

**The Fundamental Interconnectedness of All Things:
Ecology in Douglas Adams' *Dirk Gently Series***

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Dedicated to Maria Gray
1924 - 2019

... and the Dodo
Palaeolithic era - 1681

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Abstract

The *Dirk Gently* series written by Douglas Adams mixes comedy, detective fiction and science fiction to create narratives capable of conveying ecological meaning in a variety of ways.

Using ecocritical theory this thesis unpacks the ecological themes and implications of the *Dirk Gently* series; ‘Dirk Gently’s Holistic Detective Agency’ (1987), ‘The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul’, (1988) and the unfinished and posthumously published ‘The Salmon of Doubt’ (2002). This thesis demonstrates how science fiction elements such as time travel and aliens can facilitate the understanding of ecological issues. Through socio-political approaches to ecocritical theory the implications of Adams’ indictment of neo-colonialism and modernity are to be a threat to the biosphere and humans as a part of it. The blind wastefulness of the human era or Anthropocene is evident in the *Dirk Gently* series as Dirk’s world becomes increasingly cluttered by rubbish and debris, some of it sentient. As an advocate for endangered species the environmentally aware Adams, through the adventures of ‘holistic’ detective Dirk Gently, offers a glimpse into the vast interconnected web of the biosphere and the immeasurable impact of humans on the ecological welfare of the planet.

Introduction

The ecocritical potential of science fiction is remarkable. The ability to project the environmental crises of Earth in the present or near future on phenomena, eras and universes fabricated for that purpose is highly effective. Robinson and Canavan in *Green Planets: Ecology and Science Fiction* put forth the idea that science fiction can help humanity confront the future in the wake of ‘the epochal mass-extinction event called the Anthropocene’, or human era (2014, p.1). The speculative qualities of science fiction allow us to imagine different ecological outcomes that range from the optimistic ‘New Jerusalem’ that is the ‘technological super city’ (2014, p.1), to the pessimistic dystopia. Science fiction as a mode of ecological storytelling has been deployed powerfully by many successful writers of the genre, including Octavia Butler, Margaret Atwood, Paolo Bacigalupi, and Jeff Vandermeer. If science fiction is mixed with the satirical and disarming properties of comedy we find ourselves in the territory of Kurt Vonnegut, Connie Willis, Grant Naylor and, of course, Douglas Adams.

Adams began in radio with the original *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* plays in 1978 (Adams 2012). Since then his books have sold over 14 million copies (Harris 2001). Adams has created some of the most iconic science fiction constructs: indeed, hitchhiking as an intergalactic hobby; the meaning of life, the universe and everything being 42; and the mechanic of the digital audio guidebook as narrator are all frequently quoted in both popular and literary culture. Adams became involved with the British environmental conservation movement of the 1980s when he embarked on a documentary program in which zoologist Mark Carwardine guided Adams through rainforests and jungles to visit some of the most endangered animals on the planet. The pilot for this radio program, *Last Chance to See*, focussed on the aye-aye, was released in 1985 (Adams et al 1991), and lead to Adams becoming a vocal advocate for biodiversity and environmental conservation. The impact of this environmental consciousness is apparent in his post-1985 works, with themes such as extinction and pollution featuring prominently in the *Dirk Gently* series of books.

Adams’ fiction has been a focal point of multifaceted critical attention, including an analysis of the *Science of the Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* (Hanlon 2005); an exploration of the

artificial belief of the electric monks featured in ‘Dirk Gently’s Holistic Detective Agency’ (Ballim & Wilks 2013); an examination of the philosophical ideas raised by *Hitchhiker’s* (Joll 2016); and most notably for the purposes of this thesis, analysed in the ecocritical works of Ursula K Heise. Adams’ works have also been the focus of literary theory; Kropf explores *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* as mock science fiction (1988), for example, while *Hitchhiker’s* and the *Dirk Gently* books have also been examined in terms of their absurdist qualities (Van der Colff 2010). Dirk Gently has even been cited as a notable example of the postmodern detective (Owen 1997). This thesis aims to unpick Adams’ comedic sci-fi fantasy narratives featuring Svlad Cjelli, or Dirk Gently, and follow the threads of environmental and ecological discourse which it includes. By examining the Dirk Gently novels through an ecocritical lens, it is possible to identify and analyse the ecological narratives and preoccupations of a writer not just interested in comedy, aliens and monsters, but also deeply involved in the discourse of conservation and the ‘environment’.

Adams published two Dirk Gently novels during his lifetime: ‘Dirk Gently’s Holistic Detective Agency’ in 1987 and ‘The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul’ in 1988, collected in *The Dirk Gently Omnibus* (2001). This thesis also considers the posthumously published and maddeningly unfinished ‘The Salmon of Doubt’ (2002). Despite the rich vein of ecological meaning in the Dirk Gently series and indeed in the full body of Adams’ work, it is necessary to draw the line somewhere, and the print texts of the Dirk Gently series includes diverse yet thematically linked stories that may be examined in isolation. The unwieldy mass of Adams’ most popular series *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*, however, would be completely unmanageable in a thesis of this size and needs space for detailed consideration. Adams’ later works continue the author’s preoccupation with biospheres, environments, and cultural critique in his more grounded *Dirk Gently* series, which portrays a planet at the precipice, always two steps away from ecological collapse. The world of Dirk Gently is under siege from extraordinary forces such as alien entities, immortal gods, ghosts, and comets. Despite these threats from non-human actors, it is often the human actors that facilitate the most damaging and potentially devastating events of the narratives. Gods may be warring with each other and carrying out Faustian pacts, but it is a record company lawyer and an advertising executive who are the most malevolent threats in ‘The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul’.

By exploring the Dirk Gently narratives through an ecocritical lens, I hope to follow three particular threads of ecological and environmental awareness and meaning-making. The first is the complicated and interweaving webs of life or biospheres that Adams' Dirk Gently might simply attribute to the 'fundamental interconnectedness of all things' (Adams 2001a, 'Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency', p. 118). These connections and relationships extend past the non-human, tethering the human experience and indeed the welfare of humans to the non-human. This first chapter is informed by elements of deep ecology, which permits us to conceptualise a reality in which this interconnectedness could be used to undermine hierarchies that favour the human over all other life. The second chapter highlights the ways in which Adams depicts modernity as a kind of creeping illness. The human society that Dirk Gently moves through is one that appears to be stagnating and cannibalizing itself, whilst continuing the neo-colonial desire to seek domination over the non-human. By looking at the neo-colonial implications of British ecocriticism and their potential impact on Adams as a British writer and environmental activist, we can see how guilt and society are intrinsically linked to the portrayal of the human and non-human world. In the third chapter, I seek to unpack how human exceptionalism and blind consumerism are highlighted by science fiction and the mythical. This third area of consideration deals with the human tendency to create constructs to suit their needs and then discard them with little consideration as to what happens afterwards. Blind consumerism and complacency often lead to characters missing great insights, committing accidental or absentminded atrocities, and finally leaving a trail of destruction in their wake. But whilst the greater biosphere is often passive in the face of human assaults in Dirk Gently's world, there are moments in which the non-human regains a little lost ground. After the grim trek through a biosphere in crisis, we can thus pull together the moments of hope and change that Adams affords his audience, the sense of relief that despite the irreparable damage that has been wrought on the biosphere, not all is lost.

