B exterior, *Hitchhiker's TV*.

Fig. 18. Golgafrincham Ark B Bridge, *Hitchhiker's TV*. 
The humour in the Ark B lies in the crew’s obliviousness to its function and their own uselessness; even though the Captain has been told they are completely useless, he does not care. It is the displacement of the ship's intention which is the most comedic element; not only are the useless Golgafrinchams the only survivors of their race, but they also disrupt the Earth's program. Ford is convinced the Golgafrinchams corrupted the program; thus the ship not only disrupts the Golgafrincham's plans but also the mice's plans. It is a ship which functions perfectly, but still disrupts everyone else's plans.

Adams also used the Ark B to humorously displace two SF tropes: the brave and brilliant colonials, and the brave refugees from a dying world. Unlike heroes in texts such as Battlestar Galactica, the Golgafrinchams are pathetic, and entirely unsuited to colonisation; their ship, with its bath on the bridge, is similarly ill-designed for colonisation. It is not designed to land safely on Prehistoric Earth, and there are few usable pieces left after the crash (Hitchhiker's Novel REU 274). Like the Disaster Area stuntship, it is intended to be destroyed, however, unlike the stuntship, there is malice in the design, as it is also meant to kill. The Golgafrinchams are foolish enough to believe a story about a space goat coming to eat their world, and willingly enter a ship over which they have no control, with the autopilot aimed squarely at Prehistoric Earth. Like the Hagggunenon warship/Disaster Area stuntship, once started, the Ark B cannot be diverted from its program, although the Golgafrinchams are not interested in changing course.

The second type of ship in Hitchhiker's is the sentient spaceship. Sentient computers are one of SF's primary fears; from HAL 9000 in 2001: A Space Odyssey to the M-5 in the Star Trek: The Original Series episode 'The Ultimate Computer', sentient computers are a threat not only to job security but also to human life. Like the spaceship, AI is a symbol of the future, but there is a distinct mistrust of AIs in virtually all SF, particularly a fear of AI taking over human lives and curtailing free will, particularly when
it is in control of the environment. When attached to a ship, the fear of the AI increases. Robbie the Robot in *Forbidden Planet* is seen as a kindly servant, but HAL, who fulfils many of the same functions as Robbie, namely keeping the crew alive - up to a certain point - and seeing to their needs, is met with more suspicion because it controls the environment, which Robbie cannot obviously do. Robbie's apparent harmlessness is reinforced throughout *Forbidden Planet*, while HAL's deadliness is confirmed as he attempts to kill off crewmen for no apparent reason. AI's integrated into ships are more dangerous because they are integrated into the landscapes themselves; rather than a safe haven, the ship is subject to the whims of the AI. Traditionally, landscape is an object, a place to be acted upon by its inhabitants. When inhabiting a spaceship, AI turns the landscape of spaceships into subjects, who can then act upon the characters themselves; if non-sentient ships are the technological equivalent of living near a river occasionally prone to flooding, AIs make a ship the technological equivalent of a potentially active volcano, an angry god whose wrath cannot be prevented or avoided. The sanctuary the ship should represent is undermined by the ship's ability to control the environment, and the unknowability of the ship's true motives. Humans on a sentient ship are akin to parasites; at any moment the ship could choose to kill them; while the same is true of a planet's surface, which can be as dangerous as an insane ship, there is no apparent malice in a planet's instability. AIs in *Hitchhiker's* are untrustworthy not because they can be dangerous, but because they serve humour before their creators. In *Hitchhiker's*, AIs are the instigators of comedic effect not only because they are controlling the landscape, but because they are obtusely single-minded; a prime example of this were the Breathe-O-Smart air conditioning systems, which were insistent the windows of all buildings had to be sealed as fresh air from outside was no longer necessary; this obstinacy, and its hubris in thinking it could never break down, led to riots and a some deaths by asphyxiation (*Hitchhiker's*
The comedic result of this obstinacy is Ford's ability to open a rocket proof window with a credit card (684).

The first, and most important sentient ship in *Hitchhiker's* is *The Heart of Gold*; it is not only the prototype of the Drive, but is the heart of the action for much of the first season of *Hitchhiker's Radio*, and is often returned to throughout the narrative. It is the most advanced ship in the galaxy, but Adams's subcreation cannot allow such a ship to be taken seriously; in every way it is supposed to function, it fails comically, and even the doors are smaller jokes in the overall narrative. From the exterior, the *Heart of Gold* can be juxtaposed with the Vogon ship; while the Vogon ship is ugly in all its incarnations, the *Heart of Gold* is exactly how Arthur would like a spaceship to be, shining and sleek (*Hitchhiker's Radio* 44). In *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2*, the *Heart of Gold* is described as "one hundred and fifty metres long, shaped like a sleek running shoe, perfectly white and mindboggingly beautiful" (42). The primary joke in here is the oddity of calling something shaped like a running shoe "mindboggingly beautiful" (42). Compared to the elegant Enterprise, or, indeed, any spaceship whose design is based on a rocket, *The Heart of Gold* appears ridiculous. *Hitchhiker's TV* based its design on this description, and the result in fig. 19 looks as funny as it sounds:

![Heart of Gold in Hitchhiker's TV.](image)

*Fig. 19. Heart of Gold in Hitchhiker's TV.*
Of course, how funny a spaceship looks is dependent as much on the audience as on the author; however, there is no doubt that a spaceship shaped like a shoe is more likely to cause displacement than *The Enterprise* in *Star Trek*. The further implication of this is, if *The Heart of Gold* is so beautiful, how ugly are the other spaceships in *Hitchhiker's*? However, this odd shoe design could be seen as a nod to the difficulty of designing an innovative spaceship. *Hitchhiker's Film* director Garth Jennings certainly found it difficult to design anything unusual:

'Designing spaceships is extremely hard,' Garth Jennings maintains. Or at least, as he discovered during the pre-viz process, creating a spaceship that was right for this movie was hard. 'It's easy to design a groovy spaceship - we've come up with some of the most amazing spaceships you've ever seen. But when we looked at them, they could have been in any film. They didn't look very Hitchhikerish.'

(Stamp 70)

The difficulty with *Hitchhiker's Film* is that the visuals were produced after Adams's death, so it is impossible to know if Adams would have insisted on the shoe shaped spaceship once more. The important element of *The Heart of Gold* is that it looks funny, or at least, somewhat unusual; it should not look like a typical spaceship. *Hitchhiker's Film* solved this by giving *The Heart of Gold* a ceramic appearance, as can be seen in fig. 20 and fig. 21, although this is based on their inaccurate claim there is a cup of tea at its heart (70), when in fact it is the gold box of the Drive (*Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2* 42):
The overall effect of the ship in *Hitchhiker's Film* is much less ridiculous than in *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2* and *TV*, but it is still a far cry from a traditional SF spaceship; it is beautiful, but surprisingly squat; while the producers were attempting to avoid the film looking like *Star Wars* (Stamp 94), the ship does appear to be a less threatening Death Star. The interior of *The Heart of Gold* in *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2* looks more like a traditional SF set, and is as pleasing as the Vogon ship was depressing:

The Improbability-proof control cabin of the Heart of Gold looked like a perfectly conventional spaceship except that it was perfectly clean because it was so new. Some of the control seats hadn't had the plastic wrapping taken off yet. The cabin was mostly white,
oblong, and about the size of a smallish restaurant. In fact it wasn’t perfectly oblong: the two long walls were raked round in a slight parallel curve, and all the angles and corners were contoured in excitingly chunky shapes. The truth of the matter is that it would have been a great deal simpler and more practical to build the cabin as an ordinary three-dimensional oblong room, but then the designers would have got miserable. As it was the cabin looked excitingly purposeful, with large video screens ranged over the control and guidance system panels on the concave wall, and long banks of computers set into the convex wall. (Adams 70)

The incongruities are what makes the space comedic, particularly the plastic wrapping on the seats. Zaphod is delighted with the ship because it is new and gleaming (70); further, the unusual curvature is intended not for practicalities, but to keep the designers from becoming bored (70). Hitchhiker’s TV in fig. 22 and Film in fig. 23 both follow these descriptions, although the version in Hitchhiker’s Illustrated is somewhat more whimsical in its design:

Fig. 22. Trillian at the controls of the Heart of Gold, Hitchhiker’s TV.
The *Illustrated Hitchhiker's* version is also well-appointed, and a technological marvel, though its interiors are more whimsical than the others, and somehow even less practical, as can been seen in fig 24:

![Fig. 24. Interior of The Heart of Gold, Hitchhiker's Illustrated (59-62).](image)

In all its incarnations, the *Heart of Gold* is shiny, if sometimes bizarrely shaped. However, *The Heart of Gold* is intended as a show piece, an architectural marvel; it is not intended to be a working spaceship. As a showpiece, it is a displacement of the SF trope of the flagship: *The Heart of Gold* will never do anything truly practical, though its adventures will be marvellously farcical. As a landscape, *The Heart of Gold* is overly false,
and inefficient; while the Vogon ship is ugly, it is at least functional. The *Heart of Gold* would likely argue with anyone trying to open an airlock. These effects are not physically dangerous, but irritating to the characters while at the same time amusing to the audience; they feed into the humour of the universe, reinforcing the meaningless of all things when the most advanced ship ever built is also the most annoying. Unlike the unusual ship of SF and sea fiction, which is beloved by its crew, the *Heart of Gold* is suffered by hers. Beyond the challenge of creating it, there is no stated purpose for *The Heart of Gold*; instead it seems to be the testing ground for multiple AIs. However, its AIs introduce the SF audience's distrust of sentient computers, although in *Hitchhiker's* the horror is displaced for the sake of farce; like all prototypes, *The Heart of Gold* is riddled with bugs. As with the other ships in *Hitchhiker's*, the purpose of the AIs on *The Heart of Gold*, namely to make the crew feel at home, is constantly displaced; rather than happy at being served, the crew is continually anxious and irritable. The Genuine People Personalities aboard the *Heart of Gold* demonstrate a full spectrum of irritating personality quirks plaguing the human crew and Marvin, from orgasmically sighing doors to the unabated cheerfulness of the Nutri-Matic and its suggestion to recommend its dishes to friends (*Hitchhiker's Novel REU* 161). The delight of the doors and the Nutri-Matic could be interpreted as an attempt to prevent the AIs from rebelling; if they are satisfied in their work, then they will not want to take over the ship. However, the presence of hundreds of perpetually cheerful doors is grating to the crew. The controlling AI Eddie is almost as difficult for the crew to cope with, made up of two irritating settings: one is obsequiously cheerful, and in its attempts to be helpful only irritates the crew more, such as offering to work out their personality problems; its second setting is matronly, demanding everyone wrap up warm before leaving the ship for Magrathea's surface (*Hitchhiker's Radio* 61). Theoretically such settings should be acceptable for the crew; both are helpful and caring, and should imply
that the ship is caring for the crew, and is thus a landscape to be trusted. The joke is that Eddie continually takes it too far: by pushing his helpfulness onto the crew, he instead irritates and alienates them. The innate distrust of AI in Hitchhiker's is revealed when Ford, for no reason obvious in the text, says "I wouldn't trust that computer to speak my weight" (Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2 88). This is representative of the universal law of AIs never working correctly; it is, after all, much funnier if sentient computers always fall short of their makers' intentions. However, the Heart of Gold's AIs, while irritating, do not actually harm the crew; why then is there such mistrust?

Part of this mistrust lies in how an artificial agent's "overall behaviour tends to fall apart gradually as more behaviours are combined" (Sengers 427). Phoebe Sengers describes apparent schizophrenic behaviours in AI's, and claims that they change behaviours without any apparent reason, and it is these abrupt shifts which make humans uncomfortable (428). These abrupt shifts in behaviour amounts to a form of the personality version of the uncanny valley. Sengers's solution relies on introducing narrative to the AI and allowing them to move between topics or actions more organically; thus humans can interpret AI more comfortably, and therefore not interpret them as schizophrenic forces whose behaviour changes are incomprehensible. Eddie's unchanging cheeriness may be the Sirius Cybernetics Corporation's attempt to overcome any discomfort with abrupt changes of behaviour, but the lack of changes in Eddie's manners only serve to annoy the crew because it is as unnatural as rapidly changing behaviour. Sengers' assertion that people "do not want to know just the events that occur in the narrative, but also the motivations, thoughts and feelings behind them" (431) implies Eddie's inexplicable cheerfulness, even in the face of death by missile, only serves to make the crew dislike him more than they would another AI. Although they find Marvin exhausting and irritating, they tolerate him far more easily than they do Eddie. While Marvin's incessant depression - the manic part of
his self-diagnosis never appears (61)\(^\text{151}\) - grates on everyone's nerves, he is ultimately not controlling the landscape. Eddie, however, could choose to kill everyone on the *Heart of Gold* without a second thought, and his forced cheerfulness implies he would not care if he did. Eddie's unchanging nature makes him an unnatural landscape, uncanny in its continuing sameness, and essentially lifeless. The newness of the ship serves to reinforce this impression; it is not a landscape where anything has successful lived, and so, despite its sentience, is more like a dead landscape. Further, an uncaring landscape would not be an issue on a planet, as it would not be sentient and therefore not prone to bad moods. Eddie represents, as many computer characters do, "the tension between human-like qualities and its actual, non-human, *technological nature*" (Glass 17 italics in original). The crew are aware Eddie is not human, and his attempt to behave like one only serves to remind them they are at his mercy. Though he is programmed to serve, he is also self aware, and this agency in landscape is what makes him untrustworthy.\(^\text{152}\)

The Genuine People Personality program also causes another problem aboard *Heart of Gold*: namely a massive multiple personality disorder. Eddie, every single door, and the Nutri-Matic machine which creates the food, has a personality of its own, programmed to derive pleasure from service. The obvious speciousness of such pleasure adds to the crew's mistrust, as real people would not be quite so happy about operating doors all day long. In addition, all these personalities are interconnected; rather than one AI, the crew are dealing with hundreds. In a traditional SF text, this could lead to paranoid breakdowns, but in *Hitchhiker's* it leads to simple confusion. When the Nutri-matic cannot process Arthur's

\(^\text{151}\) Don DeBrandt suggests Marvin is actually part of *Heart of Gold's* operating system, and thus Eddie embodies the 'manic' side of Marvin's mental disorder (18).

\(^\text{152}\) Eddie's fictional successor, Holly from *Red Dwarf*, the BBC's other wildly successful space opera, is an amalgamation of Eddie and Marvin; dour and dreary looking, he nonetheless has a wicked sense of humour, implying both personality traits are necessary for a stable AI. While the crew of *Red Dwarf* often complain about Holly, they trust him implicitly, perhaps because of his more natural personality.

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order for tea, the entire ship becomes paralysed as hundreds of AIs work on the problem. The multitude of intelligences, and their willingness to serve, could also indicate another fear for the crew. As the AIs on *Heart of Gold* are programmed to serve, they could be interpreted as slaves. This means the crew are on a ship of hundreds of slaves who, with the proper encouragement, could revolt; it is as easy for the crew and the audience to imagine Eddie cheerfully announcing orders of execution for the organic crew. Fortunately, the only AI with sufficient independent intelligence to do such a thing is Marvin, whose bored efficiency could be interpreted as an antidote to C-3PO's terrified bumbling. Marvin, however, could explain the persistent cheerfulness of the AIs on the *Heart of Gold*; while every other AI he interacts with commits suicide or, in the case of the Krikkit robots, becomes fed up, the AIs on the *Heart of Gold* appear immune; they are the antithesis of Marvin, and if he is a part of the crew, they could represent the absent manic element of his manic depression.

In addition to the danger implied in the very existence of AIs, the Drive's nature serves to destabilise the ship as landscape for the characters; when Arthur and Ford are taken aboard, at High Improbability, the ship looks like the sea front at Southend (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio 40*):

![Image](image.png)

Fig. 25. *The Heart of Gold* at high improbability, *Hitchhiker's Illustrated* 38-39.

\[153\] DeBrandt claims this happens because the Nutri-matic has been secretly programmed by the psychotic computer Hactar to eliminate all tea, with the ultimate goal of ending the universe (14).
Reality further destabilises when they notice the sea is steady, while the buildings wash up and down, Arthur's limbs wander off on their own, and Ford turns into a penguin (*Hitchhiker's Radio* 41). The joke here depends on the juxtaposition of this insane landscape against the banality of the Vogon ship; not only are Arthur and Ford rescued at a preposterously high level of improbability, but the landscape of *The Heart of Gold* would make any newcomer presume they were insane. Every moment of the sequence is intended as a visual gag, even in *Hitchhiker's Radio*, when Ford's voice rises significantly in pitch once he has become a penguin (41). Outside of the bridge's protection, the bodily integrity of the passengers is constantly at risk, but the universe does not limit *The Heart of Gold*'s jokes to within the confines of the ship; when the Magrathean missiles are transformed into a sperm whale and a bowl of petunias, it becomes clear the Drive also affects the rest of the universe, and not just *The Heart of Gold* (59). The whale and the petunias have significantly different jokes; the whale is funny because his extended internal monologue, in which he names the parts of his body and his surroundings, is cheerful and hopeful. The audience is aware the whale will soon be killed upon landing, but his eagerness to make friends with the ground, rather than fearing the impact, is funny because of the inherent pathos (60). On the other hand, the petunias only thought, "Oh no, not again", is comedic because it is entirely out of place, and, until Arthur's encounter with Agrajag in *Life, the Universe and Everything*, completely inexplicable. In *Hitchhiker's Film*, the Drive has the same effect on the missiles, but on the ship, it turns everything and everyone into couches or knitted toys as in fig. 26 and fig. 27:\(^{154}\)

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\(^{154}\) The knitted toys sequence should not have been possible, as the crew were supposed to be in an area shielded from improbability, at least according to all other versions; however, as it serves a visual joke, it is somewhat in keeping with the logic of *Hitchhiker's*. 247
As can be seen in Fig. 27, not even the crew's own bodies are safe from the effects of the Drive. While Arthur and Ford's brief period as couches is far less jarring than the seafront at Brighton, it does allow them to have a brief comedic exchange:

Arthur: Ford?
Ford: Yes?
Arthur: I think I'm a sofa.
Ford: I know how you feel.
Both: Aaaaagh!

