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The Entelechial Thinker in Space: 'Worlds within Worlds' in Durrell, Flaubert, and Carroll

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Graduate Program in Comparative Literature

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Master of Arts

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Abstract and Key Words

This thesis argues that the interior space of each individual mind has infinite potentiality to do or create x new reality in one's life via possible worlds. I use Lawrence Durrell's short story "Zero" (1939), Gustave Flaubert's "Un coeur simple" (1877), and Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) as literary representations of how readers outside of the literary text share an unbreakable bond with universal space. I discuss the infinite potentiality of the finite being, and the experiential data in the process of entelechy, or epistemological maturation of the mind. I bring Leibniz's theory of the continuum of infinitesimals and Henri Bergson's metaphysics of duration and consciousness into the argument to advance the premise that the only limiting factor on the mind's ability to shape its own actual world environment via possible-world ideation is the mind itself.

Key words: Metaphysics, epistemology, Possible Worlds, Bergson, Leibniz, Durrell, Flaubert, Carroll.

Epigraph

“L’essentiel est invisible pour les yeux.”

-Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

“Our minds are finite, and yet even in the circumstances of finitude we are surrounded by possibilities that are infinite, and the purpose of life is to grasp as much as we can of that infinitude.”

-Alfred North Whitehead

*“That you are here—that life exists and identity,
That the powerful play goes on, and you may
contribute a verse.”*

-Walt Whitman

Dedication

*In loving memory of my Grandfather,
Douglas Wray,
Who would always sing,
“She shall have music wherever she goes.”*

*And to Sophia Persephone,
La Regina delle Oche—“Come fly with me.”*

“Never call retreat”—

Passion is Potentiality

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Terminology

Actual World: Ruth Ronen defines actual worlds from three different stances of narrative theorists in general, and these are the views of modal realism, moderate realism, and anti-realist. One definition cannot be highlighted is “more true” than another, simply because the actual world is measured by its counterpart, the various **possible worlds**, which are purely theoretical and their existence depends upon human perception, which is always subjective and relative to that which surrounds it. Moderate realism is the definition that I develop into a revised version of possible worlds, and Ronen defines the moderate system’s definition of actual worlds as having “possible worlds . . . within the confines of the actual world and are viewed as components of the actual world. The actual world is a complex structure that includes both its actual elements and non-actual possibilities, that is, the ways things might have been (whether these non-actual possibilities exist as *mental constructs*, as postulated by Rescher, as *non-obtaining states*, as proposed by Platinga, or as a *set of propositions* about things in our world, as suggested by Adams)” (22). I develop the moderate realist approach in its most fundamental points, that being that possible worlds exist *within* the actual, which is prior to them; that in the actual world there are non-actual possibilities that can be viewed as mental constructs; but I diverge from Ronen’s definition when she states that “Possible worlds in any case are the result of rational behaviour which only admits one world” (22). My analysis operates in opposition to this final point, and I argue that both possible and actual worlds are experienced concurrently by each individual, and that possible worlds are places with **infinite potentiality** to create new data of **consciousness**, and integrate parts of these data into the individual’s actual world. I contend that it is *most rational* for one to take advantage of possible world psychical creations and data, and use the newfound data as a means of supplementing one’s existence in the actual world. The actual world definition used by both Ronen and myself apply both to works of fiction analyzed through the lens of narrative theory, as well as the world in which we, as readers, exist in relation to each other.

Aggregate: I use the term “aggregate” to describe a unit in itself that is in constant flux as it changes and expands in space—the space that we understand as the fabric of the universe: space allows the existence and engagement of matter and energy simply by providing it *with the space*, in the literal sense. The aggregate, in the case of my argument, refers both to people—who are composed of their own experiences and who are shaped by the events of their lives—and to the collective of all individuals in the universal and infinite space (*i.e.* the universe), who continue to grow and expand as a multiplicity of beings. The aggregate is a whole in itself, but it can never be complete; it seems counter-intuitive, but it is the whole *at x-given moment*, but is prone to expansion and evolution all of the time and into **infinity**. There is no limit for the aggregate in space, because space is infinite. I refer to the parts of the aggregate as “building blocks,” and I refer to any individuated aggregate (*i.e.* and individual being) as functioning *as a building block itself*. Arthur describes the aggregate that is the whole in constant flux as “the continuous whole” (xxxix).

Brute Fact: Rhetorician John Searle explains that brute facts are “Intrinsic features of reality [that] exist independently of all mental states,” and that “Brute facts exist independently of any human institutions . . . [they] require the institution of language in order that we can *state* the facts, but brute facts *themselves* exist quite independently of language or any other institution” (14; 27). One example of a brute fact would be a mountain, which is indisputable matter in the world, and its existence is not relative to that which surrounds it; instead, it exists in spite of subjective beings and its existence depends on nothing related to human **consciousness** and perception.

Consciousness: I define consciousness via Bergson, who explains that consciousness is characterized its “most obvious feature,” which is “before anything else, memory” (*Mind* 3). Bergson’s approach to explaining consciousness informs my usage of this term, because memory implies a cognitive being who engages with the world and experiences phenomena, and memory signifies an external event that is internalized within the mind.