Dirk Gently: The Sci-fi Detective

Before engaging with an ecocritical analysis, it is important to establish why these texts are of any reasonable ecocritical significance. The following brief summaries of Adams' Dirk Gently texts show, even in these short descriptions, emerging ecological themes. 'Dirk

Gently's Holistic Detective Agency' is not only the first introduction to the excessive, opportunistic and eccentric detective formerly known as Svlad Cjelli, but the narrative also introduces the theme of human interference in a dying world. Part comedy, part detective story, and part science fiction, the novel follows the strange events surrounding Dirk's friend Richard MacDuff, a professor at Cambridge known as Reg, and two murders. Through this narrative, readers encounter time travel, extinction, the music of the universe, and most famously, the fundamental interconnectedness of all things. As Dirk explains to his client, the incredulous Mrs Rawlinson, he is a holistic detective and that

...what we are concerned with here is the fundamental interconnectedness of all things. I do not concern myself with such petty things as fingerprint powder, tell-tale pieces of pocket fluff and inane footprints. I see the solution to each problem as being detectable in the pattern and web of the whole (Adams 2001a p. 115).

With such an unconventional mode of investigation, Dirk finds himself faced with unconventional mysteries requiring unconventional solutions. In this first investigation, an alien ghost walks London and Cambridge trying to find someone who will reverse the accident that caused the death of his people. His efforts to find the 'perfect carrier' (Adams 2001a, p. 215) to prevent the event that kickstarted life on Earth is the underlying catalyst for most of the action throughout the narrative. This first introduction to Dirk and his methods introduces themes of ecological and narrative interconnectedness. Through these themes Adams engages in discourses of ecological cause and effect, as well as the human impact on the biosphere.

'The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul' also follows Dirk Gently, whose client is inconveniently beheaded by a horned creature, and Kate Schecter, who was in Heathrow Airport when it inexplicably exploded. These characters' narratives intersect, and both are confronted with a bizarre manifestation of the human impact on the environment, with a range of Norse gods added in for good measure. The idea that humans create a series of constructs, both physical such as plastic bottles, fridges and computers, and theoretical such as political ideologies, morals and religions, that will continue to exist long after they are wanted or useful is explored in depth in the text through the social construct of religion and

when religion becomes myth. The Norse gods have seen better times and are struggling to adjust to their new realities as forgotten gods of a bygone era; however, some, like Odin, have sacrificed their divinity and soul for a place in a private hospital with very nice linen. Throughout the narrative there are many iterations of the hubris of human civilisation and modernity in manipulating, commodifying, destroying and reconstructing. In restructuring the non-human to suit the needs of the human, the specific antagonists of the narrative and European society as a whole are implicated in ushering both the human and non-human closer to disaster. Through the process of divination, the line between the artificial and the biological becomes increasingly blurred until a new ‘guilt’ god emerges from the potential biohazard that is Dirk Gently’s abandoned fridge.

Adams’ unfinished novel, ‘The Salmon of Doubt’, plays a dual-role in the canon of Adams’ work. Despite the appearance of Dirk and other associated characters, and a plot that deals with many of the same themes as the *Dirk Gently* series, Adams seems to have had other plans for the book. Adams intimated in an interview with Matt Newsome that, whilst this started as a Dirk Gently novel many of the themes and story threads were more suited to a sixth *Hitchhiker’s* book (Adams 2002, *Salmon of Doubt*, location 2617-2628). So why include this incomplete, unpolished excerpt of what may or may not be a potential Dirk Gently novel? The book opens 1.2 million years after humankind has been wiped out, presumably by the comet that is hurtling towards the earth throughout the present-day narrative. This flash-forward alone opens up key areas for ecocriticism, as we see rapid evolution and a vision of a post-Anthropocene Utopia. Back in the Anthropocene or human era, the surly and disenfranchised Dirk Gently is contending with a lost cat of a different kind and a client who seems to be able to predict his every move. ‘The Salmon of Doubt’ presents us with existentialist ideas, brought forth by the mundane, the domestic and completely improbable. A Dirk Gently investigation is less about whodunnit and more about how misunderstood scientific principles such as quantum physics, a willingness to embrace as fact science fiction staples such as time travel and aliens, and how Dirk’s accidental clairvoyance can be applied to somehow solve the mystery. We do not yet know if Mr Gently will resolve the mystery of the missing cat, but it is possible to see Adams’ constructing a framework for the “genius detective” to practice the art of induction.

A Quick Note on Terminology

One of the key problems associated with ecological literary discourse is that of terminology; if the surroundings of everything that might be named is an environment, then other terms are needed to delineate whether we mean the manufactured human environment or the natural environment. In 'Ecocriticism' (2013), Marland argues that the terms 'human' and 'nonhuman' are a good starting point. By doing this, however, we are in danger of setting up a false dichotomy and separating the human from 'nature' and prioritising a form of 'civilisation' that excludes indigenous people and the colonised. This is a limited and distinctly neo-colonialist approach (Todd 2016). Adams' work is firmly rooted in Western ideas of the human and the natural world as pristine wilderness in need of saving, despite his work in environmental advocacy. So, it is important to acknowledge the socially and textually constructed divide created between the modern, human and artificial, and the natural world, whilst highlighting the areas of overlap that the terms human and non-human are sometimes ill-equipped to define as they imply difference based on assumptions of hierarchy (Huggan & Tiffin 2015, p. 8). Marland also highlights that the prefix 'eco', meaning webs of 'human and non-human interrelation', is intrinsic to ecocritical discourse (2013, p. 846). The term 'Anthropocene' will be used in this thesis to describe our current era of human dominated and mediated existence, and anthropocentrism will be used to describe the practice of viewing the human as more valuable and important than the non-human (Garrard 2004, p. 183).

As a means of ascertaining what is implied by the terms 'human' and 'non-human', and more importantly the problems with these definitions, I will be looking to Huggan and Tiffin's *Postcolonial ecocriticism: Literature, animals, environment* (2015). This text takes apart the colonial constructs that have caused immense damage to the non-human and to our cultural understanding of ecology and environment. They refer to racism and speciesism as being symptomatic of reinforced 'hegemonic centrism' that perpetuates colonialist controls and subjugation (2015, p. 5).

Literature Review

In analysing the ecocritical potential of Adams' *Dirk Gently* series, this thesis draws upon texts which explore ecology and ecocriticism as a key component of literary theory. One particularly important text is Pippa Marland's 'Ecocriticism' (2013), which provides useful insights into ideas such as social ecology, post-humanist ecology, colonialist ecology and material ecology. The multifaceted ways that Adams texts convey ecological meaning invite analysis from more than one line of ecocritical thinking and Marland acknowledges the multifaceted nature of contemporary ecocritical thinking rather than restricting the current ecocritical discourse to a single 'fourth-wave' (2013, p. 1512). Marland also highlights the 'slow violence' of prioritising of localised, western environmentalism at the expense of other people and environments on a global scale (2013, p. 1515) informing further reading into Indigenous and First Nations people perspectives. Indeed, in analysing the colonialist and neo-colonialist elements in the *Dirk Gently* series it was vital to approach the text from the perspective of the non-coloniser. The undervalued ecological insight of Indigenous and First Nation's people is explored by Zoe Todd in 'An Indigenous Feminist's Take on the Ontological Turn: 'Ontology' Is Just Another Word for Colonialism' (2016). Todd's analysis is key to understanding the role that colonialism plays in undermining progress in ecological understanding, pointing to 'ontology' as 'another Euro-Western academic narrative' (2016, p. 7) that devalues or ignores Indigenous experiences and traditional stories.