For the knitted toy sequence, the joke lies in the oddity of the crew's state, coupled with the return to normality; knitted Arthur is in the middle of throwing up wool when normality is restored, and human Arthur finds himself still pulling wool out of his mouth; it is a visual gag, displacing the expected crudeness of bodily humour with the unexpected presence of wool. As the Drive destabilises the bodies of the crew and surrounding universe, it stands to reason the AIs of the ship are also at risk of destabilisation, perhaps adding a type of machine dysmorphism to its existing multiple personality disorder; a sentient ship which is constantly changing at the whim of improbability is bound to develop some self-image issues. The effects appear to be even further reaching, as the Drive is blamed for the disruptions in history in Hitchhiker's Novel MH; the magnificent Heart of Gold, which is meant to have revolutionised space travel instead makes the very universe it inhabits unstable and constantly shifting (604).

The general fear and distrust of AI in Hitchhiker's can be attributed to a potential history of AIs following their instructions too literally, as seen in the cruise ship on Brontitall in Hitchhiker's Radio and on Frogstar World B in Hitchhiker's Novel REU. While the cruise ship does not technically exist in either version, as it is in a synthetic universe created by Zarniwoop, editor of the Guide, however, Zaphod and Ford's easy acceptance of its reality imply it is in keeping with the subcreation's laws. In both versions, the cruise ship is within a derelict space port, and the location strongly implies the setting of a ghost or horror story. In Hitchhiker's Radio, Zaphod describes the space port as "Spooky", and is home to at least one giant spider, who, rather than menacing Ford and Zaphod as might happen in a horror novel, takes the comedic route of saying "Excuse me" before continuing on its way (225). In Hitchhiker's Novel REU, the setting is missing the
giant spider, as Adams takes more time to set up the sinister surroundings of the cruise ship:

Inside, all was gloom, dust and confusion. Giant cobwebs lay over everything. Part of the infrastructure of the building had collapsed, part of the rear wall had caved in, and a thick choking dust lay inches over the floor.

Through the heavy gloom huge shapes loomed, covered with debris.

The shapes were sometimes cylindrical, sometimes bulbous, sometimes like eggs, or rather cracked eggs. Most of them were split open or falling apart, some were mere skeletons.

They were all spacecraft, all derelict. (205)

The setup here is meant to invoke the image of ghost ships, possibly filled with monsters and terrors; instead it turns out the only working ship remaining in the space port has simply been delayed for takeoff for nine hundred years (ref), and has been repeating this message:

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for bearing with us during this slight delay. We will be taking off as soon as we possibly can. If you would like to wake up now I will serve you coffee and biscuits. Wake up now. (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 237)

The humour of the cruise ship is much closer to the destruction of Earth than anything else in the series, as it is funny only because it is not happening to the audience; upon waking up, the passengers begin screaming in horror, fury, and anguish, and the F/X direction in *Hitchhiker's Radio* specifies it should be "REALLY SHOCKING AND FRIGHTENING" (237, all caps in original). In *Hitchhiker's Novel REU*, the horror is intensified by Zaphod entering the ship alone, and Zarniwoop rising like a ghost and
following him through the screaming passengers (207). Like the destruction of Earth, it is
morbid humour, designed to emphasise the dangers of technology which is allowed to
control without intuition; when confronted, the autopilot explains the ship will leave once
the flight stores have been filled, and in the meantime, the passengers are woken up once
every ten years for coffee and biscuits (207-208). As Brontitall and Frogstar World B are
both ruined civilisations, this will never happen. The autopilot is not unaware of this, but is
not concerned: "The statistical likelihood is that other civilisations will arise. There will
one day be lemon soaked paper napkins. Till then, there will be a short delay" (Hitchhiker's
Radio 238). The autopilot is the epitome of the AI which is incapable of bending, even
though it is now harming the passengers it was meant to care for; it is such a slave to its
programming, it is unable to recognise Ford and Zaphod are not passengers, and attempts
to force them into the life support seats. The cruise ship thus becomes an unyielding prison
where, in some of the blackest humour Adams ever used, the passengers are tortured by a
few minutes of freedom once a decade, and will never be released. The AI of the cruise
ship has become the mad captain feared in all voyage fictions, and its passengers are
paying the price.

The only AI in Hitchhiker's which appears perfectly content, and whose crew
seems at ease with them, is Wowbagger the Infinitely Prolonged's ship, and the humour of
the situation lies in why this is so. Like the Heart of Gold, Wowbagger's ship is beautiful:
"a long silver ship descended through the warm evening air, quietly, without fuss, its long
legs unlocking in a smooth ballet of technology" (Hitchhiker's Novel LUE 311). Unlike
The Heart of Gold, its arrival is not heralded by strangeness; it simply appears gracefully.
The expectation upon its arrival in Hitchhiker's Novel LUE is Arthur will finally be rescued
from Prehistoric Earth and returned to his travels. However, unlike the Heart of Gold,
Wowbagger's ship has only one occupant, and is not willing to pick up hitchhikers, as it
only wishes to insult them. There are two reasons he trusts his sentient ship more than any 
other character does: firstly, Wowbagger is immortal as a result of "an unfortunate accident 
with an irrational particle accelerator, a liquid lunch and a pair of rubber bands" (313), and 
therefore has nothing to fear from the potentially dangerous landscape of his ship. 
Secondly, the ship is complicit in his mission to insult every being in existence in 
apphabetical order, going so far as to remind him of the insults he intends to visit on 
particular entities (315). This may indicate a breakdown on the ship's part; forced into 
immortality with Wowbagger, it is as fed up of the rest of the universe as he is, both having 
suffered from Sunday afternoons:

    In the end, it was the Sunday afternoons he couldn't cope with, and that 
terrible listlessness which starts to set in at about 2.55, when you know that 
you've had all the baths you can usefully have that day, that however hard 
you stare at any given paragraph in the papers you will never actually read 
it, or use the revolutionary new pruning technique it describes, and that as 
you stare at the clock the hands will move relentlessly on to four o'clock, 
and you will enter the long dark teatime of the soul. (313)

It is not something terrible which leads Wowbagger to take up his quest to insult all 
life, but the triviality of boredom; it is a ludicrous, meaningless reason, in keeping with the 
greater joke of Hitchhiker's, as not even he could complete such a task. Wowbagger, in his 
boredom, as taken on the part of the mad captain, while his ship, trapped in the obstinacy 
of all AIs in Hitchhiker's, has willingly joined him in his insanity. Immortality, and the 
chance to see everything in the universe, is undermined by ennui and boredom, because the 
longer one lives in the Hitchhiker's universe, the more one realises the meaninglessness of 
it all. So Wowbagger and his ship embark on a mission which will in all likelihood last all 
eternity, but rather than engage in anything noble, they displace SF expectations of
immortals and opt instead to insult everything in existence. Wowbagger and his ship, joined in their mission, function perfectly together, which stabilises the landscape of the ship for Wowbagger. In addition, the ship is the perfect servant; it knows Wowbagger intimately, and is willing to serve as it is needed, reminding him he has "only" seen *Angst in Space* thirty-three thousand five hundred and seventeen times (315). Wowbagger knows his ship can be relied on to wake him for the second reel, and sleeps easy while allowing the ship to carry them forward on their mission. Interestingly, while the ship does appear to be sentient, it is also nameless. Wowbagger refers to it as "computer" (314), suggesting at least part of the difficulty with insane AIs resides with named ships; without a name, Wowbagger's ship is not mimicking an organic personality, but rather taking on only one function, and performing it to its best ability, without veering from its function. The only time Wowbagger's ship appears to deviate from its function is when it brings him to insult Arthur a second time (458-459); however, Wowbagger is, presumably, old enough to understand the universe's joke of meaninglessness, and most likely accepts such comic interludes as the price of existence.

While not strictly AI, the last ship with something akin to a personality is Slartibartfast's Bistro, whose central computational area resembles an Italian Bistro with robot waiters and customers (340). In the interest of farce, in order to introduce calculations, Slartibartfast takes the place of a customer and thereby works out computations necessary for space travel (341). The Bistromatic Drive is based on one simple rule: "Numbers written on restaurant bills within the confines of restaurants do not follow the same mathematical laws as numbers written on any other pieces of paper in any other parts of the Universe" (342). This is in keeping with the absurdity of Adams's universe, and in fact allows Arthur Dent to realise what the universe is running on. When
he first sees the Italian bistro running the ship, he says it looks like a joke, and
Slartibartfast replies he knows what it looks like:

Arthur had a sudden vague flash of what it might mean, but he refused to believe it. The Universe could not possibly work like that, he thought, cannot possibly. That, he thought to himself, would be as absurd as, as absurd as... he terminated that line of thinking. Most of the really absurd things he could think of had already happened. (Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel* LUE 340)

The Bistromath embodies the absurdities of *Hitchhiker's*; its mathematics are meaningless outside of a restaurant, and so the ship must include a restaurant, but one run primarily by robots. Further, the restaurant involves apparently drunken robots, and regular arguments with the waiter; it is not only amusing to have a restaurant experience literally driving the Bistromath, but it is a bad restaurant experience. Even the Drive is sensible in comparison with the Bistromath. Slartibartfast's testiness could imply he is already aware of the nature of the universe, and as someone intimately involved in actual worldbuilding within the *Hitchhiker's* universe, it is likely he is aware of what the universe runs on. While the Bistromatic is not in fact sentient in and of itself, it requires a sentience, and the appearance of sentience in the restaurant, to create the calculations. The robots in the restaurant are AIs, but like all AIs in *Hitchhiker's*, they have a single purpose and are not interested in anything outside of that purpose. In addition, Slartibartfast is ultimately in control; unlike the Drive, it is not subject to the whims of improbability and the comedic nature of the universe, but will respond reliably to Slartibartfast's commands. This is because Slartibartfast understands his landscape, and interacts with it on its own terms, as Wowbagger does. Unlike *The Heart of Gold*'s crew, who wish the ship were more sensible, Wowbagger and Slartibartfast accept that they occupy a comedic spaceship in a comedic
universe, and accept the consequences. They are willing participants in the joke, and therefore can move within the universe with more comfort and success than anyone else.

Adams's interest in the spaceship, and what it represents, appears to wane as *Hitchhiker's* narrative progresses. By *Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF*, there are no new named ships, and Arthur and Fenchurch's journey to God's Final Message is not described. For a space opera, the ship becomes less important as the series goes on, with the *Heart of Gold* making no appearance in *Hitchhiker's Novel MH*. The importance of the ship as sentient landscape diminishes as Arthur's journeys go on; the spaceliner which crashes into Lamuella is barely described, despite possessing AI elements which infest the local squirrel population, causing them to offer napkins to anyone who comes near (*Hitchhiker's Novel MH* 716-717). The Grebulon ship in *Mostly Harmless* is not much better, as it has been literally lobotomised by an asteroid hit, with the backup brain lost as well (606). The last ship with any kind of character is bought from Elvis by Ford; it is a:

Wonderful looking thing. Wild fins all over it, far, far too much chrome all over the fins and most of the actual bodywork painted in a shocking pink. It crouched there like an immense brooding insect and looked as if it was at any moment about to jump on something about a mile away. (760)

As Elvis's ship, it is of course overdone, but much admired by Ford. Beyond its exterior, it does not represent a landscape and the interior is not mentioned at all. This is perhaps because the ships in *Hitchhiker's* are unable to fulfil their final function and return Arthur to his home. A ship's final purpose is to end a journey; Earth's destruction means the journey can never end, and thus it becomes wearying for both Arthur and Adams. The ship as vessel can never fulfil its purpose, and therefore its position as locus becomes overwhelming, negating all sense of exploration they should represent.
Adams's interest instead turns towards the planets themselves, the destinations reached by the hitchhikers. It is a shift from the interest in travel itself, and an interest in what lies at the destinations. *Hitchhiker's* then moves from being about spaceships to being a travel narrative, describing the places Arthur sees once he stops hitchhiking and starts paying for journeys. This shift coincides with Adams's intensified interest in ecology and his own travels to investigate endangered species. Yet as *Firefly*, *Gene Roddenberry's Andromeda*, and *Farscape* demonstrate, the ship is still an integral part of SF, and Adams's legacy, his exploration of ships and how they function as landscape and character, has influenced all the space opera which followed.
Chapter Four:

Absurd New Worlds
This chapter will consider the alien landscapes of *Hitchhiker's*, which are, following our expectations, the physical manifestations of the universal laws developed for the *Hitchhiker's* universe, and thus each is rooted in the joke. As Adams's Earths and spaceships displace the expectations of the pastoral and space opera/sea fiction respectively, his alien worlds displace the expectations of SF worldbuilding by equating it with travel writing and then displacing the expectations of that genre too. In particularly this chapter will particularly focus on the subgenre of guide books Adams would have been especially familiar with - *The Hitchhiker's Guide to Europe* and *Europe on $5 A Day* - and shall discuss how he defamiliarises and displaces the expectations of the genre in the planetary landscapes of the *Hitchhiker's* universe. There are four types of planets in *Hitchhiker's*; the wasteland of Magrathea, Arcadias such as Lamuella, ruined Arcadias like Vogsphere, and pilgrimage sites, and this chapter will examine how Adams develops each of these in turn.

Travel literature, like SF and the pastoral, is a varied literature, with different functions and motivations depending on author, social and political setting, and the anticipated audience. Although sea fiction, and indeed any journey narrative, can be considered a form of travel narrative, this chapter will examine those travel narratives related to ostensibly true accounts of journeys for the immediate assistance of travellers or potential travellers, particularly guide books. For this thesis, only travel texts which Adams could have been familiar with prior to writing *Hitchhiker's Radio* will be considered, in order to understand the travel context Adams was working in.\textsuperscript{155} While it is one of the oldest modes of literature, critical approaches to travel writing have only emerged in recent years. According to Stacy Burton, this is because:

\textsuperscript{155} While more modern texts, such as Lionel Shriver's *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, have interesting approaches to the production of travel literature, they are too recent to be considered here.
Globalization, the study of imperialism, and postcolonial theory have played crucial roles in bringing travel literature and travel practices to the attention of scholars in several disciplines, including literary studies, history, sociology, anthropology, and geography. (2)

Early travel writing in the West often followed pilgrimages, to the point where they constitute a separate grouping in the mode (Zumthor and Peebles 810). Early modern travel writing, particularly from Western authors, is heavily rooted in imperialism, something reflected in the current critical interest in the subject, which is "the result of an intellectual climate that is interrogating imperialism, colonialism/postcolonialism, ethnography, diaspora, visual culture, and spectacle" (Siegal 1). Prior to the twentieth century, books based on travels and observations abroad had a distinctive didactic role as the means by which Europeans came to learn rather than know about peoples and places outside their immediate experience, and thus was more functional than later travel writing (Burton 3). 20th century travel writing has shifted scope somewhat, "tending more toward autobiography, literariness, and explicitly subjective observation", with the expectation that readers could also be travellers themselves (Burton 2). In this way, the Guide in Hitchhiker's functions more as a modern travel narrative than as an imperial one; its writers work from autobiographical experience, and are writing primarily for entertainment rather than edification. However, the lessening of imperial intent in travel does not change the nature of the travel writer too much: "Central among the genre's conventions is the privileged narrator whose representations rely on firsthand experience yet claim to transcend the limitations of individual perspective" (27). Travel has always implied a certain level of privilege, and the safety which comes with power and wealth, and travel writing, most notably in the 19th century but also in later works, was the domain of the

\[156\] Its original purpose was, of course, as a practical guide, but it has moved away from such.
privileged, which often meant the citizens of colonial powers (Clark 3). Travel for pleasure has evolved from the Grand Tours of the 18th centuries and the middle class travel of the 19th century into travel for a much wider population. While affordable travel has made travel and writing about travel available to many more people, more exotic travel writing can remain the occupation of the privileged or wealthy, something particularly visible in such texts as Michael Palin's *Pole to Pole* and Adams's own *Last Chance to See*; the former describes a journey from the North to South Poles, while the latter saw Adams explore some of the most remote areas of the world in search of endangered species. Both are far beyond the financial or physical means of most travellers; travel writing then, historically, has implied some level of wealth, or, in the case of Palin and Adams, a form of patronage in making programs for the BBC. This is where the Guide departs from the conventions of other travel literature; it does not rely on the privileged narrator, but upon the impoverished hitchhiker who has survived the various landscapes they encounter and is preparing others to follow, as cheaply as possible. It is not vicarious experience then, but guidance. Hence the Guide is as likely to contain warnings of danger as well as advice on where to find the best drinks. As Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan point out, travel writing is not limited to the imperial or the privileged; it has the potential for transgressing and questioning social boundaries, which was particularly useful for women and postcolonial travel writers (4), but Guide contributors are not seeking to transgress their society, merely vacation on an extremely small budget. This also sets the Guide apart from travel writing by refugees; Guide contributors are not necessarily paid well, but their expense cards are a useful last resort (Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel* SLTF 475). While the contributors to the Guide are not imperial, the financial support from their head offices has a similar effect. However, as a follower of the Guide, Arthur is not venturing into colonised territories or landscapes free to be conquered; he enters all worlds as a castaway,
with only his towel and a copy of the Guide, a refugee in all senses. This is a signal to the reader of Hitchhiker's abandonment of the colonial mode for something different; the comic mode which keeps comedy moving by means of changing scenes, as the Pythons had demonstrated in the decade previous (Hewison 8).

