In 1905 Albert Einstein proposed his theory of special of relativity, in which he described that the laws of physics are the same for all non-accelerating observers and that the speed of light in a vacuum (space without matter or air) was independent of the motion of all observers. In 1915, trying to include acceleration into his theory, he published the theory of general relativity which proposed the idea that massive objects cause a distortion in space-time, which is felt as gravity. In order to understand this distortion we can think of the universe as a flat piece of paper. If one were to place a very light object on the paper, nothing would happen. If you then placed a tennis ball on the paper, a space of the paper would bend around the ball and any object placed in this bent part of the paper would gravitate towards the ball. In other words, the heavier the object, the bigger the area around it that gets curved, or ‘distorted’. Similarly, heavy objects (like planets, large stars and black holes) bend the space around them; for example, the Earth bends the space around it and because the moon is within this bent (or distorted) space, it is affected by the Earths gravity. Einstein’s theory was thought to be a massive breakthrough in physics and helped us understand the universe a little better, however its been found to breakdown when dealing with the mechanics of subatomic particles (particles that are smaller than atoms, for example protons) which is a field known as quantum mechanics. Scientists have spent many years searching for a theory which reconciles Einstein’s theory with quantum mechanics; a *theory of everything.*

One the most famous, albeit controversial, ideas put forward is String Theory; which describes everything in the universe to be made up of tiny, 1-dimensional, vibrating string-like particles. It is thought that the way these string-like particles vibrate and interact with one another determines the structure and properties of the object it makes up and, in turn, the structure and properties of the universe. Within string theory is another interesting theory known as the Multiverse Theory which puts forward the idea that our universe is not the only one which exists, that there are in fact others which exist parallel to ours; *parallel universes*.

Some scientists think that these universes are very similar to ours and that there could be copies of us that exist in these universes, some of whom may be similar to us and some who may be very different to us. For example, in one of these universes there could be a copy of me who is actually good at writing, but that’s just unrealistic. Other scientists think that these universes could be so different from ours that they follow fundamentally different laws of physics. Of course, no one has ever proven that these so-called parallel universes exist nor has there ever been any signs of their existence, or maybe just none that we have been able to observe yet. A few weeks ago I read an article which described how there are some scientists who believed that there is dark matter leaking into some galaxy from a parallel universe, currently, however, there is no way to prove this.

In Islam we are taught that there are beings known as jinn; entities created from a smokeless-fire, who roamed the earth before Adam. These beings are said to exist in a universe that is parallel to ours, in which they can see and in some cases interact with us whereas we cannot see or interact with them. There is also a Quranic verse which translates to *All praise belongs to God, Lord of the worlds.* Fakhruddin Razi, an Iranian Sunni muslim theologian and philosopher raised the question whether the term “worlds” in this context meant “multiple worlds within this single universe” or to “many other universes (a multiverse) which exists beyond our known universe”. He concluded that even if a multiverse didn’t exist, it is definitely possible as the power of God knows no limits and He could create an infinite number of universes.

Is a bad person just a bad person? J K Rowling once wrote *The world isn’t split into death eaters and good people. We have all got both light and darkness inside of us. What matters is the power we choose to act on, that’s who we really are.* If we accept this logic, then surely we must accept that even some of the most ‘evil’ people have some good in them, which exists parallel to the bad. There is a man who stays in Newclare that is suspected to be a drug dealer, someone we might consider to be a bad person. But at the same time, he provides the people in the community with food, which is something that even the ‘good’ people, in the same community, fail to do.

So maybe parallel universes do exist, just not in the way that we currently think of them. Maybe each person is like a universe and all the different parts of their personality are the parallel universes that make up who they are. There is an old Japanese proverb that says we have three faces; one we show to the world, one we show to close friends and family and one we only show to ourselves, which is the truest reflection of who we are. This may seem like an obvious fact, because it’s clear that most, if not all, of us have many different levels to who we are. And no, I don’t mean in the way that some girls think reading Paulo Coelho books gives them more substance.

How many times have we met someone and a few weeks, months or even years afterwards we think that they have changed so much from the person we first met. Sometimes we may even think that we have changed. But maybe it’s not as simple as that. Maybe when we met we just failed to see the countless other universes that existed beyond the one that was shown to us and, over time, we began to become aware of their existence. That is surely how it feels with her.

When we first met, the part of me that she began to know, and fall in love with, was very different than the part of me she met when we had our last conversation. I often regret how her perception of me must have changed from this sweet, lovable person to someone so full of anger. The truth is, the anger was always there, even if she didn’t meet it till some time after we first met. Or maybe I just want to think that, because it would mean that the sweet, lovable person she met all those years ago still exists. In a black-and-white version of this story I am a villain but, of course, the world exists in color. Although I am a pretty closed up person, I have a habit of spilling things I don’t, can’t, tell anyone into the words of my stories but, in this case, I will avoid going into too much detail. I like to believe that, in her eyes, the hero inside me still exists, in parallel to the other side of me that broke her heart. I may never find this out, I may never want to. I don’t know whether I believe in the multiverse or not but I can say this; I like to think that there exists a version of us that was never jealous or insecure, a version of us that loves each other for who we are and not who we want each other to be. Most of all, I like to think that there is a version of us who overcame all the obstacles life threw at us and still wound up together; but then again, I ask myself, what if we are that version of us?

I think it’s important that we become aware that everyone we meet, and even those we think we know, are more than what they seem to be. And more than that, we should accept each other for all that we are. Maybe the reason that we like eye contact so much is that when our eyes meet another’s, we get a glimpse into the universes that reside within, waiting to be explored by someone who cares, someone who can understand. We sometimes find it easy to judge a person by something they’ve done. But I think that what really defines a person is much, much more than that. We are not defined by where we come from or the things we may have done, but rather by the potential that lies within and what we choose to do with that, who we choose to be. I think it’s only with that realization that we can really break through the boxes society has placed us in, and become much more than they ever intended. Because life is a story, and we are all the authors of our own destinies. Because you may just be a kid from the streets of Newclare but that doesn’t mean you have to fall into the vicious cycle of drugs and gangs that is all around you, you can aspire to something greater; the only limits are the ones that exist in your mind. The late Stephen Hawking once said *There should be no boundaries to human endeavor. No matter how bad things may seem, there is always something you can do, and succeed at; while there is life, there is hope.*