Along these lines, the ecological role of traditional stories is also important in examining 'The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul' as traditional stories often become myth, particularly when categorised by Euro-Western academic traditions. Amba Sepie's 'More than Stories, more than Myths' (2017) further contextualises ecology and environment within myth and traditional stories. Sepie focuses on the ecological meanings within traditional stories and warns against reducing them to cultural artefact and even abstracted allegory. Sepie's analysis is essential in bridging the gap between the mythic and the workings of ecology. However, it should be noted that Sepie refers specifically to Indigenous people of colonised areas that are not typically Euro-Western like the Norse gods encountered in 'The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul' such as Thor and Odin.

Ecocritical theorist Ursula K Heise mentions Adams work explicitly in 'The Hitchhiker's

Guide to Ecocriticism' (2006) which draws on ideas like interconnectedness and holistic approaches to reimagining ecocriticism as a multifaceted way to approach literary theory. Heise stresses the importance of ecocritical literary analysis, such as I have attempted to apply in this thesis as a part of assuming responsibility for the ecological crisis of the current epoch. Heise not only attempts to validate ecocritical literary theory but emphasises the urgency of effectively communicating the dire state of the biosphere. Heise's *Imagining Extinction: The Cultural Meanings of Endangered Species* (2016) is focused on cultural narratives and meaning making surrounding extinction with particular emphasis on an urgency of understanding the role of cultural assumptions on the biosphere in a time of mass extinction. The essay 'Lost Dogs, Last Birds and Listed Species: Cultures of Extinction' is essential in framing the implications of Adams references to extinct and endangered species in the *Dirk Gently* series and how his advocacy for endangered species may have impacted the portrayal of ecology. Moreover, one of the key elements in the ecology of 'Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency' and 'The Salmon of Doubt' is the imagining of the Earth as a planetary body that can be invaded. Heise's *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet* (2008) is a collection of essays that details how different environmental movements have imagined the planet Earth and the implications of those attitudes and ideologies on ecocritical thinking. The 'blue marble' and 'spaceship Earth' are both integral to Adams' science fiction in its more optimistic moments.

Focusing on the ecocritical potential of the *Dirk Gently* series as science fiction, Robinson and Canavan's *Green Planets: Ecology and Science Fiction* (2014) highlights the close connection between the current state of environmental crisis with the need for science fiction representations of what uncertain futures might look like. Specifically, Alt's 'Extinction, Extermination and the Ecological Optimism of H.G. Wells', Latham's 'Biotic Invasion; Ecological Imperialism in New Wave Science Fiction' and Otto's "'The Rain Feels New"; Ecotopian Strategies in the Short Fiction of Paolo Bacigalupi' are critical to the analyses of this thesis. The essays interrogate different texts and often different waves of science fiction but share elements of socialist and Marxist literary criticism continuing the tradition of ecocritical theory borrowing from other critical theories. Robinson and Canavan also provide a system of categorising ecological science fiction into four groups according to their explorations of place and modernity. The alien ship, for example, can be understood as a

‘New Jerusalem’ or technological utopia in which computerisation can read life itself like a musical score (Adams 2001a, ‘Dirk Gently’s Holistic Detective Agency’, pp. 230-233), and DaveLand can be interpreted as an ‘Arcadia’ in which the earth is recovering from the damage inflicted by the Anthropocene and is now a natural paradise (Adams 2002, *The Salmon of Doubt*, location 2702-2713). The negative flip side of the ‘New Jerusalem’ is the ‘Brave New World’ which uses the technology for surveillance and control in the aid of a totalitarian government or authority and the flip side of the ‘Arcadia’ being the ‘Land of Flies’ in which human consumerism has drained the Earth’s resources to the point at which it is starting to cannibalise humanity itself, which will be useful in describing the modernity of Adams’ London.

As a more generalised grounding in ecocritical concepts, Greg Garrard’s *Ecocriticism* (2004) establishes the evolution of ecocriticism as a literary analysis and provides the terminology and language to communicate some of the more complex concept presented by defining humanity within the context of its environment; ‘Ecocriticism is unique amongst contemporary literary and cultural theories because of its close relationship with the science of ecology’ (Garrard 2004, p. 5). One specific area of scientific inquiry that Adams’ was particularly interested in was evolution; in an interview, he cited Richard Dawkins’ *The Selfish Gene* (2016) and *Blind Watchmaker* (2013) as being amongst his favourite books. This enthusiasm for evolutionary biology is worth noting when analysing not just the Dirk Gently series but Adams’ work in general (Adams 2002, location 1524). In addition to Garrard’s 2004 text, the thesis draws upon *Teaching ecocriticism and green cultural studies* (Garrard 2016) which features essays on strains of ecocritical theory and how to make ecocriticism accessible and relevant. I refer to this text generally as it provides perspectives on a wide range of ecocritical ideas, but specifically ‘Teaching Romantic Ecology in North Canada’ by Kevin Hutchings is useful in examining Adams invocation of Samuel Taylor Coleridge in ‘Dirk Gently’s Holistic Detective Agency’ as Hutchings examines the ecocritical implications of the romantic poets.

Chapter 1. Consider the Dodo: Connection, Causation and the Biosphere

I operate by investigating the fundamental interconnectedness of all things... Every particle in the universe affects every other particle, however faintly or obliquely. Everything interconnects with everything.

- Dirk Gently, 'The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul' (Adams 2001b, p. 87)

Interconnectedness as an idea is intrinsic to ecocriticism, ecology, and Dirk Gently's methods of investigation. Garrard asserts that 'the notion of interconnectedness is a truism of environmental thought' (2016, p. 9), and the connections between life forms and their environment or the ecology of the planet is intrinsic to globalised understandings of ecocriticism. It is an argument also highlighted by Heise, who examines the 'vast interconnected webs' of biology (2006, p. 510). This chapter is an exploration of the connections between the human and the non-human in the *Dirk Gently* series and the ways in which environmental phenomena—including apocalyptic events, extinction and evolutionary leaps—have flow-on or ripple effects throughout the global ecology of the narrative Earth, and by implication, the reality of our Earth.

While private investigator Dirk Gently uses the term 'holistic detective' primarily for grifting old ladies into paying for tangential expenses while he ostensibly looks for their lost cats, the term also provides a neat framework for discussing the notion of biosphere and ecology in the Dirk Gently novels. Dirk's theory of interconnectedness, that is, taking 'quantum mechanics to their logical extremes' (Adams 2001a, p. 154), may be central to the narratives, but the environmental consciousness and connectedness often lies with other characters; with the well-meaning Reg who feels a deep need to save endangered species; in Kate who needs to feel the dirt under her hands; and in the Norse gods and homeless people who are intrinsically linked to the elements and the biosphere. We could arguably include the ill-fated, not quite human, Dave of 'The Salmon of Doubt' who, while certainly not tethered to the reality of his own physical limitations, is cognizant of his natural, non-human environment. Indeed, even as DaveLand grows to be more complex than Dave would like, his 'smart houses' are built to be environmentally sustainable and the settlement is working within the ecology of their surroundings; but more on Dave later (Adams 2002, location 2664).