Kristi Siegal considers "spectacle and culture" the necessary elements of travel writing, as the mode is characterised by a journey into another land and a record of what is seen on the journey (2). Paul Zumthor and Catherine Peebles describe travel narratives as "a double account, narrative and descriptive" (812). The mode is not only about describing a place, it is about creating a narrative to fit that place, as Edith Wharton is reputed to have done for such travel narratives as Italian Backgrounds:

Following her actual travels, she would gather her recollections of Europe and set them down in a narrative form. She would fabricate a narrator, introduce suspense, and generate drama through metaphors and personifications. (Schriber 261)

Wharton's process of travel writing is therefore closely linked to her methods for writing fiction (261), but there is ultimately little difference between this and the methods other travel writers employ; after all, narrators, suspense, drama, and personifications serve to transform a dull account of a journey into an exciting narrative for the reader to follow. Wharton, like many travel writers, carefully selected her material to eliminate tedium and foreground difference, adventure, and even philosophy (265). Mary Suzanne Schriber goes on to point out Wharton's use of travel writing conventions when the "narrator enlists the known - America - to assist her audience in envisioning the unknown, the hitherto neglected treasures of Europe" (265). As Steve Clark points out, the "travel narrative is addressed to the home culture" (1); perhaps more so than any other genre, travel writing is focussed on audience expectations and is written in such a way that it speaks to the
audience’s collective experience in order to allow them to understand a new place. This characteristic is shared with SF, but whereas SF works through defamiliarisation, the travel narrative is arguably a familiarising genre; SF makes the unknown of the known; travel literature makes the known of the unknown, although their similarities are real, this may only be a rhetorical flourish rather than a real distinction. It seeks to create comfort with a strange landscape and, in the case of guide books, to reassure the audience of their own ability to navigate such places, transforming from the unknown to the known. This awareness of audience expectations also serves to inform the type of narrator; Wharton's constructed narrator "conceives of her travels as more than mere adventure", raising it into a pilgrimage or quest, transforming "such practical matters as one's means of transportation into accomplices in adventure" (263-264). By comparison, Ida Pfeiffer, writing a century earlier, describes herself in her narratives as "poor, unattractive, and old, without any pretensions to learning or literary talent", whose focus in writing was on self-discovery and nature (Watt 341, 343). These narrators are constructed entirely for the benefit of the audience to whom they are directed; Wharton’s adventurous and gregarious narrator would have appealed to Americans in the early twentieth century, while Helga Schutte Watt ascribes Pfeiffer's success in the 19th century to her modest self-representation, as she "complied with the dominant image of woman" (349), while transforming it by the very act of her travel. Viewing Hitchhiker's as a travel narrative is not only sensible in light of the title, but also has the potential for comedic flair in misunderstandings,¹⁵⁷ as Arthur could be considered closer to Thomas Nash’s unfortunate traveller than an SF adventurer. In Hitchhiker's, familiarisation is abandoned in favour of the comic effects of Arthur's travel, particularly at the Las Vegas style Milliways, the titular restaurant at the end of the

¹⁵⁷ Such as Arthur etiquette failure in not mentioning the award for "The Most Gratuitous Use Of The Word 'Fuck' In A Serious Screenplay" at the permanent party in Hitchhiker's Novel LUE (412). Interestingly, the American editions of this book renamed the award "The Most Gratuitous Use Of The Word 'Belgium' In A Serious Screenplay"
universe; not only is the entertainment morbid, with the compère pointing out the destruction of guests' worlds, but the Dish of the Day recommends portions of itself to the diner. Arthur's discomfort with the Dish of the Day is not vegetarian squeamishness - he is happy to eat Perfectly Normal Beasts in *Hitchhiker's Novel MH* - but rather it underlines this rejection of the expected audience for a travel narrative; *Hitchhiker's*, while acknowledging its audience as an SF text would, does not write directly to it as a travel narrative should. Arthur is the quintessential unfortunate traveller, constantly faced with minor irritations. In addition, Arthur is not functioning as a narrator, but is part of the narration, and without the Earth to speak back to, the narrative of *Hitchhiker's* is displaced out of travel writing and firmly into SF territory. There is one element of travel writing Adams embraces: according to Clark, "Comedy is intrinsic to the genre: misunderstanding, presumption, and the catalogue of errors and endemic lack of dignity to which any cross-cultural interchange must be sensible" (14). Arthur's discomfort at Milliways is also a source of comedy because of everyone else's comfort, particularly with the Dish of the Day. Ford and Zaphod eat it with relish, and although Trillian is hesitant at first, she still tucks in to the steak of the recently deceased sentient animal, while Arthur finds himself unable to eat any (*Hitchhiker's Novel REU* 228). For Arthur, his travels are nothing but a catalogue of errors and indignities.

The travel narrative can have two purposes which may or may not both be present in a text; the first is the edification of an audience who will probably not be able to travel themselves, and the second is a guide to an audience which expected to travel. The first is perhaps the most traditional and arguably the less reliable. Clark claims the "dividing line between fact and fiction, documentation and embellishment, is traditionally elusive" (2). He goes on to point out that difficulties in determining facts are not necessarily intentional on the part of the author, as the differences in travel narratives can be a result not only of
different experiences but also a difference between authors' cultural backgrounds (2). In addition, "the travelogue allowed for selective factual description, rational or emotional reaction, personal experience, and any number of digressions" (Watt 339). Like *Pole to Pole* and *Last Chance to See*, travel narratives are inherently personal experiences, reinforced by the use of the first person and the omission of uninteresting details in favour of curiosities. Because of this use of personal experiences, travel writers can be understood to practice a form of worldbuilding, in which they are re-constructing the foreign landscapes and cultures as they experienced them; in *Hitchhiker's* this process is effected by Adams's focus on Arthur's journey. While Ford, Trillian, and Zaphod are all followed at various points, Arthur is the primary focus of the narrative, and his experiences as the Innocent Abroad - or Cynic Abroad in Arthur's case - inform how Adams's subcreation is experienced by the audience. However, Arthur's displacement from the position of narrator means the more relevant aspect of *Hitchhiker's* travel writing lies with guidebooks.

According to Annie Caulfield, the "guidebook is the map; the travel writing volume is the interesting companion you've chosen to take on your journey" (7). This implies guidebooks are dry compared to travel narratives, and in a sense, they are far less exciting because unlike travel narratives, guidebooks need to be useful on the ground rather than entertainment to be enjoyed in the safety of one's own home. They can also be seen as more direct examples of worldbuilding or world reflection, as they represent a specific time, place, and culture as experienced by the traveller. *Bradshaw's July 1922 Railway Guide*, which was reprinted in 1985 as an item of cultural interest, includes among its contents advertisements for travel typewriters, holiday tours, household appliances, trust houses, meat lozenges, guides to steamers, and 235 pages of hotel listings (Thomas). The railway routes, along with these, serve to demonstrate where and how people were travelling in 1922, and what was available for them. The cultural interest, the editor David
St. John Thomas, felt, was in tracing the mileage, routes, and companies which have changed, and how comparing the 1922 Railway Guide to the 1910 Edition shows the effect World War I had on rail services, changing the pre-war world (unnumbered page 2). As the authors of guidebooks are aware of their audience as other travel writers, they also reflect where their target readers were expected to travel; The Backpacker's Bible, intended for the less well-off traveller, includes a section on where the traveller should go, along with more practical instructions, such as how to get around, insurance, and what should be packed (King and Robertson 1). Baedecker's London presumes the traveller is going to want to visit as many places in London as possible, and as such engages in active world reflection with its breakdown of the guidebook:

The guide is in three parts. The first part gives a general account of the city, its population and administration, economy, transport, art and culture, famous people and the history of London. A small selection of quotations and a number of suggested tours leads into the second part in which the principal places of tourist interest are described. The third part contains a variety of practical information. Both the sights and the practical information are listed in alphabetical order. (Eisenschmid 3)

*Baedecker's* is whimsical as well as practical, including a special feature describing Sherlock Holmes and his offices at Baker's Street as if they were real (134), along with a guide to British voltage provided for international travellers (221). While these guidebooks do provide some entertainment in and of themselves, they are also intended for the reader to find their own entertainment and avoid the pitfalls of travel.

The two guidebooks with which Adams would definitely have been familiar, referred to by Adams himself (*Hitchhiker's Radio* 10), are *The Hitch-hiker's Guide to Europe* by Ken Welsh, and *Europe on $5 A Day*, by Arthur Frommer. *The Hitch-hiker's
Guide to Europe is based on the presumption the hitchhiker has finite resources, has no money, and therefore includes instructions on how to sell blood (40-41). By comparison, Frommer's presumed even lower middle class Americans had more disposable income than most Europeans, and thus could enjoy extended travel not by staying in the expensive hotels suggested by traditional guidebooks, but by staying in the cheaper locations frequented by Europeans themselves. Both Welsh and Frommer reject the traditional idea of travel as the privilege of the wealthy, but while Frommer presumes his American audience will have significant funds, Welsh presumes that his audience cannot afford to travel in any traditional way. This appears to be backed up by Adams's assertion he did not have the funds to follow Frommer's advice (Hitchhiker's Radio 10). Frommer's focus is also on experiencing not only Europe but Europeans as well, and not only spending time with other American tourists (15-17). In contrast, Welsh is interested in sharing the experience of hitchhiking:

you have to get away and the place you can go is on the road, the infinite miles of tarmac and pot-holes which criss-cross the world, the magic ribbon which can lead you to a thousand other worlds...

The thing is that the road takes you. You can't dictate to the road. If you do you might as well be in a train. Hitch-hiking is the art of wondering what will happen to you between your starting point and your destination and taking from everything that does happen everything that you can [emphasis in original]. (13-14)

Welsh goes on to describe how destination is not important to hitchhiking, and it represents an attitude to travel rather than simply a method of travel:

Hitch-hiking is a cumulative experience, a never-ending happening of unknown factors which contribute, with a little luck, to a memory of what
real travelling is all about - not just the chance to say you've been to a place, but the feeling that at one time, somewhere, even if only for an instant, you felt like you had become part of the land through which you travelled. (14)

According to Laurie Loker-Murphy and Philip L. Pierce, this almost meditative activity, generally limited to students and middle class youth, was diminished significantly with the introduction of cheap airfares (824); thus, hitchhiking, as Adams and Welsh understood it, no longer exists today. Welsh's meditation on hitchhiking could be seen as descriptive of all Adams's narratives, even though it has a positive rather than a negative twist; the narrative of Hitchhiker's is a journey through his landscapes, exploring them, encouraging the audience, through Arthur as straight man and fall guy, to become immersed in his subcreation. While comedy requires speed, which should prevent the audience from immersing themselves in the landscapes, the richness of the subcreation still allows the audience to invest in Hitchhiker's. The destruction of Earth removes the final destination of Arthur's home, encouraging this immersion in other landscapes. Therefore on one level travel becomes a quest for another homely place; without any expectation for where the characters should end up, the audience of Hitchhiker's can focus on and enjoy the current locations of the text. When Welsh says "On the road you are in a world where time passes without the aid of a clock. On the road you even have time to think" (13), he is reinforcing the time and freedom to wonder hitchhiking provides. The time taken, for hitchhikers, is as important as the space they cross. However, this sense of wonder can be found displaced in the Guide's introduction, as mentioned earlier: "Space... is big. Really big. You just won't believe how vastly, hugely, mind-bogglingly big it is. I mean, you may think it's a long way down the street to the chemist, but that's just peanuts to space" (Adams Hitchhiker's Radio 39). The Guide does not encourage wonder; rather there is a rambling discussion which does not actually aid the hitchhiker. The reality is the Guide is
not always helpful, having "many omissions, contains much that is apocryphal, or at least wildly inaccurate" (Adams Hitchhiker's Radio 18). As a worldbuilding tool, let alone a travel guide, the Guide should be functionally useless, although it is impossible to know when it might be right. However, in Hitchhiker's it supports the central joke of the absurdity and meaningfulness of life. Unlike Bradshaw's, Baedeker's, and Europe on $5 A Day, the Guide has few concerns with accuracy, preferring to be entertaining.\textsuperscript{158} In keeping with the absurdity of Hitchhiker's, a time travelling edition of Encyclopedia Galactica proved the editor right (Adams Hitchhiker's Radio 44). When referencing hitching a lift from the Vogons, the Guide's primary advice is "Forget it" (27). It goes on to describe why one should not hitch a lift from Vogons, but it fails to provide any solutions should a hitchhiker find themselves in Arthur or Ford's position, perhaps presuming hitchhiker's would take the first piece of advice. However, unlike human guide books,\textsuperscript{159} which will remain wrong until the next update is printed but is in itself is never updated, the Guide can be updated with new information; it is, Doctorow claims, the fictional precursor to Wikipedia (25-34), though Adams later denied any technological foresight: "The Guide itself was purely a narrative device" (Hitchhiker's Radio CD Disc 8 Track 8).

In fact, the Guide's entries which support landscape worldbuilding on other planets are not actually plot relevant: "The Guide itself began to be a very useful vehicle for dealing with those ideas that spin off the flywheel that have at best a tangential... connection with the actual plot" (Disc 8 Track 8). For example, the Biro Planet is not relevant to the plot, but it does represent the joke of the universe:

Somewhere in the cosmos, [Veet Voojagig] said, along with all the planets inhabited by humanoids, reptiloids, fishoids, walking treeoids and

\textsuperscript{158} The one exception to this is when a contributor to the Guide was supposedly let go for describing the Marketing Division of the Sirius Cybernetics Corporation as "a bunch of mindless jerks who'll be the first against the wall when the revolution comes"; in keeping with Hitchhiker's, this opinion piece turned out to be completely accurate (44).

\textsuperscript{159} At least the printed guide books.
superintelligent shades of the colour blue, there was also a planet entirely given over to biro life forms. And it was to this planet that unattended biros would make their way, slipping away quietly through wormholes in space to a world where they knew they could enjoy a uniquely biroid lifestyle, responding to highly biro-oriented stimuli, and generally leading the biro equivalent of the good life.

And as theories go this was all very fine and pleasant until Veet Voojagig suddenly claimed to have found this planet, and to have worked there for a while driving a limousine for a family of cheap green retractables, whereupon he was taken away, locked up, wrote a book, and was finally sent into tax exile, which is the usual fate reserved for those who are determined to make a fool of themselves in public. (Adams Hitchhiker's Radio 65)

This is representative of the Guide entries which are not relevant to the plot, as Arthur reads about the Biro Planet while waiting alone on Magrathea (65). If the majority of the Guide entries are not plot relevant, then they are present solely for the purpose of worldbuilding, and to either reinforce the joke of the absurdity and meaninglessness of life or provide individual jokes; Arthur does not need to know the Drive was created by a lab assistant shortly afterwards lynched by the scientists he had trumped (42), but it is there to make the audience laugh. It is the equivalent of Baedecker's entry on Sherlock Holmes, which would not allow a tourist to navigate London, but which would amuse those readers who know about the character.\footnote{The downside to the joke is the admittedly unlikely possibility of a reader not being aware Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character.} Guide entries, unless specifically referencing something Arthur has looked up, are meant only as short jokes in the overall narrative, representing the overall joke. The Guide could be interpreted as a collection of jokes or amusing
anecdotes describing the universe, rather than advice on how to travel the universe. This ties the Guide into a certain type of travel narrative as much as tourist guides, as in tone it is closer to *The Innocents Abroad* than to *Baedecker's*. The existence of a Guide of universal anecdotes also serves to displace the colonial expectations of traditional travel narratives; humans on Earth in *Hitchhiker's* would expect a universe open for exploration. Instead they find the white spaces on the map have been filled in by hitchhikers, who have failed to find any earthly paradise, but not for want of looking. There are three specific Guide entries on worlds Arthur does not visit: the Biro Planet; Viltvodle VI, whose inhabitants, the Jatravartid people, have more than fifty arms each, and invented the aerosol deodorant before the wheel; and Bethselamin, the paradise planet. Each of these is farcical in its own way; sentient biros are almost infinitely improbable, while it should be scientifically impossible to create aerosol deodorant before any other technology. Bethselamin is a potential Arcadia:

the fabulously beautiful planet Bethselamin is now so worried about the cumulative erosion caused by ten million visiting tourists a year,\(^{161}\) that any net imbalance between the amount you eat and the amount you excrete whilst on the planet is surgically removed from your bodyweight when you leave.