Deep ecological thinking posits the idea of 'Biospherical egalitarianism' in which the needs of one species should not be prioritised over the best interests of the interconnected webs of

biology (Marland 2013, p. 850). The consequences of running contrary to ‘biospherical egalitarianism’ are demonstrated in two key narrative threads in ‘Dirk Gently’s Holistic Detective Agency’. The most obvious is when Reg interferes with the biosphere to save the coelacanth (a rare order of fish) and ends up causing the extinction of the dodo. Despite the prioritisation of the coelacanth over the dodo, overriding the interests of both species is the human agenda. Anthropocentrism is responsible for the extinction of the dodo through hunting (Barras 2016), and Reg’s naive meddling seems to have set those events into motion. Similarly, despite Reg’s best efforts, the coelacanth, a breed of fish which has weathered 400 thousand years of environmental change, is still on the brink of extinction due to being caught in fishing nets and rising sea temperatures (Platt 2015).

Both Reg and Douglas Adams are caught up in the discourses surrounding endangered species and extinction, a cultural phenomenon that has its own idiosyncratic elements which often work contrary to the ecological security of the planet (Heise 2016, p. 17). The dodo of Mauritius and other iconic extinct species such as the thylacine of Australia act as ‘shorthands for broader misgivings regarding the planetary consequences of modernization’ (Heise 2016, p. 27). Endangered species such as the aye-aye, kakapo and the Amazonian manatee, all featured in *Last Chance to See* (1991), are also used as shorthand for the unfolding mass extinction event of humanity’s creation (Heise 2016, p. 15). Adams himself was deeply involved in conservation efforts, particularly regarding the Northern White Rhinoceros, which is thought to be close to complete extinction (Christian 2018). Adams advocated for the conservation of the rhino after following four of the last animals in *Last Chance to See* (1991). As a part of his campaigning efforts he even participated in a climb up Mount Kilimanjaro taking shifts dressed as a rhino to raise money and promote awareness of the plight of the rhino in Kenyan villages near the Tsavo National Parks (Adams 2002, location 1192). The extreme lengths that both Adams and Reg take to try to save endangered animals suggest the emotive response to endangered and extinct species that Heise examines in *Imagining Extinction* (2016). According to Heise, advocating for endangered species may be less about scientific reasoning than about emotional responses, which act as a catalyst for conservation narratives and media, and the sympathy and concern elicited from the audience. The effectiveness of such advocacy for a singular or limited selection of animals is up for

debate, however Heise does point to the effectiveness of comedy in prompting audiences into action, using *Last Chance to See* (1991) as an example (Heise 2016, pp. 70-72). Reg in ‘Dirk Gently’s Holistic Detective Agency’ seems to be aware that his desire to help endangered and extinct animals is based in emotion, as there is no science in his desire to save the coelacanth or his visits to Mauritius to visit the dodo, just a deep nostalgia and guilt for the animals he cannot save:

‘I only come to look,’ said Reg in a small voice, and glancing at him Dirk was discomfited to see that the old man’s eyes were brimming with tears which he quickly brushed away. ‘Really, it is not for me to interfere—’ (Adams 2001a, p. 214).

The second example of the perils of rejecting biospherical egalitarianism in ‘Dirk Gently’s Holistic Detective Agency’ is more allegorical and follows the science fiction convention of using hostile aliens to highlight dangerous or unjust human behaviour (Latham 2014, p. 78). Rather than anthropocentrism placing the Earth in immediate risk, there is another force actively trying to sabotage all life, human and non-human, originating from Earth for the benefit of a single species. The alien ghost seeks to undo the catalyst that set life in motion on planet Earth in order to save his crew from annihilation. The alien ghost is portrayed as dangerous and ‘mad’, but the reader is invited to sympathise with him through the high culture, music and technology of his people, and their noble intent to build a peaceful paradise. These admirable qualities are similar to the reasons put forth for human exceptionalism and anthropocentrism; humans have evolved beyond animals to create culture, technology and learning. But in the end, does that matter in the face of mass extinction? This is the stuff that environmentally conscious science fiction is made of; providing new ways of viewing the unethical, damaging and often colonialist practices of humanity by projecting them onto a fictional, intelligent species (Latham 2014, p. 77-78). Latham outlines this apparent desire of the coloniser to rewrite their historical role through first contact narratives, specifically in reference to HG Wells’ *War of the Worlds*: ‘the irony of this switch of roles is not lost on Wells’ narrator who compares the fate of his fellow Londoners to those of the Tasmanians, and even the dodos’ (2014, p.77).

The science fiction device of an exterior, often alien, threat to the planet allows us to view the interests of the world on a global scale, whilst tethering ecological concerns to the ‘needs of the national security state’ (Alt 2014, p. 35). This unification via an apocalyptic form of ‘risk communication’ (Heise 2008, p. 133) may reflexively create links and connections across local and nationalist lines, thus creating what Heise refers to as ‘ecocosmopolitanism’ (2008, p. 21). Ecocosmopolitanism is a term posited by Heise that refers to an ‘environmental world citizenship’ in which humans are aware of the global implications of ecological collapse and take responsibility for regulating their own impact on the global ecology (2008, p. 21). Whilst we only venture beyond the bounds of Britain on a handful of occasions in ‘Dirk Gently’s Holistic Detective Agency’, these journeys are facilitated by Reg, the time-travelling Cambridge professor. Reg’s rooms in the college function as a time machine, and through such technology connections are forged between human and non-human environments across time and space. A direct manifestation of this connection occurs when Richard Macduff is able to pass through the time machine and awkwardly feed a ‘cross dodo’ on an island in Mauritius in 1676, four to five years before their estimated extinction (Adams 2001a, p. 214). This simplification of the cause and effect of human/non-human interrelations are made easier to comprehend through the facilitation of science fiction elements. Communicating the sheer enormity and complexity of the interconnected webs of life is one of the key barriers to understanding the impact of ecological damage, but science fiction mechanisms like time travel are deployed in this narrative in order to make the connections more understandable.

In defiance of hierarchies of value that disregard the perspectives of non-human characters, Adams attempts to give the reader the perspective of the non-human. In ‘The Salmon of Doubt’, for example, we spend a substantial portion of a chapter in the head of a rhinoceros called Desmond. Adams goes to great lengths to provide insights into Desmond’s confusion and panic, without providing an anthropomorphised inner monologue:

He didn’t even know that his name was Desmond, but, again, it wasn’t the sort of thing that bothered him. A name was just a sound you heard, and didn’t have that rich, heady reek of really being something. A sound didn’t well up inside your head and go woomph the way a smell did (2002, location 3386).