*(Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 39)*

Like much of the universe, Bethselamin is overrun with bureaucracy, requiring receipts for visits to the toilet (*Hitchhiker's Radio* 39). The paradise it should be is undermined by the reality of erosion. In *Hitchhiker's*, colonialism is replaced by bureaucracy, because for Adams, as for his generation, the British Empire was all but gone. In addition, the bureaucracy of *Hitchhiker's* is meaningless and unnecessary, intentionally unhelpful and obfuscating, as we all assume bureaucracy must be. That Adams was aware

\(^{161}\) The irony of Adams's figure is that in 2013 Ireland alone received seven million tourists (ref).
of the colonial nature of space opera is clear from these lines cut from the transmission of *Hitchhiker's Radio*:

TRILLIAN:  
*I wonder if Columbus had this trouble?*

ZAPHOD:  
*(Getting increasingly exasperated)* Who?

TRILLIAN:  
*Sorry, just an esoteric Earth reference. He discovered a continent which went on to cause a bit of trouble. Arthur'll tell you about it... Arthur?*

ARTHUR:  
*(As if he's been day-dreaming)* What? (Radio 54, italics and bold in original)

There are several important elements here working to displace traditional colonial narrative in SF. Firstly, Zaphod's complete lack of knowledge of or interest in Christopher Columbus, reminding the audience of his alien status, and reinforcing the lack of Earth-centric concerns, underlines the permanent loss of Earth. There will never again be children to teach about Columbus, except for the surprise of Random, who is completely uninterested; this is reminiscent of how Arthur tries to understand the loss of Earth in *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2*, as it is the little details, such as the supermarket and Nelson's Column, which make the loss real for him (53). Trillian's description of Columbus as an esoteric Earth reference reinforces this: while Columbus is a household name on Earth, or at least part of Earth, the information is esoteric for the wider universe, and, upon Arthur and Trillian's deaths, will be lost forever. Secondly, Trillian hands the question over to Arthur, who, as a British male, represents the embodiment of former Imperialism; yet instead of responding as an Imperial and educating the ignorant, Arthur has been trying to work out what is presently going on. Rather than the sharp-eyed explorer quickly absorbing every detail of his surroundings, Arthur has gotten lost once again in the confusion around him. Far from being the superior man, Arthur is muddled. Thirdly,
Adams did not include this scene, most likely for time (Hitchhiker's Radio 6), but the willingness to cut these particular lines, and, more importantly, the decision not to include them in any later version of Hitchhiker's indicates Adams did not feel they were necessary to further displace colonial expectations, as endless bureaucracy already accomplishes the same purpose. In addition, the point these lines made could be presented in more subtle, and amusing ways. Arthur is already treated as the savage, referred to only as "Earthman" by Zaphod (59), and considered unmannerly for ordering the salad at Milliways when there is a perfectly good sentient animal willing to be eaten (Novel REU 227-228). Further, when Fenchurch disappears on the space liner, Arthur's concerns are not taken seriously because he is from the Plural Sectors; the small print on the ticket instructing him he used hyperspace at his own risk is a bureaucratic exemption from responsibility on the part of the company. Earth, then, was a place on the periphery, so unimportant it was never conquered by anyone, and thus a primitive backwater rather than the imperial centre it is in much space opera. Arthur himself is so insignificant, the loss of his girlfriend is treated as a nuisance rather than a tragedy. This treatment of Arthur and colonialism is intended to underscore Adams's worldbuilding on two points: firstly, he understands the colonial trappings of SF and in the view of Britain as empire, and secondly, he is displacing these colonial trappings in favour of bureaucracy and humour. The audience comes to realise Hitchhiker's, from Earth to its alien planets, and Arthur's interactions with them, will not be like anything they have yet encountered. There will be no conquering, and no imprinting of Earth cultural norms, as in Le Guin's The Word for World is Forest, or 1920s mobsters, as in Star Trek's 'A Piece of the Action'. Instead, there will only be apparently absurd new worlds, which Arthur does not even try to influence. The only exception to this is on Lamuella, but the culture Arthur shares with their society is nothing more than sandwiches.
Along with the spaceship, alien worlds are one of the most immediately recognisable SF nova, each with their own worldbuilding problems. Firstly, they must make sense. *Star Wars* is famous for Tatooine's double sunset and the ice planet of Hoth, but habitable planets should normally be meteorologically more complex. As Le Guin says:

As soon as you, the writer, have said, "The green sun had already set, but the red one was hanging like a bloated salami above the mountains," you had better have a pretty fair idea in your head concerning the type and size of green suns and red suns - especially green ones, which are not the commonest sort - and the arguments concerning the existence of planets in a binary system, and the probable effects of a double primary on orbit, tides, seasons, and biological rhythms; and then of course the mass of your planet and the nature of its atmosphere will tell you a good deal about the height and shape of those mountains; and so on, and on. (Le Guin "Do-It-Yourself Cosmology" 122)

Purely alien worlds represent some of the most difficult elements of worldbuilding since they must obey both the general laws of planetary function and yet not simply be Earth with different names; for example, as a writer cannot present a planet of greater mass than Earth having lower gravity, at least not without a good reason. Another common example is that planets are generally presupposed to have complex climate systems, so when the author wishes to create a single climate planet, they must explain it, as in the planet Hoth in *Star Wars* experiencing an ice age, or Arrakis's worldwide desert in *Dune*, caused by the influence of the sandworms on the water system. Worldbuilding alien planets is further complicated in *Hitchhiker's* by the Magratheans' planet building industry; not only does Adams need to be aware of the scientific explanations for his worlds, but the
Magратеаны need to as well. One of the most telling comments from Slartibartfast is when the mice cancel the creation of a second Earth from scratch, and he replies "I've got a thousand glaciers poised and ready to roll over Africa" (Adams Hitchhiker's Radio 83). Andrew Goudie and Heather Viles describe landscapes as a palimpsest, complex layers comprising not only the surface of the present human habitation and vegetation, but also natural processes which have previously shaped the landscape (2). Slartibartfast, rather than carving fjords with a laser, uses natural forces as his tools, albeit apparently inappropriate ones in the case of Africa. However, as mentioned earlier, Slartibartfast, through his job constructing landscapes in keeping with the universal laws, would have been familiar with those laws; in honour of those laws, Slartibartfast insists on fjords in Africa, despite them not being "equatorial enough" (81), as he knows comedy is the driving force of the universe. This is the effect Adams's use of comedy has on the alien worlds of Hitchhiker's; because everything flows from the joke, he is free to depart from accuracy in planetary construction, as long as it is funny. This implies every landscape in Hitchhiker's must be funny or represent the meaninglessness of life. This displaces the SF expectations as alien worlds as places of fear and wonder, while the worlds in Hitchhiker's may be so for the characters, for the audience they must be either humourous, or have the potential for humour.

The first alien world Arthur encounters is the legendary Magrathea. While Earth's destruction can be seen as a displacement both of SF expectations and of the notion of Arcadia and literary Britain, Magrathea arguably functions as a displacement of the idea of any kind of stable landscape, undermining any literature concerned with landscape, including travel literature, and presenting everything as potentially manufactured and false. In a sense, the Magratheans stand in for Adams; like Adams, they have constructed Earth,

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162 While alien worlds can be interpreted as other versions of Earth, in Hitchhiker's, it is the difference from Earth which matters.
not only as a computer but also, as is their mandate, as a paradise planet. All of its beauty, all the Arcadian ideals it embodies, are the result of its careful construction. Technically, there was no need for the Magratheans to make Earth beautiful, as the program could have run just as well on a planet similar to NowWhat; however, like Adams and his literary predecessors, the Magratheans are artists, and they want their art to be appreciated.

Defamiliarisation is first achieved for Magrathea through the quest to reach the planet; it is the equivalent of an archaeological dig, searching for clues to Magrathea's location until The Heart of Gold reaches the Horsehead Nebula (Adams Hitchhiker's Radio 53). Magrathea's presence in such a well-known - at least on Earth - cosmic structure is further defamiliarisation; the audience must reimagine the Horsehead Nebula not only as an extraordinary celestial landmark, but also as the home of possibly the most impressive industry the universe has ever known. Further, by placing Magrathea within a nebula, which is often a star forming region, Adams is linking Magrathea's industry to the construction of the universe itself, and potentially suggesting the Magratheans acquired material for new planets from the nebula itself. For audience members familiar with SF tropes, the hidden planet of Magrathea is rich with mystery and potential for adventure and wonder. However, as a comedy creation, Hitchhiker's must displace this expectation into something ridiculous. Magrathea's introduction would seem to be particularly auspicious for a quest: it is a lost planet, home to a fantastic industry of planet building, responsible for bankrupting the former Galactic Empire, and is so far removed from everyday experience Ford does not believe it exists (Hitchhiker's Radio 53). Like the traditional travel narrative, Magrathea is linked with imperialism and privilege; it took a Galactic Empire to sustain its industry, albeit for a short time, and it requires enormous wealth to buy a planet. Magrathea's industry is further displacement of any SF expectations the audience might have formed; not only is Magrathea an ancient civilisation, its wealth and
power does not come from imperialism or political influence, but instead from an industry which bankrupted the galaxy and proved the impossibility and ridiculousness of building an Arcadia by capitalising on the desire for one. It is this construction of planets which makes Magrathea potentially the most interesting location in Hitchhiker's. Despite the wealth of the Former Galactic Empire, its heroes were dissatisfied:

for these extremely rich merchants life eventually became rather dull, and it seemed that none of the worlds they settled on was entirely satisfactory, either the climate wasn't quite right in the later part of the afternoon or the day was half an hour too long, or the sea was just the wrong shade of pink.

(Adams Hitchhiker's Radio 53)

Even though the ancient heroes had both the adventure and wealth which came with empire, it is the trivial faults of their planets which depresses them. Like any true entrepreneurs, the Magratheans stepped in to promise a solution, the construction of personalised Arcadias, and the elimination of trivial nuisances in favour of perfection. They were so successful in this endeavour they became the richest planet of all time, forestalling their own industry. It is their success in planet building which is of great interest in this thesis; in a universe without meaning, the Magratheans promise meaning through landscape, and are wildly popular for it. As we have seen, Hitchhiker's is a universe in which meaning is subverted and turned into farce whenever it is encountered; while Adams does not indicate whether any of the Magratheans' Arcadias were successful, their business, ultimately, was not. This thesis proposes sustainability as an integral part of worldbuilding, and while the Magratheans' planets are long lasting - to judge from Earth's ten million year research program - their business model was not sustainable. This is both a side effect of, and influenced by, the meaninglessness of life in Hitchhiker's. Because life is meaningless wealthy people turned to Magrathea to build them perfect worlds where
they could find meaning; however, rather than leading to happiness, in an ironic turn the over-demand collapses the economy which can sustain Magrathea, halting the production of new Arcadias. As the Magratheans suddenly find themselves without purpose, their lives too have been rendered meaningless because they were too good at their jobs. The sleeping Magratheans are one of the great ironic displacements of *Hitchhiker's;* Arcadia could be found, but there is not enough money to do so.

Perhaps the funniest thing about the Magratheans is that, while they are the wealthiest planet in existence, they do not spend any money on themselves and live on possibly the ugliest planet in *Hitchhiker's,* with the possible exception of NowWhat. Hearing of the magnificent wealth of Magrathea, the audience would naturally have expected the planet's surface to be magnificent, capitalising on the glorious sunrises and sunsets promised by its twin suns. The twin suns are in fact the first joke of Magrathea, as an obvious nod to *Star Wars* and its iconic sunset over Tatooine. From space the suns prove magnificent:

> Even the most seasoned star tramp can't help but shiver at the spectacular drama of a sunrise seen from space, but a binary sunrise is one of the marvels of the Galaxy.

> Out of the utter blackness stabbed a sudden point of blinding light. It crept up by slight degrees and spread sideways in a thin crescent blade, and within seconds two suns were visible, furnaces of light, searing the black edge of the horizon with white fire. Fierce shafts of colour streaked through the thin atmosphere beneath them. (Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2 89*)

The twin sunrise - and indeed, even a single sunrise - seen from space is one of the great moments of defamiliarisation in SF, being one of the most iconic moments of Richard Donner's 1978 film *Superman.* It is defamiliarisation because it is a perspective
still relatively new to the human race. However, this beautiful sight is undermined by Ford's scepticism overriding his sense of aesthetic; he does not believe in Magrathea, insisting it is "what parents tell their kids about at night if they want them to grow up to become economists" (Adams Hitchhiker's Radio 53), though he does feel the "excitement of seeing a strange new planet" (Hitchhiker's Novel 89). The majesty of the twin sunrise is further undermined in Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2, as the suns illuminate a singularly unmajestic surface which is "bleak and forbidding in the common light of day - grey, dusty, and only dimly contoured. It looked dead and cold as a crypt" (90). In Hitchhiker's TV the shipboard computer tells the crew they do not want to visit the planet as "It's just cold and grey and a whole bunch of no fun"; however, as Zaphod points out, "With half the wealth of the former galactic empire stored on it somewhere it can afford to look frumpy". This is part of the joke of Magrathea; it is the planetary equivalent of the billionaire who dresses like a bum, an ugly exterior concealing great wealth and beauty.

The shabbiness of the planet is confirmed upon landing, with only Arthur impressed by the monotonously dull surface, claiming it is "fantastic!" (Adams Hitchhiker's Radio 62). Even Trillian, who only left the Earth six months previously, thinks Magrathea is "bloody cold. It all looks so stark and dreary" (62). Arthur tries to keep his sense of wonder, but fails quickly: "It's only just getting through to me... a whole alien world, millions of light years from home. Pity it's such a dump though" (ellipses in original, ibid). This is a displacement of the expectations of the travel narrative; destinations should be places of wonder and interest, with at least something to describe, but Magrathea, the ultimate home of landscaping, has no discernible features. A bleak landscape should not, ordinarily, be funny; however, it is the displacement from SF and travel expectations which makes this landscape comedic. This is further emphasised in Hitchhiker's TV, which filmed the Magrathean scenes in a quarry, as in fig. 28, while
*Hitchhiker's Film* used a soundstage, seen in fig. 29; the results, while different, still represent wastelands.\(^{163}\)

![Image](image1.png)

**Fig. 28.** *The Heart of Gold* on Magrathea, *Hitchhiker's TV*.

![Image](image2.png)

**Fig. 29.** *The Heart of Gold* on Magrathea, *Hitchhiker's Film*.

While both *Hitchhiker's TV* and *Film* use desolation to represent the Magrathean surface, the former used a quarry, one of the more obvious symbols of human interference

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\(^{163}\) Both the TV series and film were intended originally to film Magrathea in Iceland; however, while *Hitchhiker's TV* was unable to do so because there was no infrastructure in place (Gaiman *Don't Panic* 93), the producers of *Hitchhiker's Film* were concerned about destroying the very landscape they admired (Stamp 152). Thus, despite Adams's desire not to film in a quarry *Hitchhiker's TV* was filmed in one to capture the desolation of Magrathea. Filming in a quarry is also a tradition in British SF.
with a landscape; the implication of mining reinforces the unnaturalness of the landscape. It is a place at once empty and lifeless, supporting the constructedness and absurdity of an ugly landscape for the builders of Arcadia. It is, in effect, the planetary equivalent of the outside of a factory. Both Arthur and the audience can naturally feel somewhat cheated; after Star Trek and Star Wars' promises of glorious alien worlds, Magrathea is a depressing example to light upon first. Ford also feels cheated, particularly after being stranded for fifteen years on Earth: "He stooped down and picked up a cold clod of earth, but there was nothing underneath it worth crossing thousands of light years to look at" (Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2 102-103). It is this attitude which displaces the travel narrative; Ford is a travel writer, and there is nothing on the surface of Magrathea to recommend it to him. As a hitchhiker, Arthur's career has gotten off to a disappointing start. Hitchhiker's Film, as can been seen in Fig x, uses snow to achieve the same sense of desolation, and perhaps to emphasise the lack of life on the surface; all versions of Magrathea are conspicuously absent of life, with the only lifeform visible the doomed sperm whale; Hitchhiker's Film reinforces this with the apparent ice age which has taken hold of Magrathea. In all versions, the surface of Magrathea is a neglected landscape, unconsidered and unworthy of the Magratheans' skill. Its representation in Hitchhiker's Illustrated, fig. 30, is not much more appealing:
The audience can be forgiven for presuming there is a reason the surface of Magrathea was unoccupied, as Arthur presumed it had become too polluted or overpopulated, both very human concerns of the 1970s (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 63). However, according to Zaphod, it was simply because the Magratheans "just didn't like it very much" (63). This attitude to the surface is a further displacement of the magnificent industry of Magrathea; rather than use their planet to showcase their abilities, they leave it a bleak, blank canvas. The only attractive element of the planet's surface appears to be the sunset, which mesmerises Arthur: "I've never seen anything like it in my wildest dreams... the two suns... it was like mountains of fire boiling into space [ellipses in original]" (65). Like the twin sunrise, the sunset is wasted on the surface of Magrathea, and, in fact, on Marvin, who finds it "rubbish" (65). In *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2*, Slartibartfast also appears to be enjoying the sunset:

He was standing with his back to Arthur watching the very last glimmers of light sink into blackness behind the horizon. He was tallish,
elderly and dressed in a single long grey robe. When he turned his face was thin and distinguished, careworn but not unkind, the sort of face you would happily bank with. But he didn't turn yet, not even to react to Arthur's yelp of surprise.