Readers are invited to connect with Desmond without resorting to a cartoonish reframing of his ability to comprehend the human constructs, both non-physical and physical around him. This simple, yet nuanced portrayal of a non-human psyche creates sympathy with the rhino, who is tragically thrust into a situation that he does not understand. Confused and alarmed, Desmond charges through the backyards of upper-class suburbia, finally crashing a pool party and being shot to death by the residents. As a method of creating connections between the reader and the non-human it differs substantially from the science fiction device of the time machine and the more fantastical connections to the non-human of 'The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul'.

Further, in 'The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul', the reader is presented with a society of non-human deities that are intrinsically linked to both the human and the non-human. The Norse gods are human constructs from a time when people needed explanations for nonhuman phenomena. This leads to an angry thunder god, who is frustrated at the indifference of the world that surrounds him, accidentally destroying an airport terminal in an explosive blaze of fire. Thor has control over one of the most volatile natural phenomena, lightning storms, but it does nothing to help him navigate modernity. He is tethered to the natural world, or the premodern ancient world, a world in which humans were more subject to the weather and ecologies that surrounded them. In chapter three, I will discuss the displacement of the Norse gods in more detail. However, it is important to acknowledge that in empathising with the Norse gods moving through a world that is no longer theirs, that these entities have an innate connection to the non-human and an understand of the complex interconnected webs of the biosphere.

Adams' use of the 'apocalypse' in the *Dirk Gently* series is particularly poignant regarding extinction and evolution. Robinson and Canavan explore the apocalypse as a device for conveying urgency and inspiring unification, and the kind of ecocosmopolitanism for which Heise advocates, arguing that the apocalypse does not need to be 'the final end', but rather can refer to the transition from one era into the next (2014, pp. 27-28). Adams intimated that he was obsessed with the events of extinction and evolution: 'That was pretty much it for the dinosaurs... I'm rather obsessed with the idea of that comet coming down and it being the single event to which we owe our very existence' (Adams 2002, location 3618-3629). As a

species that is heralding in the sixth mass extinction on Earth (Heise 2016, pp. 51), humanity in 'Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency' faces a threat of mass extinction at the hands of an ancient alien facilitated by a murderous, recently fired magazine editor and a time machine.

In 'The Salmon of Doubt' Adams opens with a jubilant celebration of an Arcadian future; that is a future in which the world has moved past ecological crisis by breaking down the societal structures that reinforce unsustainable practices and unchecked consumption (Robinson & Canavan 2014, p.1). We meet Dave, the somewhat reluctant ruler of this part of the Earth that he has labelled DaveLand. It is not until Dave is possibly plummeting to his death on a glider of his own construction that we find out that humanity has been extinct for 1.2 million years and Dave, with his lank greasy hair and penchant for naming things after himself, is our evolutionary successor: 'In geological terms [1.2 million years] was but a fleeting moment, of course, but the forces of evolution had suddenly had tons of space to play in, huge gaps to fill, and everything had started to thrive like crazy' (Adams 2002, location 2706). Indeed, DaveLand may be the post-crisis Arcadia environmentalism strives for but made possible by the complete extinction of humans as a species. In this sense the apocalyptic threat of the comet hurtling towards Earth in 'The Salmon of Doubt' may mean the 'final end' for humanity, but for the Earth itself, it could be a second chance at recovery and regeneration.

In contemplating the impact of the human on the vast interconnected biosphere it is important to bear in mind Reg's explanation of the impact of time travel: "The complexities of cause and effect defy analysis" (Adams 2001a, p. 228). The enormity of the impact of human on the non-human in the Anthropocene may be impossible to effectively communicate but by tracing cause and effect through his Dirk Gently narratives Adams is able to create powerful examples.

Chapter 2. Keeping up with the Draycotts: British Modernity and Neo-Colonialism

Listen I draw up contracts for the record business. These guys are just minnows by comparison. You've met them. You've dealt with them. They're primitive savages. Like the Red Indians. They don't even know what they've got.

- Clive Draycott, 'The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul' (Adams 2001b, p. 231)

Robinson and Canavan assert that 'two ideological positions are available to us in modernity, one positively charged, and one negatively charged', indicating that narratives carry an implicit judgement of modernity, specifically the role that the environment and ecology play in human and non-human spaces (2010, p. 1). The primary setting for the modernity of Dirk Gently's world, 20th century London, has a distinctly negative charge, plagued by urban decay and nonsensical capitalist structures. In Dirk Gently's world Adams shows us a particular type of assault on the ecology; a perpetual cycle consumption and destruction that has its seeds in colonialism and pre-modernity. This cycle not only decimates the non-human but also destroys and subjugates human populations in pursuit of capitalist goals.

The threat that humans pose to the environment through new technologies and increasing consumption is not unique to modernity. Coleridge was preoccupied with environmental issues and the idea of ecological interconnectedness or its Romantic near equivalent, 'nature's economy' (Hutchings 2016, p. 50). Even in this premodern era, there was a concern that man posited a great threat to the balance of nature, giving rise to 'Romantic era animal welfare activism' articulated through the poetry of writers like Wordsworth, Keats, and Coleridge (Hutchings 2016, p. 72). We can see this in the shooting of the albatross in 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', for example, which is the catalyst for the woes of the mariner and his crew. The poetry of Coleridge as deployed by Adams in 'Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency' affords an early window into the ancient alien's view of humanity; that 'Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs, Upon the slimy sea' (Coleridge 1798 & Adams 2001a, p. 147). In changing the context of the narrative, this excerpt from 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' shows the shared early evolution of homo sapiens with other animals. In this context, the slimy things with legs are the human and the mariner is the alien ghost. This facilitates the alien's revulsion and hatred of humanity channelled through an unsuspecting

Coleridge while possessed by the alien ghost. The alien ghost has, over billions of years, watched the animals that superseded his species, the animals that he despises, move towards modernity and create a society that he loathes. A dislike of human modernity is not exclusive to the alien, however; the narrative voice of the *Dirk Gently* novels, as well as characters such as Thor, Kate and Dirk, also have a critical view of aspects of human modernity. Whilst Adams' narrative voice still affords a certain reverence for technology, the societal constructs and the grim concrete structures surrounding that technology is criticised.

Despite Adams revelling in the potential of computers through Richard MacDuff, a friend/client of Dirk Gently and computer programmer for Wayforward Technologies, there is a downside to the fast pace of technological innovation in 'Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency'. One potential symptom of diseased modernity is Wayforward Technologies' *Reason*. *Reason* is a computer program that works backwards from your chosen course of action to justify that outcome. Rather than weighing up the social and ecological costs of the decisions *Reason* can justify the most profitable outcome. Richard tells Reg about the troubling purchase of *Reason* by government authorities and claims to recognise the algorithms of *Reason* in government policy:

“The entire project was bought up, lock, stock and barrel, by the Pentagon... I've recently been analysing a lot of the arguments put forward in favour of the Star Wars project, and if you know what you're looking for the pattern of the algorithms is very clear” (Adams 2001a, p. 55).

It must be noted, of course, that while some of the technology produced by Wayforward Technologies is impressive in the narrative, there is still the Quark and the malfunctioning electric monk with which to contend—to be returned to in chapter 3.