Eventually the last rays of the sun had vanished completely, and he turned. (*Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2* 110)

This is not only Slartibartfast's first sunset in five million years, it is also the only thing of any interest or beauty on the surface of Magrathea. It is also the only beautiful element of the surface in both *Hitchhiker's TV*, in fig. 31, and *Film*, in fig. 32:

![Two suns setting over a desert landscape](image)

Fig. 31. The twin sunset over Magrathea, *Hitchhiker's TV*. 
There is a comic irony inherent in the surface ugliness of Magrathea, while the industry of creating beautiful planets takes place within. The question is why the Magratheans live in such an unattractive place, when they could, presumably, produce a far more beautiful surface? It is, it seems, because the Magratheans understand the futility of seeking Arcadia, or any sort of perfect place in a comic universe, and instead have opted to sell the hope for it. They see no point in turning the surface of their planet into a paradise, and instead focus on creating paradise for others. Like Adams, they are constructing fantasies for their customers, literally worldbuilding with a skill unmatched by any others in the universe, improving on creation itself. It is no coincidence Arthur found an Arcadia on Earth, as Earth is one of the most complex creations of Magrathea, and all their efforts have been put towards "the best in contemporary geography" (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 57). The Magratheans are crucial to what Adams believes he should be doing, namely building worlds which, once they let them go, are able to sustain themselves, as *Hitchhiker's* was expected to do.

As it has been five million years since the Magratheans went into hibernation, it could be argued the planet's indistinctiveness could be attributed to the effects of time on landscape, as Ford in particularly senses the age of the planet while they are in orbit.
(Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2 90); however, as the Magratheans’ industry was the construction of beautiful worlds, it is incongruous to believe they would not provide an automated system to sustain their surface if they wished. This ability is confirmed by the automated response from Magrathea; while attempting to make a slow and majestic descent to the planet's surface, the Heart of Gold is greeted, not by the anticipated welcome to the end of the quest, but by an answering machine message, claiming the planet "is temporarily closed for business. Thank you. If you would like to leave your name and a planet where you can be contacted kindly speak when you hear the tone" (Hitchhiker's Radio 56). The funniest part of this is the absurd notion a planet could actually close down; the lifeless surface reinforces Magrathea's very ability to cease functioning; it appears as a dead world, a shut down factory with the lights off. The answering machine is a further displacement of Magrathea's expected position as the prize at the end of a quest; rather than being granted entry by a wise being, a somewhat cold voice invites them to leave a voicemail. Zaphod, in an attempt to enjoy his quest, tries to make it sound as if the recording is of great significance - "A voice from ancient Magrathea!" (56) - but the reality is far more banal and practical, displacing the expectations of both Zaphod and the audience. Adams described the voice of Magrathea as "outwardly pleasant but actually quite cold and forbidding" (emphasis in original, 56), and, when the Heart of Gold keeps going, it becomes increasingly annoyed and chillingly polite (57). Far from a voice of wisdom from a long dead civilisation, the voice of Magrathea is more of an annoyed bureaucrat, following its orders to the letter. Slartibartfast confirms this to some extent when he says it is "Merely an automatic system. Ancient computers ranged in the long caves deep in the bowels of the planet tick away the dark millennia. I think they take the occasional pot shot to relieve the monotony" (66). Slartibartfast's speech juxtaposes the majestic stretch of time the computers have waited, and their magnificent size, with the absurdity of their being
bored; like all computers in *Hitchhiker's*, they do not behave exactly as intended. His speech also contains what Lynn describes as a "tip-of-the-iceberg" line (76); as Magrathea has been asleep for five million years, and lost to the rest of the galaxy for much of that time, what has the automatic system been taking pot shots at? It is left up to the audience to wonder at this.

In *Hitchhiker's TV*, the voice of Magrathea is also represented visually, as in fig. 33, although this visual is intended to remind the audience of the hologram R2-D2 projects in *Star Wars*:

![Fig. 33. Voice of Magrathea, *Hitchhiker's TV* episode 4.](image)

The audience, likely familiar with the holographic Princess Leia of *Star Wars* would have immediately made the connection to the Magrathean hologram; however, where Leia was the princess calling a knight to a quest, the Magrathean hologram is intended to dissuade anyone from continuing their quest. If Slartibartfast is right, and it is merely attempting to pass the time by shooting down *The Heart of Gold*, it is a particularly effective displacement of the audience's expectations; their answering machine then is as cold as Magrathea's surface. In *Hitchhiker's Film*, the use of Simon Jones as the voice of
Magrathea is a specific insider joke for the audience; those familiar with *Hitchhiker's Radio* and *TV* would have instantly recognised him as the original Arthur Dent:

![Fig. 34. Simon Jones as the voice of Magrathea, *Hitchhiker's Film.*](image)

While not necessary for worldbuilding purposes, this visual gag was intended as a reward for fans of the earlier media. Like the voice of *Hitchhiker's Radio* and *TV*, Simon Jones's performance is simultaneously friendly and cold and seems to be more than a little gleeful at his opportunity to take a few pot shots. The sophistication of the system, like all computers in *Hitchhiker's*, is not working entirely as desired. It is successfully protecting Magrathea, but doing so by enjoying destroying ships far too much.

Magrathea's stunning interior is ridiculously juxtaposed with its bleak surface. Unlike the cold and lifeless surface, the planet's interior is full of life and, with the reawakening of the Magratheans, industry. As discussed earlier, the very existence of this industry makes *Hitchhiker's* somewhat unusual, as it is a subcreation about subcreating.\(^{164}\) However, rather than magnificent rooms of plans for future planets, there is a comic

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\(^{164}\) Terry Pratchett explored similar themes in *Strata*; the striking similarity between *Strata* and *Hitchhiker's* is that both feature a literal worldbuilder who signs their work, in a mountain range in *Strata* and a glacier in *Hitchhiker's*. Further, in *Eric*, Rincewind and Eric encounter the creator of the world at the moment of creation, putting the finishing touches on animals.
banality to Slartibartfast's office. In *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2*, his office is described as "a total mess, like the results of an explosion in a public library" (125). This is ascribed to the inadvertent deaths of the cleaning crew due to a failure in the life support diodes (125); this error does not bode well for the correct functioning of Earth, or any other planet the Magratheans constructed, but is perhaps in keeping with the Magrathean outlook, which places work above personal comfort. This is confirmed by Slartibartfast's award for the Norwegian fjords hidden among the debris; while he tosses it aside gently, he still considers it an example of meaningless, relevant only for the short time fjords were fashionable (134-135). This defies the audience's expectations of the award proudly on display; like Magrathea's surface, Slartibartfast's office is not a place of beauty, only of necessity. Slartibartfast's office in *Hitchhiker's TV*, and the showroom in *Hitchhiker's Film*, reinforce the ridiculousness of the Magratheans' worldbuilding:

Fig. 35. Slartibartfast and Arthur in Slartibartfast's office in *Hitchhiker's TV* episode 5.
In Fig. 35, Slartibartfast is using paper maps; however, he prides himself on the fiddly edges of fjords, so such small maps would be next to useless, and while he does use the large globe to work from, Africa appears preposterously small when he points it out. The visual jokes of the office are all based on displacements of SF expectations: first, the office does not appear as high tech as an SF audience would expect; instead it appears as if it could belong to Leonardo da Vinci. Further the stone floors and walls of the office look like they are hewn out of a cave; while the office is underground, an SF audience would expect shining metal walls rather than stone. Finally, the entire office looks quite slapdash, as if Slartibartfast is disorganised, and not someone who should be trusted to build a planet. His insistence on fjords in Africa reinforce this; not only does he do it because he is aware the universe is meaningless, but also because he like fjords, and has devoted his life to them, and so does not care they do not belong on an equatorial continent (Adams Hitchhiker's Radio 80-81). The overall effect is one of disorganisation and inefficiency, in complete contrast to Magrathea's reputation as skilled worldbuilders. Hitchhiker's Film skips Slartibartfast's office and instead opts to demonstrate the range of worlds Magrathea is capable of creating:
Fig. 36. Slartibartfast in the showroom in *Hitchhiker's Film*.

The existence of the showroom is intended to remind the viewer of a car showroom or a shop, both defamiliarising the idea of a shop and by the scale of its contents, and displacing this defamiliarisation with the absurd image of customers browsing for planets as they would for clothes. It shrinks the grandness of the Magrathean industry into an almost everyday commercial venture. The planets in Fig. 36 feature both a diamond shaped world and one which looks like two linked donut rings.\(^\text{165}\) In any other SF subcreation these planets could be both ridiculous and impossible, depending on the subcreation's own laws; however, in *Hitchhiker's* they serve as further proof of the Magratheans' understanding of their universe; knowing they live in a universe dependent on comedy, the Magratheans have embraced the freedom to be ridiculous in their planet design. This ability to design absurd planets is likely the secret to the Magratheans success; planets can be designed on a whim, following non-Euclidean geometry where necessary. Arguably, the ability to not create spherical worlds to order with working ecosystems, but also to

\(^{165}\) The cube world is not visible in this image.
presumably fit them into pre-existing solar systems with no gravitational repercussions,166 is verging on the ludicrous and the impossible in itself. It implies the Magratheans have an innate understanding of the universe and how it works, as well as the preposterousness of their own industry; as long as it can be made funny, Magrathea is capable of building planets and, despite Slartibartfast's office, doing it well.167

Magrathea's factory floor, the heart of its worldbuilding, is magnificent and terrifying and completely incongruous to its surface and Slartibartfast's office. In *Hitchhiker's Radio*, Slartibartfast says "the chamber we are about to pass into does not literally exist within the planet. It is simply the gateway into a vast tract of hyperspace. It may disturb you... It scares the willies out of me", and indeed, Arthur is terrified by the sight (68-69). The displacement joke in this is Slartibartfast's discomfort; as a world builder, entry to his own factory floor should be second nature but it is an unsettling experience instead. In addition, calling the planet's interior a factory floor is the defamiliarising agent; factories in the Primary World are not the size of planets, and the audience is forced to readjust their expectations. However, even these expectations are soon exceeded, as *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2* describes the factory floor itself:

> It wasn't infinity in fact. Infinity itself looks flat and uninteresting. 

> Looking up into the night sky is looking into infinity - distance is incomprehensible and therefore meaningless. The chamber into which the aircar emerged was anything but infinite, it was just very very very big, so big that it gave the impression of infinity far better than infinity itself...

> The wall appeared perfectly flat. It would take the finest laser measuring equipment to detect that as it climbed, apparently to infinity, as it

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166 At least, no repercussions demonstrated in *Hitchhiker's*.
167 Pratchett's *Strata*, while featuring a similarly strange world in the Discworld, comes instead to the conclusion the universe is an artificial construct made by a greater force; in *Hitchhiker's*, the Magratheans have instead come to the conclusion the universe is a joke and they may as well join in.
dropped dizzily away, as it planed out to either side, it also curved. It met itself again thirteen light seconds away. In other words the wall formed the inside of a hollow sphere, a sphere over three million miles across and flooded with unimaginable light...

Arthur stared about him in a kind of wondering horror. Ranged away before them, at distances he could neither judge nor even guess at, were a series of curious suspensions, delicate traceries of metal and light hung about shadowy spherical shapes that hung in the space. (115-116).

The Magrathean factory floor accomplishes some of what the Total Perspective Vortex does; it is too large, and too impossible for Arthur to fully comprehend, with nothing to break the apparent infinity. Adams intended his audience to connect the interior of Magrathea with Doctor Who's TARDIS; both spaces are larger on the inside, and both fantastic. However, where the TARDIS is only a defamiliarising space, an infinitely large spaceship contained with a fairly small fixed object, Magrathea's purpose adds a comedy displacement to defamiliarisation, as it is introduced as a tour of a factory floor. It is made even funnier by its containment beneath the grubby surface of Magrathea, as the juxtaposition of the dull planetary surface with the fantastic interior is pure absurdity. This is also the space where Arthur first learns the Earth was constructed by the Magratheans, as in all versions, Slartibartfast tells Arthur the one extraordinary commission they have awoken for may interest him (Hitchhiker's Radio 69, Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2 116). Arthur, having experienced Earth's destruction at close quarters, is shocked to see it, and on a factory floor no less. Slartibartfast's introduction to it, delivered as if he were relating a mildly interesting anecdote, provides the comedy displacement: as it appears the Earth has been saved after all, the audience would expect Slartibartfast to enthusiastically tell Arthur the good news, and his prosaic introduction of the Earth Mark 2, or Backup Earth as
it is referred to in this thesis, undermines the momentousness of the occasion and leads Arthur to believe he is going mad (*Hitchhiker's Radio* 69). The further matter of fact revelation the Earth was destroyed five minutes too early is another comic absurdity (ibid); from this comment, it would seem no one cared about the millions of humans who died when the Vogons demolished Earth, only that they died a little too soon. This also displaces the audience's expectations for the salvation of Earth; rather than saving the planet from a sense of altruism, it turns out to be because it has not fulfilled its intended purpose. *Hitchhiker's TV* attempted to demonstrate the space visually, and given the technology available at the time, the result is impressive\(^{168}\) and does impress upon the audience the vastness of the factory floor, as in fig. 37:

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\(^{168}\) While *Hitchhiker's TV* is often criticised for appearing cheap, it was actually very expensive to make, and the Magrathean factory floor is not so far away from the representation of V-ger in 1979's *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*. 

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Fig. 37. Magrathean Factory Floor, *Hitchhiker's TV*. 

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Further, *Hitchhiker's TV* attempts to follow the description of the traceries of light in *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2*, though admittedly the effect is somewhat less delicate than Adams's description. More advanced technology allowed *Hitchhiker's Film* to produce an ever more magnificent rendering of the interior of Magrathea in fig. 38:

![Fig. 38 Magrathean Factory Floor, Hitchhiker's Film.](image)

The producers of *Hitchhiker's Film* even included the double doughnut planet:

![Fig. 39. The double doughnut planet, Hitchhiker's Film.](image)

The presence of the double doughnut planet on the factory floor serves as a joke on several fronts: first, it is visually strange enough to be a joke in itself particularly as it is not immediately obvious how the laws of physics are in play; second, it is a reminder of
the other strangely shaped planets in the showroom, and a follow through on the filmmakers' visual worldbuilding; third, its presence on the factory floor implies the customers who ordered this odd construction ran out of money before it could be finished. This is an example of the filmmakers' ability to work successfully in Adams's subcreation, as the double doughnut planet is in keeping with the comic nature of *Hitchhiker's*; after all, physics must be meaningless, or at least easily malleable, in a universe which can support a double doughnut planet.

In designing planets, the Magratheans are keenly aware of the need for connection to a homeworld, a connection which, as discussed in Chapter Two, Arthur has completely lost. This is demonstrated in the following exchange from *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2*:

"unless you would care to take a quick stroll on the surface of New Earth. It's only half completed I'm afraid - we haven't even finished burying the artificial dinosaur skeletons in the crust yet, then we have the Tertiary and Quarternary Periods of the Cenozoic Era to lay down, and ..."

"No thank you," said Arthur, "it wouldn't be quite the same."

"No," said Slartibartfast, "it won't be," and he turned the aircar round and headed back towards the mind-numbing wall. (Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel H2G2* 124)

The loss of Earth means Arthur cannot connect to Backup Earth, as he knows it will not be the same. He is not yet aware he will be able to feel the break between Earth Prime and Backup Earth, but having experienced the destruction of Earth and only narrowly escaped it, a copy of all he left cannot fulfil him. Further, as the inhabitants of *Hitchhiker's* are all connected to their homeworld, Arthur would be able to sense the newness of the world; the age inherent in the planet has been lost. It could argued the construction of luxury planets is in defiance of the connection to a homeworld; after all, what use is a new
world if its inhabitants cannot connect to it? This implies the refinement of this law, namely a homeworld is the world one is born on, not the planet one's race comes from. The Magratheans, working on a planetary scale and in deep time, understand this connection will from with the first generation born on a planet. Working in deep time means the Magratheans view the universe and its tragedies in a different light. In *Hitchhiker's Radio*, Slartibartfast is remarkably sanguine about the destruction of Earth: "Ten million years of planning and work gone just like that. Well, that's bureaucracy for you" (80). He understands the very existence of his world and its industry is part of the joke; the failure of the quest for the meaning of life is simply another part of it, and having accepted being the butt of a universal joke, he is unmoved by the failure of Earth to complete its programming.

A side effect of the rediscovery of Magrathea is the uncertainty which undermines all other planets. It also highlights the constructedness of *Hitchhiker's* as the shadow of the Magratheans' literal worldbuilding hangs over the rest of the series. Although the universe is potentially infinite in size, the Drive means coincidences are both common and staggering; as such, it would only be in keeping with the universal joke if every planet Arthur ever visits was built by the Magratheans. As it has been five million years since Magrathea last built a planet, there is no way of knowing if any planet visited in *Hitchhiker's* is natural or constructed, as anyone who would know the truth is long dead. All landscape in Adams's subcreation, therefore, is potentially as constructed as literary Britain. It is pure chance - and comedy necessity - which allows Arthur and Ford to discover Slartibartfast's signature on Prehistoric Earth, with their seemingly random decisions bringing them straight for it; the universe guided them to it because it was too amusing not to. However, this joke is only funny once, so they do not encounter a definite Magrathean construction again, but this does not mean every planet visited after Magrathea
was not built on the factory floor. This uncertainty is reinforced by the collapse of the economy due to Magrathean industry; for this to have happened, an enormous number of planets would have been built, all of them habitable by at least one species. Magrathea leads to a meditation on the nature of reality, as it raises the questions of whether its constructs can be considered real, or at least as real as planets which formed naturally. Fictionality and constructedness unite in Magrathean worldbuilding, questioning and undermining everything in the universe. This is reinforced by Magrathea’s position as the first planet Arthur visits in almost all versions of Hitchhiker’s; knowing the Earth is constructed, and knowing construction is possible, Arthur and the audience cannot be sure of the naturalness of any landscape he visits. This is at odds with the purposes of travel writing; while it is intended as a means of telling the audience at home about a new place and its wonders, it becomes less marvellous when the wonders are revealed to have been built from scratch.