In 'The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul', the description of the Anstey house—in which the police find Dirk's late client decapitated—and its surrounds is one of the clearer indictments of modernity in the *Dirk Gently* series. Adams describes an upper-class home that is all surface; it is 'tasteful and dried', showing signs of increased modern decay as Dirk ascends the stairs. As Dirk articulates through his broken nose “Id dtheemdth to be cobbledly

dthouldth” that is, “It seems to be completely soulless” (p. 56), foreshadowing the Faustian pact with Odin’s minion Toe Rag and ‘a large, hairy, green-eyed monster armed with a scythe’ (Adams 2001b, p. 42). In the attic of this very nice house in a very nice neighbourhood is a neglected and solitary child who appears as a hunched, unwashed figure. He is extremely lethargic until the television is turned off, after which he becomes formidably violent. This 13-year-old boy has not noticed that his father has been brutally murdered downstairs because he is too focused on the television. His entire existence has been adapted to facilitate the continued watching of television, including the hose that runs from the bathroom to the kettle near the television so that the boy can cook ‘Pot Noodles’ without getting up from his armchair.

It just so happens that right next door to the unfortunate Anstey house live the most diabolical villains of ‘The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul’. Clive and Cynthia Draycott, a record label lawyer and a senior partner in an advertising firm who are the architects of a Machiavellian plot at the heart of the story, have jobs like those of the Golgafrinchans in Adams’ *Hitchhiker’s* series. The Golgafrinchans of Ark Fleet Ship B were ‘middlemen’ who had, unbeknownst to them, been deemed unnecessary by their society and sent off into space to die (Adams 2017, pp. 248-249). These ‘middlemen’ jobs are part of Adams’ critique of modernity, with unnecessary employment that reinforces consumerism and capitalism. From an ecocritical perspective, the capitalist tendency towards consumption can be held responsible for the western approach towards natural resources as commodities, resulting in unsustainable practices and irreparable damage to the ecosystem. Gently seems to share this view of occupations such as those in advertising and contract law, taking a dislike to the Draycotts. Another element to Clive Draycott that reinforces his link to a kind of destructive and diseased modernity is his use of the word ‘savages’ and his assertion that the Norse gods are like the ‘Red Indians’ who have not adapted to the modern world. This characterisation of the Native American and First Nations People as ‘savages’ and Clive’s criticism of them as primitive because they fail to adhere to his idea of ‘civilisation’, places Clive firmly within colonialist and neo-colonialist views of indigenous people as being inferior (Adams 2001b, p. 231).

The tradition of neo-colonialism, of which Clive Draycott is an enthusiastic participant, devalues societies and cultures, particularly those of Indigenous people, in order to justify systems of capitalist consumption. These capitalist systems of consumption are detrimental to the environment and do not consider the expertise and knowledge of Indigenous people in sustaining resources and moderating environmental impacts. Neo-colonialism creates space for those looking to profit from those who are not entrenched in systems of modernity and helps to justify their actions on the basis that those people are not actively consuming and exploiting their resources. This continuation of the 'colonisers' dismissing the knowledge of Indigenous persons are highlighted by Todd's exploration of continued colonialist practices and the impact this has on the progress of ecological thinking. As Todd writes on the underestimated knowledge of Indigenous persons and the biosphere: 'Indigenous thinkers for their millennia of engagement with sentient environments, with cosmologies that enmesh people into complex relationships between themselves and *all* relations' (2016, p.6). This idea of sentient environments runs contrary to the colonialist view of environments as resources.

The squalor and pollution of Dirk Gently's world seems to be in the early stages of the 'Brave New World' city environment. As an emerging example of the 'Brave New World' it is the capitalist structures such as large corporations that still control the world with mass production and legal contracts (Otto 2014, p. 184). This is a world in which the 13-year-old boy, for example, is captivated by technologies of control, including the advertisements by which he is entertained and the television which appears to absorb his every waking moment. Clive Draycott lays out the corporate systems of control superseding governmental systems of control by evaluating everything by its purchase price, including the United States of America. Clive is the neo-colonialist entity, acting as a focal point of shared British guilt for what their empire has wrought. Latham argues that narrative threats, particularly invading forces like the alien of 'Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency', are playing out a reversal of colonialist narratives (Latham 2014, p.77). These reversed colonialist narratives are capable of assuaging colonialist guilt by defying 'historical reality' and placing former colonial powers at risk of colonisation (Latham 2010, p. 77). Clive and Cynthia act as this proxy in 'The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul' for the guilt associated with modernity that

Adams describes as ‘the normal background-noise type of guilt that comes from just being alive this far into the twentieth century’ (Adams 2001b, p. 41).

The dismissal of the gods and, more importantly, the ‘Red Indians’, to use Draycott’s offensive language, as primitive by virtue of their apparent failure to exploit their resources, is to dismiss the many groups and nations of people who have valuable ecological and environmental knowledge. Adams’ condemnation of neo-colonialist and capitalist practices comes through Dirk’s response to Clive’s self-congratulatory speech that lays out the solution to the mystery at the heart of the plot:

“Anything you want, Mr Gently, it can be made to happen.”

“Just to see you dead, Mr Draycott,” said Dirk Gently, “just to see you dead” (Adams 2001b, p. 234).

Before Dirk’s final encounter with the Draycotts, when Dirk is looking for cigarettes and stumbles into the portal into Asgard, he finds himself at King’s Cross station at one o’clock in the morning. He discovers a very different spectacle of modernity to the neat concrete blocks and careful self-centeredness of the Draycotts; the homeless and disenfranchised of London, many of whom turn out to be gods who have struggled to adapt to modernity. Whilst Odin has traded his power or soul for a room in an upmarket residential hospital, facilitated by the opportunistic Draycotts, other gods have found themselves unable to reconcile their original role as mediators between the human and non-human phenomena and their modern existence. They have been insulated and isolated from the non-human world and the biosphere by the dense labyrinth of the modern city. Adams’ depiction of Kings Cross at this time is one of urban decay: ‘In front of this lay the one-storey modern concourse which is already far shabbier than the building, a hundred years its senior which it obscured and generally messed up’ (p. 194). Further, Dirk has an interaction with a shabby, disorientated and potentially drunk man/god which highlights modernity’s tendency to replace nonhuman constructed environments with human-constructed environments. Dirk asks him if he has lost something:

‘Have I lost something?’

It seemed to be the most astounding question he had ever heard. He looked away again for a while and seemed to be trying to balance the question in the general scale of things....

‘The sky?’ ... ‘The ground?’ he said, with evident great dissatisfaction, and then was struck with a sudden thought.

‘Frogs?’ he said, wobbling his gaze up to meet Dirk's rather bewildered one. ‘I used to like...frogs’ (Adams 2001b, ‘The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul’, pp. 186-187).

Whilst the narrative time between ‘The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul’ and ‘The Salmon of Doubt’ is a matter of weeks, the foregrounding of environmentalism indicates a time of heightened awareness of the catastrophic fate of the planet at the hands of humans. This prominence afforded to environmental and ecological concerns might be attributable to the years, perhaps even a decade, that passed between the writing of ‘The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul’, first published in 1988 and the writing of ‘The Salmon of Doubt’, published posthumously in 2002. Speculation about the timeline of Adams’ views aside, this new state of modernity within Dirk Gently’s fictional world now includes environmental debates as newsworthy, and environmentalism as a movement popular enough to garner backlash. The news on the television at Dirk Gently’s local pizza neatly highlights the looming threat of the comet hurtling towards Earth—following the news story is a piece about a lobby group, called ‘Green Shoots’, rapidly gaining support which advocates for continuing patterns of human destruction rather than minimising environmental impact (Adams 2002 location 3045). This group’s theory is that the Earth is ‘much better able to take care of itself than we were’, a notion which appeals to the ‘battered American psyche’ (location 3045). This kind of reflexive rejection of ideas that might compromise modern comforts is one of the reasons that Moser posits as barriers to climate change communication (Moser 2010, p. 36). Groups like the ‘Green Shoots’ are emblematic of the modern tendency towards separating the fate of the human from the non-human. However, these two fates are intrinsically tied and unless something like a large comet hurtling towards Earth forces the mass extinction of humanity, current structures of capitalism and modernity are in place then consumption of resources and destruction of environments will continue to increase. As Canavan and Robinson argue, great pains appear to be taken to preserve a capitalist system at the expense of the future existence

of humanity and the world of *Dirk Gently* highlights this state of modernity, guilt and stagnating power structures that continue in the face of reason and logic (2014, p. 14).

Chapter 3. Electric Monks and Disposable Gods

'Immortals are what you wanted,' said Thor in a low, quiet voice. 'Immortals are what you got. It is a little hard on us. You wanted us to be for ever, so we are for ever. Then you forget about us. But we are still for ever.'

- Thor (Adams 2001b, 'The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul', p. 176).

In a world of plastic wrapped vegetables, disposable food containers, and single-use water bottles, comprehending the scale of human detritus is one of the challenges in communicating the dire state of the planet because of the wastefulness of the Anthropocene (Moser 2010, p. 35). Adams manages to communicate the sheer wastefulness of the human made world through alien technology, mythology, iconography and the astute observations of Dirk Gently's inner or outer monologues. The world of Dirk Gently seems to be rapidly filling with unwanted, obsolete items to the extent of which Dirk Gently's London fits Robinson and Canavan's definition of the 'Junk City':

the dysfunctional New Jerusalem is in slow-motion breakdown, where the glittering spires haven't been cleaned in quite a while, where the gas stations have all run out of gas, and where nothing works quite the way it did when it was new (2014, p. 3).

In 'The Salmon of Doubt', Dirk remarks on his anger about pollution: 'You can't stare into the sea. Well, you can, but it's covered with plastic bottles and used condoms, so you just sit there getting cross' (location 3145). And in 'The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul', Dirk ruminates on the pollution that bars whales from communicating in an era of continuous monitoring and electrical interference:

In the past the whales had been able to sing to each other across whole oceans...But now again because of the way in which sound travels, there is no part of the ocean which is not constantly jangling with the hubbub of ship's motors (p. 152).

In the 1980s, before 'The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul' was released in 1988, there were already reports indicating the tremendous impact of industrial noise on whale populations (Bayne et al 1985, Malme et al 1986). Adams' emotive passage about human interference taking away whales' ability to communicate is a quiet moment of reflection in which Dirk's state of mind is established and the author is able to make an ecological point.

'The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul' focuses on the fate of the Norse Gods, once intrinsic to the daily lives of a certain set of humanity, who are now sadly irrelevant. The nature of their fate is determined explicitly by humans who wanted immortal gods to mediate their experience with the natural world. Stories of Thor were used to understand weather phenomena, but now in an age in which Western human society is so far removed from the biosphere, it no longer needs the gods. Thus, like a water bottle that was so important to one person's existence for a short period of time, Thor is no longer needed to explain weather phenomena and has been cast aside, with little thought to what will happen to him next.

Thor is part of this pre-Anthropocene tradition, in which humans were not having the significant planetary impact of the modern Anthropocene. In 'The Salmon of Doubt', Thor goes to mournfully look at the elks in the zoo when he is upset, this is what his connection to the natural world has become; mediated by modernity and concrete. As Kate says: 'He's not a happy god. It's not his world. Never will be either' (Adams 2002, location 2840). Myth and traditional stories have been used to shape ecological worldviews across the globe and the use of myth rather than the Western rationality of modernity promotes the view of the human as part of a greater ecological structure (Sepie 2017, p. 1). Thor as a Norse weather god comes from one of these mythic traditions, albeit a pre-modern Western one, that use humanlike entities merged with the non-human as a way of understanding ecological phenomena. For Thor then to be stuck in the human-made modern environment of London, almost entirely isolated from the non-human, must be an intensely alienating process. Having access to elks in cages is not what Thor wants; he wants the pre-modern world, not this city maze of concrete and metal. He is longing for a time in which animals wandered around pretty much as they pleased; a time in which he was still relevant. But, unfortunately, visiting the elks in the zoo will be the closest he can get. The need for proximity to the biosphere has been explored by environmental theorists such as Thomashow, who have put forth the idea that

proximity to the biosphere could combat alienation and indifference to the fate of the nonhuman and even provoke the sublime (Heise 2008, p. 52). We can see a manifestation of this desire for ‘spiritual immersion in place’ (Heise 2008, p. 52) through Kate’s reflex to put her hands on the grass and dirt of parks:

The grass was damp and mushy, but still worked its magic on city feet. Kate did what she always did when entering the park, which was to bob down and put the flats of her hands down on the ground for a moment. She had never quite worked out why she did this... but all she really wanted was to feel the grass and the wet earth on her palms (Adams 2001b, pp. 188).

This practice of physical contact with the Earth and associated medical investigations into its effects has been termed ‘grounding’ or ‘earthing’ (Chevalier et al 2012). This connection with the biosphere is integral to our understanding of the human as part of a greater ecology, rather than reinforcing ‘culture and nature, subject and object, and body and environment’ dichotomies (Heise 2006, p. 511).

Adams uses magic and iconography to demonstrate the problematic human/non-human dichotomy. The catalyst for perhaps the most obvious manifestations of magical or divine transformation arise from the frustration that Thor feels at being thwarted at every step by human structures and capitalist systems. One of the most recognisable icons of capitalist wealth and human consumerism is the Coca-Cola brand. Janice the airport check-in woman acts as a gatekeeper, preventing Thor from accessing human, consumer driven, air transportation. So, when Thor accidentally transforms her into a Coca-Cola vending machine Janice moves from gatekeeper of human controlled spaces to an icon of capitalist consumerism. These human structures even control the sky which Thor needs access to in order to fly home. Similarly, we find that another technology of air space control, a fighter jet and jet pilot, have been transformed by Thor into a giant eagle that stalks Dirk and Thor throughout the narrative. These transformations, including the transformation of Kate’s lamp into a kitten, are explosions of anger and frustration at the human world that consistently restricts his movements. Thor’s anger and the despair of the suicidal god Tsuliwaënsis are

moving examples of futile non-human resistance in the face of human ‘progress’ and seemingly unstoppable environmental destruction.