The awareness of the destabilisation of landscape and reality, and its interaction with the joke on the meaninglessness of life, is reflected in the unreliability of Guide entries. On several occasions, the Narrator assures the audience of the Guide's frequent unreliability and may be imaginative constructions of bored or lazy compilers. Further, it is rumoured the Guide editors have gotten so lazy they explore the universe through simulated universes in their offices (Hitchhiker's Radio 131); therefore any entries which do not relate to the characters' experiences may not exist at all, further reinforcing the potential fictionality and constructedness of all of Hitchhiker's. This rumour also displaces the expectations of the SF explorer and the travel writer; rather than an army of hitchhikers out exploring strange new worlds, the travel writers are sitting in the comfort of their offices, pretending to go see new places. Ford appears to be one of the few researchers who actually go to other planets, so the Guide entries, while taken from a copy of the universe,
could be completely wrong. This seems particularly likely with the biro planet, though in a universe which contains sentient shades of blue, even sentient biros must be a possibility (65). Nonetheless, whether the Magratheans constructed it or not, and whether the Guide entries are based on real or simulated experience, the joke remains inherent to all landscapes in *Hitchhiker's*.

This constructedness does not only extend to Arcadia: the remainder of this chapter will examine the planets Arthur visits in an attempt to find meaning, beginning with the three Arcadias he settles down on and then the three worlds he visits which are supposed to provide the answers to life's mysteries, but instead only deconstruct the universe. Of the three alien Arcadias Arthur attempts to build a life on in *Hitchhiker's*, the first is not generally perceived as such, and could be considered an accidental Arcadia. The planet Krikkit, considered the most evil place in *Hitchhiker's*, is dangerous because of the need to hold on to Arcadia despite all obstacles, and causes the greatest devastation in existence in *Hitchhiker's*: the Krikkit Wars. Krikkit is an unusual planet; on the surface it is a wonderful Arcadia, with "undulating green countryside" and the "skyline was of gentle pleasing curves" (354-355). Further, when Arthur experiences Krikkit through Slartibartfast's Room of Informational Illusions, he find:

The place was peaceful. Arthur felt happy. Even Ford seemed cheerful.

They walked a short way in the direction of the town, and the Informational Illusion of the grass was pleasant and springy under their feet, and the Informational Illusion of the flowers smelt sweet and fragrant. Only Slartibartfast seemed apprehensive and out of sorts. (355)

Arthur fears something terrible will happen to this pastoral idyll, as it appears to be the kind of landscape likely to be mutilated by horrific invaders; his expectations are displaced when Slartibartfast informs him the horror of the Krikkit Wars came from
inhabitants of this glorious idyll. Despite the singing birds and playing children, Krikkit is the breeding ground for the most vicious xenophobia in the galaxy, purely because the sky is completely blank; the planet and its sun are surrounded by a dust cloud, preventing them from realising there is a universe beyond their surface (369). Arcadia, Krikkit implies, is possible only if the entire rest of the universe does not exist; this is similar to the law of flying in *Hitchhiker's*; as long as the Krikkiters are not aware of anything which is not them, they are content to remain in their idyll. Krikkit is every paradise planet in SF narratives which is destroyed by outside interference, such as the natives in Le Guin's 'The Word for World is Forest', but it is the inverse, displaced from all expectations. Rather than being destroyed by the universe, the pastoral Krikkiters instead set out to kill everything, in order to be sure of their safety.

This Arcadia is complicated when it is revealed the dust cloud surrounding Krikkit is actually the supercomputer Hactar, which was reduced to dust for refusing to destroy the universe when first commanded to do so (418-419), and engineered the xenophobia of the Krikkiters to fulfil its function. Trillian's throwaway line, about the planet being on the very edge of the Galaxy, gives a further clue to Hactar's power, or at least wealth, as it suggests Krikkit may have been built by the Magratheans to suit Hactar's purposes (436). Regardless of who built it, it is as constructed a landscape as Earth. This pastoral idyll is designed entirely for the purpose of creating universe-destroying xenophobia as it is the overwhelming, infinite nature of the universe which is a threat to the Krikkiters' idyll. The trauma of their introduction to the greater universe solidifies this purpose, as Hactar crashes a spaceship into the planet to incite fear and xenophobia: "The profoundness of the shock and horror they emanated a few moments later when the burning wreckage of a spaceship came hurtling and screaming out of the sky and crashed about half a mile from where they were standing was something that you had to be there to experience" (369). For
the Krikkiters, it is the equivalent of a monster emerging from nothingness, a supernatural entity attacking without warning or reason. Without an outside universe, the Krikkiters could never conceive of anyone or anything destroying their green hills, and when they see the universe, and the infinity of worlds which could harm their home, their response, "It'll have to go" is almost sensible (373).

However, Hitchhiker's is a comedy universe, and in a comedic reversal, Hactar's plan fails with the Krikkiters who live on the surface of their planet because he has made their Arcadia too perfect. The Krikkiters are the perfect inhabitants of a perfect Arcadia, and, when they encounter Arthur, Ford, Trillian, and Slartibartfast, are uncertain they want to kill them, let alone the rest of the universe (428). It turns out the Krikkiters are "quite keen on ecology", and would prefer to start playing sports with the rest of the galaxy (428-429). The monsters Slartibartfast has prepared Arthur, Ford, and Trillian to meet turn out to be mild-mannered people who only want to sing and play sports. Hactar's failure to destroy the universe is thus meaningless on two levels; the first is his original motivation, as he is completing orders provided by a civilisation long dead, orders he originally refused to carry out (418-419). Despite Hactar's original desire to preserve the universe, he decides to fulfil his original purpose and develops a monstrous xenophobia on Krikkit to enable it. The second is that his attempt to destroy the universe is undermined by his own extraordinary skills. He has made his Arcadia too perfect, and the Krikkiters Arthur, Ford, Trillian, and Slartibartfast meet are more curious than violent, reluctant to use the bomb to destroy the universe. Hactar has made them a genuine Arcadian idyll - perhaps the only true one in the galaxy simply because it was not aware of anywhere else - and it calms the Krikkiters to the point where those living on the surface are not sure if they should kill Arthur, Ford, Trillian, and Slartibartfast and can be easily talked out of it (428-430). The most fearsome, xenophobic race in the universe is undone by their very motivation to
protect not only their Arcadia, but all others, the Balance of Nature itself. It is only those whom Hactar encourages to live in the atmosphere above the planet who retain their xenophobic hate for all other life, but even they are beginning to lose motivation; the Krikkiters are true inhabitants of Arcadia, and Arcadians are not murderers. Arthur ultimately chooses to settle on Krikkit at the end of Hitchhiker's Novel LUE because it is a quiet, pastoral world; however, even in the unintentionally perfect pastoral, Arthur is somewhat dissatisfied, giving up flying to avoid the inanity of bird speak, and finds himself annoyed by the songs. However, Arthur does decide to leave Krikkit at some point between Hitchhiker's Novel LUE and Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF; the reasons for this are unclear, though the references to inane chatter both in the air and on land might have something to do with his decision (458-459). Arguably, Krikkit is too perfect for Arthur to settle down on; as an imperfect, ridiculous figure, he could never settle in a true Arcadia, and must move on and find something else.

The last two Arcadias Arthur attempts to settle on are closely linked: Bartledan and Lamuella. Both are represented through pastoral villages living in harmony with nature, but in a number of ways they are almost diametrically opposite, forming a combined displacement joke about the expectation of finding Arcadia. Bartledan is something of a static utopia, and appears in the grimmest part of Arthur's journey, near the beginning of Hitchhiker's Novel MH, and is the first world he finds vaguely acceptable to settle down on after Fenchurch's disappearance, though he discovers it, not through questing or following any kind of wisdom, but through what is essentially a catalogue of planets (Hitchhiker's Novel MH 672-676). The entire process engages with defamiliarisation as it resembles visiting a travel agent, down to the brochures Arthur has to peruse to find his personal Arcadia (672-673). Displacement is achieved through the non-humanoid staff member's distaste at Arthur wanting to live with people like him; unlike a human travel agent who
would send Arthur to a hotel frequented by other British tourists, "the strange thing behind the desk at the Resettlement Advice Centre on Pintleton Alpha" is taken aback by Arthur's request (672). This is not only comedic, but also a further displacement of Earth-centric SF and imperial tropes, as the white British man is not only powerless, but also considered abnormal in appearance. When Arthur reaches Bartledan, he discovers it is all it is in the picture, but nothing more; a pretty landscape inhabited by flat people. While Arthur could potentially happily settle in Bartledan's physical Arcadia, its culture drives him away. Bartledan is an extended joke at the expense of realist fiction as the Bartledanians are so literal they are strangely lifeless. They possess no imagination, want nothing, and create no fantasies, either in their fiction or in their daily lives, as they do not even understand the concept of wishing or hoping (674). Following closely on the sequence on NowWhat, and Arthur's frustrated attempts at enlightenment on Hawalius, Bartledan is Arthur's serious attempt to find a home and some meaning in his life, and as such, it backfires almost immediately. Both Bartledan and NowWhat exist in an area of the galaxy "somewhere off to the left as far as the universe [Arthur] knew and recognised was concerned" (672). As with Earth X, and indeed, all plural zones, it is an area rife with overlapping universes, where the Guide is unable to function correctly, because the universe itself at this point is fundamentally unstable. Arthur's Arcadia at this point, the home he longs for, is not a place of adventure or mystery or alien strangeness; it is, instead, a place of familiarity and almost banality, where:

the post van would be going up the lane, the daffodils would be blooming in his garden, and in the distance the pub would be opening for lunch. He so much wanted to take the newspaper down to the pub and read it over a pint

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169 This will be discussed later in this chapter.
of bitter. He so much wanted to do the crossword. He so much wanted to be able to get completely stuck on 17 across. (673)

At this point, it is as much the cultural trappings Arthur is longing for as the physical setting of Earth. It is not just a quiet life, but his ideal of a quiet life. The physical landscape of Bartledan, as Arthur first sees it in a picture, is similar to Arthur's village, if not preferable:

It had oxygen. It had green hills. It even, it seemed, had a renowned literary culture. But the thing that most aroused his interest was a photograph of a small bunch of Bartledanian people, standing around in a village square, smiling pleasantly at the camera. (673)

Bartledan is not only visually reminiscent of Earth and an Englishman's view of England, but also appears to have the same type of inhabitants. Despite the Bartledanian similarity to humans, and the balmy air of the village (674), Arthur finds this new Arcadia to be intolerable for two main reasons. First, despite appearing human, Bartledanians do not need to breathe, and are incapable of wishing for things, to the point where they have to ask Arthur what hope was (ibid). The absence of breath is possibly the most defamiliarising element of the Bartledanians, and Arthur finds it spooky to play netball with people who are so similar and yet so fundamentally different from humans (675). It speaks to a completely different biological makeup, and to a removal of many cultural norms, such as sighing, and, perhaps most odd for a comedy universe, laughter. Though it is not said implicitly, the Bartledanians lack of breath implies they do not laugh, and their exactly realistic view of the world indicates they are not even able to make a pun, let alone a displacement joke. The humour in them is not quite black comedy, but rather uncomfortable comedy; the audience expects Arthur to find a new home and settle down,

\[170\text{ If the Bartledanians were not so serious, they could be assumed to be}\]
and perhaps be dragged into adventure again by Ford. Instead these expectations are displaced by eerie, breathless, netball playing realists who care about nothing. Their inability to want things is the greatest disruption to Arthur's potential happiness, as all of his Arcadian ideals revolve around wanting; not only does he want to be on Earth, but the pub and the crossword are both wants shared by potentially many others. The lack of wanting on Bartledan, the lack of desire for anything more than what is in front of them, is more of a culture shock than Arthur has heretofore experienced, as they may be the one race in the galaxy incapable of caring whether they got stuck on the crossword. While Arthur is inherently uncomfortable with both the lack of desire and the Bartledanians lack of breathing, he tries to accept this cultural difference and his discomfort as his own problem:

He had long ago realised that a lot of things that he had thought of as natural, like buying people presents at Christmas, stopping at red lights or falling at a rate of 32 feet/second/second, were just the habits of his own world and didn't necessary work the same way anywhere else. (674-675)

Arthur has realised all the things which were meaningful for him are meaningless in and to the rest of the universe, with culture and gravity equally problematic as universal concepts. This is a further displacement of Earth-centric SF, and indeed of the Terran notions of universal physics, and Arthur's unwillingness and inability to function as an Imperialist. Watt describes how:

Traveling and writing about the experience was important to the self-determination of the bourgeoisie in the eighteenth century. It meant an empirical and philosophical taking possession of a world in which spatial mobility presented a utopian promise of future social mobility. (343)
Despite appearing human, the Bartledanians complete inability to actually want anything is also anti-Imperialist and indeed, anti-human. Ironically, Arthur finds he is uncomfortable in a society which has no Imperialist drive nor, indeed, any drive to do anything except play netball and write books in which nothing that happens matters; indeed, the Bartledanians do not even care who wins at netball. It is never explained why the Bartledanians play netball and write books; it appears as if someone suggested they do so, but they still have no real desire for it. Their entire culture is based on what they think they should do, including ending all novels abruptly at 100,000 words, even if they finish in the middle of a sentence (Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel MH 675*). Arthur, in comparison, would sometimes "wish for things so much that his breathing would get quite agitated, and he would have to go and lie down for a bit. On his own. In his small room" (ibid). The Bartledanians are so at ease they drive Arthur to panic attacks. The Bartledanians technically do have an Arcadia because they want for nothing, but this is not from the landscape but rather from their very nature. From a sociocultural standpoint, this should be impossible, but Adams's comedy universe is capable of sustaining such a preposterous culture. In fact, Bartledan is the ultimate joke on Arthur; he finds a place which looks like somewhere he would like to live, but it is impossibly dull, and his wish has backfired on him in a bizarre way. The quiet peaceful life he looks for is on Bartledan, but it comes at the cost of an absolute lack of even everyday excitement. On Bartledan Arthur will never have an argument with his neighbour, or fall madly in love with a girl in the village; or rather, he can do these things, but they will never reciprocate as he needs them to. It is an endless static nightmare of sameness. The literature is another intolerable aspect of Bartledan for Arthur, and the last straw for any hope of his staying there. "Famed though it was throughout this sector of the Galaxy for its subtlety and grace" (674), the Bartledanian literature is utterly inane, a tongue in cheek criticism of realist fiction:
He had just read an entire book in which the main character had, over the course of a week, done some work in his garden, played a great deal of netball, helped mend a road, fathered a child on his wife and then unexpectedly died of thirst just before the last chapter. In exasperation Arthur had combed his way back through the book and in the end had found a passing reference to some problem with the plumbing in Chapter 2. And that was it. So the guy dies. It just happens.

It wasn't even the climax of the book, because there wasn't one. The character died about a third of the way through the penultimate chapter of the book, and the rest of it was just more stuff about road-mending. The book just finished dead at the one hundred thousandth word, because that was how long books were on Bartledan. (675)

While it is not mentioned explicitly, it can be imagined Bartledanian literature is devoid of similes and metaphors, indeed, anything which could make their novels interesting. This impossibly dull narrative is composed of the Bartledan "view of the universe, which was that the universe was what the universe was, take it or leave it" (674). The overall opinion of the Bartledanian literature as filled with "subtlety and grace" (674) has two implications, both comic: first, fans of Bartledanian literature might believe it is a parody of the realist mode and intended to be mocked; second, the cultural acceptance of realist fiction over genre fiction has been inflated to such an extent Bartledanian literature, as boring as it is, has become the epitome of the realist novel. Regardless of which it is, as a travel destination, Bartledan, despite its apparent beauty, is simultaneously creepy and dull, and, as subjects in a travel narrative, the Bartledanians would barely merit a footnote.

Whether or not the Bartledanians understand Adams's comic universe for what it is, they are narrow-minded, seeing only what is in front of them; unlike travel writers, the
Bartledanians go nowhere, and do not construct heightened or exaggerated narratives from their experiences. Considering Adams as a genre writer, it is tempting to see his scathing attack on Bartledanian literature as a commentary on realist literature, which seeks to represent the world as it is. However, understanding *Hitchhiker's* as a comedic construction redefines Adams's true opinion of realist literature; he finds it boring to the point of laughter, and its logical conclusion, the Bartledanian novel, is its absurd final result.

Arthur, as a quintessential British Everyman, comes from a rich literary history, including crime, romance, and SF; when presented with the extreme realism of Bartledanian literature, Arthur finds he has no option but to throw the book across the room, sell up, and travel with "wild abandon", selling DNA to fund his travels (675-676). While this may seem an overreaction to a single book, Arthur cannot face the possibility of reading only Bartledanian novels for the rest of his life, and instead chooses to be buffeted by farce in the greater universe rather than live in a place which, on the surface, is peaceful, orderly, and would cost him his sanity.

Lamuella, on the contrary, should not have been an Arcadia for Arthur, given his introduction to the planet, in which his ship "went into a final hectic spin, ripped wildly through half a mile of trees and finally exploded into a seething ball of flame" (676). Unlike his careful choosing of Bartledan, Lamuella happens to Arthur in one of his more traumatic moments in *Hitchhiker's*. The crash occurs because Lamuella is uncharted, and therefore unexpected, and thus its gravity disrupted the hyperdrive (676). From Arthur's landing, and the sinister "quiet shapes" surrounding him at the end of Chapter 11, it would appear Lamuella would not be a haven for him (676). This is not only the setup for the castaway among the primitives of sea fiction, but also the SF hero from an advanced civilisation stranded on a primitive planet. The audience's expectations would involve some, if not all, of the following: Arthur would be made the chief or proclaimed a god,
having proven himself wise and worthy; Arthur would fall in love with one of the local women, only to find himself in conflict with her original intended; and Arthur would use his knowledge of a more advanced civilisation to bring new wonders to the planet. While these tropes can all be found in sea fiction, in SF they can be seen in a single episode of *Star Trek, The Paradise Syndrome*, in which an amnesiac Kirk fulfils all three clichés. Before examining how these tropes operate on Lamuella, the landscape and culture of the planet must be discussed.

Physically, Lamuella is as much as idyll as Bartledan, and indeed, many islands or planets experienced by castaways; it is a pastoral idyll, with perfect autumns, and its primitive society is just advanced enough to be pleasurable for Arthur to take part in:

the leaves were just beginning to turn red and gold, the river was beginning to swell again with the rains from the mountains in the north, the plumage of the pikka birds was beginning to thicken in anticipation of the coming winter frosts, any day now the Perfectly Normal Beasts would start their thunderous migration across the plains, and Old Thrashbarg was beginning to mutter to himself as he hobbled his way around the village, a muttering which meant that he was rehearsing and elaborating the stories that he would tell of the past year once the evenings had drawn in and people had no choice but to gather round the fire and listen to him and grumble and say that that wasn't how they remembered it. (688)

Lamuella is a landscape of mountains, forests, and plains, all apparently natural and gentle; the river is swelling but not overflowing from the mountain rains, the coming winter is anticipated even by the birds, and the plains provide meat via the Perfectly Normal Beasts. It is a landscape supportive of life, and indeed, of community, as the river is not just a source of fresh water but potentially of travel, and the village is located within
convenient distance of all these landscape features. Further, from Arthur's perspective, there are presumably no roads, and thus no potential for bypasses. However, the key differences from Bartledan lie not in the idyllic landscape, but rather in the alien creatures and the emphasis on storytelling. Animals do not feature on Bartledan, possibly because Arthur appears to only get through one novel before he feels compelled to leave, but perhaps also to underline the unnaturality of the society. Bartledanians, by not wanting anything, would not want to care for animals, or to hunt any. Food is never mentioned on Bartledan, while it is a central concept on Lamuella, as their primary meat supply come from the regular migrations of the Perfectly Normal Beasts, who appear out of nowhere to run across the plains and disappear again (692-693). The limited availability of the beasts, coupled with their unknown provenance, turn hunting and preparing the meat into a communal ritual, not only a necessity, but an occasion among the Lamuellans. The inclusion of birds and beasts on Lamuella are intended to reinforce Lamuella's natural state, and further prove the landscape provides well for its inhabitants.

The culture of Lamuella is also significantly different to Bartledan, particularly in regards to storytelling; clearly Old Thrashbarg's stories are his interpretations and embellishments of events, which are not always appreciated, but they are listened to. His stories of the hunt, for example, are made up in his hut while the rest of the village actually carry out the hunt (693). Old Thrashbarg's stories, unlike the Bartledanians', are clearly lies, and far from being the venerable elder, Old Thrashbarg is the person everyone else has to put up with, though they do seem to enjoy arguing with him (688). However, Old Thrashbarg visibly wants something; to be heard and considered important, which is why he has placed himself at the centre of Lamuellan culture by taking on the role of storyteller, and wildly exaggerating every story. After Bartledan, this is exactly what Arthur needs and appreciates. Not only did the Lamuellans save him from the wreckage of the spaceship,
they also provided him with a crotchety neighbour to be endured. Thrashbarg inserts himself into every part of Lamuellan life, and the younger people's willingness to argue with him indicates they both respect and cherish his argumentative nature, or at least enjoy the fight. Lamuella then is a physically perfect Arcadia with the type of storytelling Arthur can appreciate.

Culturally, Lamuella is yet further from Bartledan. No one on Bartledan appeared to have a set role in their society, and Arthur, upon his arrival, does not have any responsibilities. He is not even obliged to take part in netball, as the Bartledanians want nothing from him. While the audience might expect Arthur to be seen as a god on Lamuella, and made a chief, he is instead appointed as Sandwich Maker. This was foreshadowed when Arthur earlier muses on his lack of knowledge of how things on Earth actually worked, and his only skill lay in making sandwiches (673). However, Arthur is more than content in the role, as he is not only doing an easy job, but doing it well, and is considered as important to the village as the Baker and the Tool Maker, as he consults extensively with both (691). Arthur has gained a place not only the physical sense, but in the cultural sense. The importance of the role is underlined by Arthur's assistant being the envy of all other children in the village. This role is comedic in itself; the only place Arthur can find peace and happiness is on a planet no one goes to, among people who may not look like him, doing nothing more responsible than making sandwiches. Arthur's strange role on Lamuella further underlines the lack of British Imperialism in Hitchhiker's, and displaces traditional SF expectations. Stranded space travellers typically bring technology or wisdom to their new worlds, such as Kirk's implementation of irrigation in 'The Paradise Syndrome', or at least learn from their experience. Arthur does not bring great advances to Lamuella, and rather than conquering the natives, or advancing their civilisation with

\[\text{171 The Lamuellans are never described.}\]
technology. Arthur becomes a novelty chef and is perfectly content to do so. This position of Arthur as a novelty is a further displacement of the stranded SF hero, as Arthur does not have a local girl in love with him; he is valued, not as a romantic prospect, but for his ability to make a good sandwich. The comic irony of this is that it is a job he would not have been revered for doing on Earth. As for wisdom or knowledge, Arthur is faced with Old Thrashbarg, who declares "the planet had been found fully-formed in the navel of a giant earwig at four-thirty one Vroonday afternoon" (703). Despite his greater knowledge of the universe, Arthur sees no point in arguing with Old Thrashbarg. Arthur does not believe in this, but does not find it particularly upsetting; he has become so used to oddities, he will endure, if not believe, Thrashbarg's tales. This acceptance of the oddities of his new home can be seen in his comfort with the Perfectly Ordinary Beasts; the name itself startles Trillian, who presumes it suggests something terrible about the meat.

With the exception of his travels with Fenchurch, Arthur's time on Lamuella is his happiest period in Hitchhiker's. It is, for him, another Arcadia, but there is one limit imposed upon it. Despite the "lush rolling countryside" available all around, Arthur continually returns to a spot where he can see the crash site of his ship, a "nagging dark spot of fear and pain nestling just on the edge of his vision" (707). The horror of the crash is the darkness at the edge of Arthur's new Arcadia; he has found meaning in his life through making sandwiches, and while he is happy, the wider universe, and its meaninglessness, still haunts him in the form of the wreckage. It is a symbol of his lost home on Earth, Fenchurch's vanishing, and his own previous unhappiness. It is also a reminder to Arthur that Arcadia is fleeting, and can be lost in a moment. Lamuella is only a hiatus in Arthur's travels, with its Arcadian perfection broken by the arrival of Trillian with

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172 As the planet could very well have been constructed by the Magratheans without any of the inhabitants realising it, Arthur likely felt he did not have sufficient knowledge to counter Old Thrashbarg's argument successfully.
Arthur's daughter Random. What should have made Arcadia complete for Arthur, a family, is a comic displacement, as Arthur has not sought a family, and only accidentally fathered Random by selling DNA to pay for his travels. Rather than the happy life with a native girl, Arthur finds himself instead stuck with a surly teenage daughter of uncertain age who does not understand the permanence of gravity on a planet's surface (701-703). From the technology embedded in her wrist, and her desire to play in virtual realities rather than the woods of Lamuella, Random represents all that is unreal, ephemeral, and meaningless in the greater universe, a literal child of the stars who does not understand or want an Arcadia, or at least, not Arthur's Arcadia. She also throws Arthur out of his place of meaning; when Random breaks Arthur's knives and he brings them to the Tool Maker, they

had tried the usual business of waving the knives through the air, feeling for the point of balance and the point of flex and so on, but the joy was gone from it, and Arthur had a sad feeling that his sandwich making days were numbered. (712)

Trillian did not only bring Random to Lamuella, but the wider universe as well; with the knowledge he can be found relatively easily, Arthur knows he cannot rely on being left in peace, and this latest Arcadia will end for him. Random is an embodiment of the joke in that she is the product of an unwitting Adam and Eve; Arthur and Trillian, with the exception of some flirting at a party, have never wanted to be a couple. Random is therefore literally random and a joke in and of herself. Her connection to the joke serves to disconnect her from all landscapes:

The only places you could ever feel right were worlds you designed for yourself to inhabit - virtual realities in the electric clubs. It had never

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173 Random is the result of Trillian receiving artificial insemination, unwittingly using the DNA Arthur donated to pay for his travels.
occurred to her that the real Universe was something you could actually fit into. (Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel MH 707*)

Like the Magratheans, Random is a world builder, though only in simulations and not in reality; unlike the Magratheans, she is unable to accept reality as meaninglessness, and therefore subject to comedic manipulation, but searches for meaning in her own creations. This disconnection with the world is represented by Arthur's watch; he enjoys resetting it every day, as Lamuella days are one hour longer than on Earth, but Random sees as it as a symbol of her disconnection. The watch has a place and a time in which it fits, just as Arthur and Trillian once did, while Random, born between planets, is at peace nowhere, and leaves Lamuella to try to find Earth as soon as she is able, in the hope of forming a connection she has never experienced before and cannot understand (727).

Despite the beauty of the landscape, and the simplicity of the life he had found, Arthur is unable to hold on to this Arcadia once the wider universe intrudes on his bucolic life. Unlike the supposed Arcadia of Bartledan, Arthur does not want to leave Lamuella, though he does so to find Random. That which destroys his Arcadia becomes the most important thing to him, though in proper comedic form, all his interactions with Random are awkward and largely hopeless. He is forced to become a father, and though he cannot fit into the role, he tries to, understanding Random can provide the link broken by the loss of Earth. Lamuella and Bartledan then function together as a displacement joke. Arcadia is not available if Arthur seeks it out, but it can be found if he crashes into it in a fireball. Yet Arthur will abandon Arcadia for his family without hesitation. Like the pastoral tradition, Arcadia is the place which is left and then mourned. At the moment of Earth X's destruction, it is Lamuella Arthur thinks of, the one place in the universe with any kind of meaning for him, even if it was a silly meaning. Thinking of Lamuella instead of Earth
Prime indicates Arthur has finally accepted the joke of his home's meaninglessness, and has stopped hoping to preserve his original Arcadia.

There are three landscapes in *Hitchhiker's* which are unconnected to Arcadia, but they are places which should be centres of power and wisdom in the universe, the sites of pilgrimages where Arthur goes to find meaning. However, these pilgrimage sites become places of disappointment and anti-climax instead, and signify a complete deconstruction of the universe in *Hitchhiker's*. The first of these is the home of the true ruler of the galaxy, who Zaphod and Zarniwoop are looking for.\textsuperscript{174} By all rights, it should be a grand planet, with armed guards to protect him, and perfect weather. It should also be well-known and a popular place to visit to receive wisdom. Instead he lives in a shack in the middle of a seemingly permanent rainstorm, and he is only ever visited by six men who ask him questions (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 243-244). The description is more detailed in *Hitchhiker's Novel REU*:

> On a small obscure world somewhere in the middle of nowhere in particular - nowhere, that is, that could ever be found, since it is protected by a vast field of unprobability to which only six men in this galaxy have a key - it was raining.

> It was bucketing down, and had been for hours. It beat the top of the sea into a mist, it pounded the trees, it churned and slopped a stretch of scrubby land near the sea into a mudbath.

> The rain pelted and danced on the corrugated iron roof of the small shack that stood in the middle of this patch of scrubby land. It obliterated the small rough pathway that led from the shack down to the seashore and

\textsuperscript{174} It should be noted Zaphod signed up for this quest prior to the removal of half his brain, so does not remember it for much of *Hitchhiker's*.  

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smashed apart the neat piles of interesting shells which had been placed there.

The noise of the rain on the roof of the shack was deafening within, but went largely unnoticed by its occupant, whose attention was otherwise engaged.

He was a tall shambling man with rough straw-coloured hair that was damp from the leaking roof. His clothes were shabby, his back was hunched, and his eyes, though open, seemed closed. (Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel* 278-279)

Improbability is a crucial function in reaching this landscape, and is the reason Zaphod stole *The Heart of Gold*. In this landscape, the ruler is as much a part of it as anything else, as shabby and damp as the beach. The ruler of the universe is as simple as his abode, and his needs are simple; in *Hitchhiker's Radio*, he is brought crosswords, dictionaries, and a calculator by those who come to ask him questions (Adams 243). His mind, however, is surprisingly complex, having spent considerable time wondering if anything else in creation is real; in *Hitchhiker's Novel REU*, he says he "couldn't trust the thinking of a man who takes the Universe - if there is one - for granted" (282). He is also uncertain whether "the past isn't a fiction designed to account for the discrepancy between my immediate physical sensations and my state of mind" (*Radio* 244). The ruler of the universe, then, is a man uncertain of the actual existence of said the universe, or at least that which he cannot see. When confronted with the accusation his words affect the lives of others, he replies "I've never met all these people you speak of. And neither, I suspect, have you. They only exist in words we hear" (Adams *Hitchhiker's Radio* 245). This is a complete deconstruction of the universe as it stands in *Hitchhiker's Radio*; it is only constructed from the words heard by the audience. The audience is thus reminded of the
constructedness of *Hitchhiker's*, and it is deconstructed through the ruler's confirmation of its reliance on words. The farce in this is clear, as all of the important decisions in *Hitchhiker's*, including the decision to destroy Earth in *Hitchhiker's Radio*, have come through someone who is not even sure his cat exists (245). However, the ruler clearly knows more than he claims to, as in *Hitchhiker's Radio* he lets slip Zaphod is in collusion with "a consortium of high-powered psychiatrists who want him to order the destruction of a planet called Earth because of some sort of experiment" (245). Not only does the ruler recognise Zaphod, but he knows Arthur has come from Earth; although he is not sure the universe exists, he recognises the key players of the series. The ruler of the universe has essentially connected the construction of fiction through words with the construction of the universe through the same, and is unable to tell them apart. He considers the universe, and all those in it, to be meaningless imaginings, implying he rules because he understands the true nature of his reality. The ruler is also somewhat playful or perhaps vindictive; the revelation Zaphod signed the order to destroy Earth causes Arthur to take off in *The Heart of Gold* and leave everyone, including Ford and Zaphod, behind. In *Hitchhiker's Novel REU*, Trillian is present instead, and when she and Zaphod abandon Zarniwoop, the ruler locks him out in the rain. Like his landscape, he is mildly malicious, unsettling, and completely unexpected, especially when compared to the pomposity of Zaphod's puppet presidency. The placement of the scene in *Hitchhiker's Radio* is telling; it is the last scene of the second series, and therefore the last location in *Hitchhiker's Radio* written by Adams; perhaps one of the reasons there was no season three was because Adams was not sure how to recover the series from the deconstruction offered by the ruler; he has already undermined his own subcreation's veracity, and could not, at the time, go further, at least, not in radio. This may also explain why the plot of the book is changed and Arthur

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175 The opening of Colfer's *And Another Thing...* strongly implies Arthur might be the mysterious ruler, but it is left purposefully vague (5-7).

176 Adams also passed away before he could write the Tertiary Phase, based on *Hitchhiker's Novel LUE*. 
is missing from the meeting; Arthur's presence, and pointed knowledge of the fictionality of his world, is not in keeping with the quest for meaning he engages in throughout *Hitchhiker's*.

In *Hitchhiker's Novels SLTF* and *MH* Arthur visits two different planets to find some meaning in his life. The first is the planet of God's Final Message, Preliumtarn, third out from the sun Zarss in Galactic Sector QQ7 Active J Gamma, and Adams certainly uses language a pilgrim might when describing the journey, if a little more overwrought than usual:

> Beyond what used to be known as the Limitless Lightfields of Flanux until the Grey Binding Fiefdoms of Saxaquine were discovered lying behind them, lie the Grey Binding Fiefdoms of Saxaquine. Within the Grey Binding Fiefdoms of Saxaquine lies the star named Zarss, around which orbits the planet Preliumtarn in which is the land of Sevorbeupstry, and it was to the land of Sevorbeupstry that Arthur and Fenchurch came at last, a little tired by the journey.