Divine transformation is not limited to the work of old gods; a new god emerges in the wake of human wastefulness and disposable consumer cultures. Dirk Gently’s fridge undergoes a transformation that begins with wasted food and ends in the disposal of the fridge. Rather than clean it Dirk opts to not open it until it is clean, the problem being that his cleaner is also taking this approach. As a result, the fridge becomes an ominous presence in the house, with its terrifying potentiality weighing so heavily on Dirk’s mind that he orders an entirely new fridge and asks the delivery men to dispose of the old one, which they thoughtlessly toss in someone else’s rubbish skip. Aptly, there emerges from this discarded fridge a new guilt god, a god manufactured from waste, facilitated by the disposable nature of mass-produced appliances.

The desire for the thriving ecology of the pre-Anthropocene is played out earlier in ‘The Salmon of Doubt’, in the flash-forward to DaveLand. Before we reach the point at which Dave’s non-humanity is revealed, DaveLand seems like an optimistic paradise for humans, largely free of the wide scale pollution of the Anthropocene. But even in this world there is still detritus left over from humans, some 1.2 million years later. The saint to whom Dave pays homage, ‘St. Clive, the patron saint of real-estate agents’ (location 2644), carries the legacy of human social structures and notably carries the same name as the capitalist figurehead of ‘The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul’. Appropriately, Dave brings him artefacts of the Anthropocene, such as part of a pool cleaner and a remote control for a garage door. These non-biodegradable plastic objects made during the Anthropocene have ceased to have the same meaning or purpose after humanity has gone, but they are still there. This commentary on destructive modern modes of production is bolstered by the rate at which the Earth recovers from the Anthropocene once humans disappear and cease production and consumption. The plastics and detritus of humanity remains, but the Earth can begin to counteract the damage already done. Moser points out that one of the barriers to effectively communicating the need for climate change action is the idea that there is no hope for recovery, that all is lost, and thus there is no point in taking action (Moser 2010, p. 4).

Adams' optimistic picture of Earth in a state of rehabilitation presents reality in which destructive modes of production have ceased and there is hope for the future of life on the planet.

Social ecology asserts that there is an inherent unsustainability that forms part of a modern capitalist society which relies on production and increased consumption (Garrard 2004, p. 28). One manifestation of this increasing consumption is the proliferation of technology and its planned obsolescence, as it is constantly being updated and is not built for long-term use. Despite the changes in the computer industry since 1987 Adams was already critiquing this trend in 'Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency', primarily through computer programmer Richard MacDuff's employer Wayforward Technologies and the alien technology of the Electric Monk. Wayforward Technologies is a British hardware company started by Gordon Way that went bust but produced a quick succession of computers, some of which are now entirely redundant, including the Quark II. A police officer who pulls over Richard MacDuff, upon finding out that Richard works for Wayforward Technologies, complains about the Quark II. Richard responds: 'It doesn't work. Never has done. The thing is a heap of shit' (Adams 2001a, p. 80). This flippant response about the manufacture and sale of a product that does not work and requires resources to produce provides an insight into the obsolescence of technology at play even in the early days of computer technology.

In 'Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency', Adams' creates an entity whose defining characteristic is unchecked gullibility. The Electric Monk comes from an alien society that seems to mimic our own in its penchant for creating devices that do things for you, then developing new ones that are cheaper to make, and supplant the previous model rather than fixing the old one. The example offered by Adams in 1987 is that of a video recorder or dishwasher, but perhaps today a smartphone is a better analogy. The Electric Monk, designed to believe whatever it was told, malfunctions and is cast out into the wilderness of his planet with his horse, because the new Electric Monk model is less expensive than fixing the old one. So, the monk who, against all probability, looks human, is free to accidentally wander into our world. The Electric Monk as discarded technology is interesting in itself, but the horse should not be overlooked. Adams asserts that 'convergent evolution' has produced many creatures almost exactly like the horses of Earth, the implication being that they have

been domesticated and treated as resources and labour. The ridiculousness of this is highlighted by the horse's ability to comprehend and the monk's ignorance:

[Horses] have always understood a great deal more than they let on. It is difficult to be sat on all day, every day, by some other creature, without forming an opinion about them. On the other hand, it is perfectly possible to sit all day, every day, on top of another creature and not have the slightest thought about them whatsoever (Adams 2001a, p. 4).

Clift et al use the electric monk as means for warning against unchecked belief in 'eco' labelling (2005, p. 4). They argue that the electric monk who believes things for you is equivalent to green labelling that signals that a product is ostensibly environmentally friendly. By accepting this labelling on face value, without interrogating the 'green' classification to assess the credibility of its claims we make the same mistake as the ancient alien. The alien asks an electric monk to assess the damage to a spaceship because he wants confirmation that it is fixed rather than a genuine assessment of the situation. This lack of interrogation results in the catastrophic accident that killed the alien and his people. In this way the monk is not just symbolic of our wasteful consumerism, but also our blind acceptance that wasteful consumerism is somehow sustainable or reversible; that somehow, somewhere, someone else is taking care of the problem.

Conclusion

The *Dirk Gently* narratives as a science fiction series demonstrate the far-reaching implications of the actions of humankind. Through the fundamental interconnectedness of all things as both Dirk's methodology and a means of viewing the biosphere, it is possible to perceive the ecological impact of cause and effect. A well-meaning professor undertakes a conservation project and a vulnerable species in a different time and space is drastically affected; a comet hurtling towards Earth in the Anthropocene results in the creation of DaveLand and the recovery of threatened Earth biome's 1.2 million years later. Mirroring our own world, the humans in the *Dirk Gently* books are responsible for wide-reaching devastation that affects not only the non-human, but also the human world. This damage done by humans through the Anthropocene has a wide range of implications throughout the books, but each story has a primary ecological preoccupation. Through 'Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency', Adams explores conservationism, the implications of extinction and the role of humans in jeopardising species, while in 'The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul', he implicates modernity in the distancing of the human from nature and colonialism that forms part of the genesis of modernity. Finally, in 'The Salmon of Doubt', Adams explores how the planet would thrive if the Anthropocene were to be stopped in its tracks. However, these varied and far reaching themes are not exclusive to one book. As explored in this research project, Adams use of ecological themes and commentary are weaved throughout his works featuring Dirk Gently.

In each of these narratives it is Dirk Gently's London that remains a strong presence. It is a city that bares the deepening scars of progress and modernity, continuing to isolate its inhabitants further from the natural world. London is a place in which the Draycotts thrive and Norse gods become homeless. Dirk's distinctly otherworldly powers of perception do him no good in the same manner that the Norse god's powers are completely useless to them as they cannot navigate modern capitalist, consumerist society. His dedication to the 'fundamental interconnectedness of all things' makes him exceptional in a London in which people are so isolated from the biosphere that they are oblivious to their impact on it. Yet despite the dire state of the Dirk Gently's world it is possible to trace the connections between the human and the non-human. There are humans who revel in the non-human, who have a desire to commune with the biosphere who are not completely consumed by

modernity. There is Kate and her desire for unmediated contact with the earth, Richard's perception of the world as interconnected strands of music and Reg's urge save what humankind have destroyed. Adams gives us hope in the strangest places; in the music of the universe, in the sudden sentience of a refrigerator and in the complete extinction of the human race.

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