> And in the land of Sevorbeupstry, they came to the Great Red Plain of Rars, which was bounded on the South side by the Quentulus Quazgar Mountains, on the further side of which, according to the dying words of Prak, they would find in thirty-foot-high letters of fire God's Final Message to His Creation. (Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel SLTF* 584)

This is a true pilgrimage, and this, perhaps, is why Arthur did not immediately seek it out; he was not ready to learn God's Final Message until he had rejected Backup Earth. The landscape is certainly reminiscent of biblical wildernesses, with a "Great Red Plain" which "rippled in the heat" (584-585). However, Arthur's expectations are immediately displaced; Prak had told him the Message was protected by the Lajestic Vantrashell of
Lob; this turns out to be "a little man in a strange hat and he sold them a ticket", who tells Arthur and Fenchurch to keep to the left (584). The sense of pilgrimage is further displaced by the booths along the path, at which they buy fudge baked in a cave heated by the Message, postcards featuring a blurry picture of the Message, commemorative sunhats, and cufflinks made from pebbles collected beneath the Message (584-587). While it is not unusual for pilgrimage sites to feature souvenir shops, Adams is emphasising how absurd it is to have them at a site presumably as holy as the Message. In addition, the fudge which is made in a cave heated by the Message suggests the souvenirs are much more intimately involved with the location than they might otherwise be. It would also seem a connection with the landscape through walking is desirable; a woman serving ice cream is insistent the devout must not use scooters; walking through the baking wasteland is an integral part of this pilgrimage. However, this belief does not seem to be too restrictive; when Fenchurch explains they are not devout, the lady tells them to turn back, but when they refuse, she sells them souvenirs and takes their picture (585). Even though Arthur and Fenchurch are not taking this pilgrimage because of devotion, she is more than happy to take their money.

There is also a clue in how long the planet's day lasts, as there is a "baking sun that hardly ever seemed to move, let alone set" (587). The journey is long, made even longer by their encounter with a dying Marvin, who they carry. When they see the Message, Arthur and Fenchurch are "slowly and ineffably filled with a great sense of peace, and of final and complete understanding" (588). The content of the message, "We Apologise for the Inconvenience", is not only comic, but, in a sense, utterly pointless. If that is all God has to say to his creation, why then must the devout walk under a blazing sun around a mountain range to see it? The pointlessness of the pilgrimage reinforces the overall meaninglessness of the universe; for Marvin, the confirmation of the pointlessness of his entire life is the first and only thing he ever feels good about (588). The Message confirms what Arthur,
Fenchurch, and Marvin all suspected; life is nothing but an inconvenience in the hunt for a laugh. The pointlessness of the journey is supported by the nearby scooter rental stall, run by "guys with green wings" who, presumably, have never had need of a scooter.

Arthur's final pilgrimage is not about universal truth or meaning, but rather personal meaning; he becomes frustrated with the universe because both Earth Prime and Fenchurch are gone, and cannot bring himself to enjoy anything. To solve this, he takes a pilgrimage to Hawalius, where "wisdom and truth were to be found" from the oracles, soothsayer and seers (658). However, once he reaches Hawalius, he finds the village of the major prophets has a crestfallen air about it, with many shutting up shop (658). While wisdom and truth were once available only on Hawalius, time travel has shut down the prophecy business for good (659). Similarly, the village of oracles is in the process of closing down, however, "village" might not be accurate, as they actually live in caves (660). The smell of the area is so bad Arthur cannot help but be sick from it; the landscape is rocky and dried out, reflecting the dying industry of Hawalius (661). The final village of Hawalius is one composed entirely of tall poles, occupied by an old man capable of moving between poles as if there were no space between them (665). The poles look out over a "hot, dry scrubby landscape" with a "fetid heat haze" on the horizon (667). These are certainly places where sages and oracles should be, however, there is no wisdom in the landscape. The woman in the cave merely photocopies her life story to advise people not to make her decisions, while the old man on the pole is promising, but ultimately frustrating. His words are seemingly wise:

You cannot see what I see because you see what you see. You cannot know what I know because you know what you know. What I see and what I know cannot be added to what you see and what you know because they are not of the same kind. Neither can it replace what you see and what you
know, because that would be to replace you yourself. (Adams *Hitchhiker's Novel MH* 668)

In *Hitchhiker's*, it is impossible to actually know the universe objectively; if the mystic has succeeded in doing so, then he would have found meaning in *Hitchhiker's* however, his inability to share it with others could be a pratfall the universe places before him. Indeed, the mystic has discovered the fictionality of the universe, deconstructing it for himself, but ultimately unable to share it; Arthur becomes dizzy at the attempt because it will destroy any hope he has for finding meaning in his life (668). The discovery and sharing of meaning must always be displaced in favour of the joke; in this case it is displaced by the old man telling Arthur he can get printouts of his wisdom at the spaceport. While he does possess powers, showing Arthur an image of Earth, Arthur's disorientation at the movement between the poles prevents him from sharing real wisdom about people occupying boundaries (668). The landscape and the mystic on the pole are both appropriate to their purpose, but Arthur can get nothing from them.

Arthur's journeys to other worlds are ultimately meaningless, as he is destroyed along with every possible version of Earth at the end of *Hitchhiker's MH*. Each landscape then is nothing but an element of the larger joke, as not only is Arthur unable to find meaning within them, but neither can anyone else in his universe. However, despite the meaninglessness of *Hitchhiker's*, it does fulfil one function, and does it well. Every scene in it is funny; even when terrible things are happening to Arthur, the audience laughs because they are glad it is not happening to them. As a comedy SF worldbuilder, Adams was undoubtedly a success.
Conclusion:

The Journey Goes On...
This thesis has attempted to discover whether worldbuilding in *Hitchhiker's*, and possibly by extension all SF, can be attributed to a single strange attractor or controlling element in each subcreation, a single driving force upon which all parts of the universe depend. Further, is it possible to identify this strange attractor in both the physical and social worldbuilding Adams uses, from Earth to spaceships and finally to alien worlds? While Adams's worldbuilding, like all SF, incorporates elements from disparate genres, from the pastoral and space opera to the travel guide, at the heart of everything in *Hitchhiker's* is the joke: life is meaningless, and only laughter is a viable response and respite. It is, perhaps, the repetitive grimness of the meaninglessness of life which makes *Hitchhiker's* so funny; accepting the lack of a higher purpose in the series, or heroic motivation - unless it is heroic simply to endure - the reader can simply enjoy the joke. The landscapes of Earth, spaceships, and alien worlds are all embedded in the joke. They function out of futility of meaning, and the black comedy in its quest. As comedy dictates everything else, the universe must behave in certain ways, with the worlds of *Hitchhiker's* constructed for and by the joke.

Worldbuilding in *Hitchhiker's* is concerned not only with the creation of a logically coherent secondary world built on the laws of comedy and dressed as SF, admittedly from the skin out, but also on the examination of the constructedness of all literary landscapes. Magrathea, by constructing worlds, draws attention to Adams's own constructions; while the audience is emotionally and intellectually invested in *Hitchhiker's*, they remain aware there is potentially no natural landscape in the series, and there is no place which does not potentially exist within the same literary constructedness of Adams's universe. There all landscapes are embedded within the joke of the meaninglessness of life, and Arcadia, the unattainable dream of pastoral writers, and a worthy vehicle for Adams's purpose, remains unattainable, although with comic rather than nostalgic intent. As soon as Arthur finds
Arcadia, whether it be in his pathetic little home on Earth or among the villagers on Lamuella, it is snatched away from him. Landscape, for Arthur, is something to be mistrusted, whether it be the flawed or doomed Arcadias of Earth, Lamuella, and Krikkit, or the mercurial ships of Hitchhiker's. Even sites of pilgrimage, where wisdom or peace should be found, become sites of deconstruction, where meaning is further displaced and the existence of anything in the universe, even the constructed landscapes, is undermined and questioned.

As with the constructedness of Hitchhiker's, the following laws are also embedded in the text. Meaninglessness is the only answer, and a search for meaning will always result in farce, typically pathetic farce enveloping Arthur. This search for meaning is the reflection of the connection to one's home planet, and Arthur is trapped in this search and destined to be the butt of the universe's jokes forever. While there was never any meaning in the universe, the loss of Earth serves as the narrative impetus for Arthur to become sure of this. As a further result of the lack of meaning, computers/ androids will never function as they are supposed or expected to, and the Drive will always warp reality to comedy rather than sense. Plural zones, despite containing infinite possibility, will always be sites of uncertainty and loss. Further, Hitchhiker's is a universe where manufacturing planets is not only possible, but a profitable exercise. Finally, the law which ties in to all others; if it is funny, it will happen, and in Hitchhiker's, it will usually happen to Arthur.

One part of the definition of worldbuilding remains to be examined in regards to Hitchhiker's: is it sustainable? Certainly in terms of internal consistency Hitchhiker's has proven sustainable. As long as Adams was involved, all landscapes reacted as the laws of Hitchhiker's would demand, embodying meaninglessness, humour, and virtual impossibilities. However, sustainability should be about more than just the author's production; as the continuing incarnations of Sherlock Holmes show, sustainability can
also mean the willingness or ability to continue a subcreation after the original creator's death. Certainly *Hitchhiker's Film*'s landscapes are in keeping with Adams's intentions, both in terms of constructedness and frustrated or comedic purpose. However, this may have been because of the work Adams had already done on the script before his death. In comparison, Eoin Colfer's *And Another Thing...* was published eight years later and presumably without much input from Adams, as *The Salmon of Doubt* contains no suggestion Adams intended to produce a sixth *Hitchhiker's Novel*. Reception for the sixth part in the trilogy was mixed; on the positive side, *The Guardian* reviewer Euan Ferguson called it a "triumph" (Lawson). Ferguson was already a fan of *Hitchhiker's*, and his only objection to the book was the length, preferring the shorter novels earlier in the series (Lawson). In comparison the review from *Books Ireland* referred to it as grave robbing in the title (Malone 111). However, the reviewer Aubrey Malone's view was most likely coloured by his dislike of the SF mode itself, writing "it's not the kind of thing that would float my boat (or space capsule) anyway" (111). Despite his dislike of the novel on its SF grounds, Malone does admit to being able to accept the premise of the novel, "it's hard not to, so committed is the writing" (111). While subtly different in style, *And Another Thing* is certainly part of the *Hitchhiker's* subcreation. Certainly Colfer's novel uses the same destabilisation of landscape, and while it is not possible here to examine the entire novel, the beginning and end are particularly well-suited to *Hitchhiker's* constructedness. *And Another Thing...* begins with Arthur apparently as an old man on a beach, happy and contented, relishing in the waves and endless cups of tea and biscuits (Colfer 5-7). Arthur has taken particular delight in learning how to dunk properly, reaching the same level of skill as with his sandwich making: "Dunking and sandwiches. What else

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177 In point of fact, Adams was working on a third Dirk Gently book before his death.
178 Interestingly, Ferguson did not like *Hitchhiker's TV or Film*, preferring the written versions over all others (ref).
179 Given the reviewer's dislike of SF, it is confusing as to why they reviewed the book at all.
are left to a person?” (7). This is a reflection not only of Lamuella, but of Arthur’s general search for contentment and simplicity, an Arcadia to call his own. Even his robot servant is functioning as it should, making proper tea (ibid). Colfer, in a fit of Adamsian whimsy, uses this opportunity to suggest the ruler of the universe was, in fact, Arthur: he vaguely remembers having a cat, but does not trust his memories, wondering if there was "anything trustworthy in the Universe that one could hug and hold on to in the midst of a butterfly storm” (6-7). The butterfly reference implies chaos, and a chaotic universe, on the edge of Arthur's Arcadian beach. However, Colfer quickly destabilises this location; Arthur has lived for decades in a simulated world in the seconds since the Grebulons began to destroy Earth X. Like all landscapes in Adams's Hitchhiker's, the beach is not to be trusted, and Arthur's bucolic life is utterly meaningless, particularly when it is revealed he is only in the simulation because Random was thinking of him, and, fortunately for Arthur, thinking kindly of him (28-29). The simulation is particularly pointless, as the Mark 2 Guide could have rescued Arthur, Ford, Trillian, and Random from the planet, but instead provides them with false lives. The end of And Another Thing... is also filled with the destabilisation of landscape; technically Arthur has found an Arcadia as a stay at home father looking after Random. All he needs do is make her sandwiches and look after her, but he cannot settle down, even among other humans on the new colony world of Nano. This is because Arthur knows it is as false and constructed as any other world, even more so as the Magratheans built it and sold it to the refugees from at least two Earths (97). It would seem knowing a planet was created by the Magratheans is enough for Arthur not to trust it. Under the guise of vetting a university for Random, Arthur chooses to risk hyperspace again and appears to be rewarded with the return of Fenchurch (335-337). For a moment it appears as if the universe has given Arthur meaning in his life, because while this is not his Fenchurch, as she has "blue mottling on her upper brow and [a] sloping ridge of bone in
the centre of her forehead", it is still a Fenchurch he can love (338). As this is *Hitchhiker's* any meaning Arthur could find is instantly subverted, once again by the instability of the Plural zones. However, this time it is not Fenchurch who disappears, but Arthur is literally pulled out of existence, dragged into a hyperspace anomaly before he can find happiness and meaning again (338-339). Arthur concentrates on where he was happiest, but it is not Lamuella or Fenchurch he thinks of, but rather the beach hut from his simulated universe; surprisingly, he manages to reach it, or at least, something like it. For a few moments, it appears as if Arthur can live his life in peace in the place in which he was happiest; however, in a move which would have made Adams proud, his new Arcadia is invaded by the presence of a Vogon destructor ship, which has arrived because he did not seek planning permission for his beach hut (339-340). Not only is Arcadia once again ruined, it is ruined by the Vogons. There is no meaning in this addition to *Hitchhiker's*, only the universe reminding Arthur, once again, of the meaningless of life in general, and the search for Arcadia in particular. Arthur, in his final line of the series, "Typical", understands the message perfectly, and so, it would seem, does Colfer. His foray into Adams's subcreation is successful because he recognises and integrates Adams's strange attractor, the joke on the meaningless of life.

In addition to Colfer's book, Dirk Maggs adapted the final three books of Adams's series into radio plays, with the remaining original actors taking up their parts again. Their inspiration was a combination of love for the series and for Adams himself. Simon Jones's foreword is addressed to Adams, and filled with affection, both for Adams and for his own role in the series (Maggs vii-x). Bruce Hyman claimed even in the late 90s, *Hitchhiker's* was still ahead of its time for radio, thus the desire to finish the story in its original form (qtd in Maggs xi). Despite the many difficulties - including finding a suitable replacement for the late Peter Jones and explaining the change in voice - all three books were adapted,
and even Adams had a part; having read Agrajag's part convincingly in the audio books, those recordings were used for the new adaptations (Jones qtd in Maggs x-xii). Hyman says it "is a tribute to Douglas that he was able to inspire such dedication from so large and distinguished a team" (qtd in Maggs xii-xiii); it is not only the man himself who inspired such a response, but the work itself. Everyone involved in Hitchhiker's found themselves drawn to the story again and again, because it is a world at once hilarious and intelligent, and, most importantly for those working on it, salable, and as a bonus, fun.

Sustainability does not only mean the continuation of the narrative by a new author, but also the influence a text has. BBC's series Red Dwarf, which was first aired in 1988, is an obvious successor to Adams's humour. Like Hitchhiker's, Red Dwarf is a comedy set in space, with only one living human remaining, and comedy and SF are integrated, and comedy, once again, appears to be the senior partner. Red Dwarf is not a parody, it references itself more than any other SF, and, in some ways, is as grimly comic as Hitchhiker's; due to a punishment for keeping a cat onboard, Dave Lister emerges from hibernation after three million years to find he is the only human crewmember left alive, and they are far from Earth because the AI has gone senile and did not turn the ship around after the crew's death. The quest in Red Dwarf is to return to Earth, although it is impossible for anyone to be sure Earth is still there; thus everything the crew endures could be as meaningless as Hitchhiker's, or could all be rewarded. Red Dwarf's humour was often different from Hitchhiker's, often relying on bodily functions rather than wit; nonetheless, it is, like Hitchhiker's, a series which has a joke at its core, though for Red Dwarf, that joke is not quite about the meaninglessness of life, but rather its absurdity; the crew of Red Dwarf will never truly win, but they never truly lose. A true sitcom, the series will always return to a status quo Hitchhiker's never had.
What does this mean in the context of studying worldbuilding in all SF? First, the presence of a strange attractor or single necessary physical element provides a specific focus to study; in *Star Trek*, which deals heavily in political and cultural questions, particularly in regards to what would make a utopian future, identifying the strange attractor as the duality of FTL and a heavily populated galaxy. Thus, while *Hitchhiker's* worldbuilding can be interpreted through its landscapes, *Star Trek*'s worldbuilding is seen equally in planets, the heroes' society, and alien races. Le Guin's worldbuilding of the Hainish novels is similar but slightly different; again the galaxy is heavily populated, but FTL travel is not possible; there is, however, an ancient race of anthropologists who, like the Federation of *Star Trek*, is a benign group of explorers. The differences in the strange attractors of *Star Trek* and Le Guin's subcreation would allow for a comparison of the worldbuilding between these two very different universes, particularly in their approach to alien worlds and civilisations, and the means to reach them.

By examining secondary worlds in the light of a strange attractor, worldbuilding criticism can then be used to group subcreations together, based on the tools the author uses, and their methods for implementing them. It allows a variety of new angles to take in the approach to SF criticism, providing a deeper understanding not only of individual subcreations, but also of worldbuilding itself. Further research will lead to a refinement of this approach, and new ways of understanding what worldbuilding is and how it functions, not only in SF, but potentially in all literature.
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Figure One:

*History of Science Fiction* by Ward Shelley

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