Continuum: Philosopher Richard T.W. Arthur explains the continuum via Wilhelm Gottfried Leibniz’s philosophy and mathematics. Arthur states that “In order for the parts of a body to cohere together continuously through time, there needs to be a continuous sequence of endeavours propagated across it, in other words, *a continuous motion*” (xl). This continuous motion can be considered synonymous with Bergsonian **duration**, which is one unending flow of energy and matter through space. The continuum is, in its essence, akin to space, which Bergson argues is the same thing as duration; therefore, the continuum is the space or fabric of human **consciousness** upon which each individual who exists as an “event” on the continuum leaves a trace of their existence through the passage of time. The continuum is composed of **infinitesimals**; and the continuum begins with one whole number, which is akin to the one particle that gave way to the universe in which we live, and thus it divides infinitely (*i.e.* it divides with no foreseeable termination) to infinity. As a result, the continuum—and Bergsonian **duration**—are the terms with which we can understand space, which is not visible to the eye, aside from our perception of the matter that exists within space. I equate each infinitesimal upon the continuum as a life, which I consider an event, and that since each infinitesimal divides infinitely (*i.e.* each individual creates data that enters universal space, and each datum becomes in itself an autonomous unit). As such, we see that one point, or one individual, can expand as an infinite multiplicity in space, and a significant portion of the data that propels the expansion is of **possible worlds**.

Duration: Bergson defines duration as “the form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself *live*, when it refrains from separating the present state from its former states” (*Time* 100). Furthermore, Bergson notes that in recalling these states of **consciousness**, the mind “does not set them alongside its actual state as one point alongside another, but forms both the past and the present states into an organic whole, as happens when we recall the notes of a tune, melting, so to speak, into one another” (100). The successive states of being that melt each into another allow the nature of duration to be homogeneous in spite of the fact that all the events are separate and are not all of one source of being or consciousness.

Entelechy: There are several definitions of this term that speak to the complex nature of a philosophical principle that has existed at least since the Ancient Greeks. Aristotle understood entelechy as a process of actualization, which he describes in *De anima (On the Soul)*; Leibniz expands upon this to say that entelechy is “the soul or principle of perfection of an object or person” (*Collins*, “Entelechy”), and he explains in the *Monadology* that each “monad” (a term that describes the essence of a unit, or the presence of one simple substance at the core of a unit, or a substance that exists *a priori* to the unit) is one indivisible substance. I branch out from Leibniz’s theory of the indivisible substance in order to argue that each monad could be considered a unit or whole-in-itself, even if it is an infinitesimal; and I will explain how an infinitesimal whose ontology is of one simple substance is not strictly dividing infinitely, but rather expanding to infinity. I unite these definitions to create one that is designed to describe each **infinitesimal**, which I describe as a being in **consciousness** upon the **continuum**, as a unique unit that expands infinitely via the process of entelechy, where the being recognizes the **potentiality** of *x*-substance within the self and endeavours to actualize it to some effect in the **actual world**.

Infinite Progress: Infinite progress is a formula borrowed from mathematics, and formulated as follows: p^1 therefore p^2 therefore $p^3 \dots p^n$, with the last figure indicating that the process continues to **infinity**. I explain infinite progress in greater detail in the Flaubert and Carroll chapters.

Infinitesimal Regress: The equation for infinitesimal regress is drawn from mathematics, as opposed to logic, and is formulated as such: p^1 if p^2 if $p^3 \dots p^n$, with the last term indicating the process of division continues to **infinity**. I explain the conceptual framework of infinitesimal regress briefly in the Flaubert chapter, and in depth throughout the Carroll chapter.

Infinitesimals: Infinitesimals are the points that exist upon the **continuum**, and each is derived from the first number in the sequence. From a conceptual application, each infinitesimal will be considered a human being in **consciousness**, who exists in space, and is *of* space. I will offer an explanation as to why I equate the continuum with space/**duration**, so for the purpose of this thesis, the “first number” can be considered the first particle that gave way to matter and **substance** in space via energy, or motion. As such, each infinitesimal—each being—is a partial reflection of the first particle, because each being finds its ontological roots in this particle. Likewise, for each infinitesimal-being that divides to **infinity**, all matter that is of the specific infinitesimal in turn reflects the infinitesimal as its ontological genesis. In terms of **possible worlds**, each possible world that composes each **internal duration** in one being, exists as a part of the infinitesimal that initiated the possible world, which means that all possible worlds of one being in the **actual world** unite in the infinitesimal-being as the homogeneous identification of the self, known by the pronoun “I.”

Infinity/The Infinite: Infinity, or the infinite, though it is a mathematical term, does not represent a number or a composite number; in fact, it *cannot* represent a number, because a number by nature is finite (*e.g.* there are three apples means simply there are three, and only three, apples; if an apple is added, it is no longer three, but now four, but this does

not change the association of the number 3 that signifies only three of any visible matter). There have existed debates between mathematicians and physicists as to whether space is truly infinite, or if it is simply our inability to “catch up” with its constant expansion. Max Tegmark explains that space is in fact infinite, as suspected by Euclid, and proved in Einstein’s *Theory of Relativity* (33). I refer to space according to the premise that it is indeed infinite.

Institutional Fact: Searle defines institutional facts as a “subclass” of “social facts,” and he explains that this subclass is governed by human institutions (*i.e.* manmade realities). Institutional facts “can exist only within human institutions,” and Searle uses the example, “Clinton is president” to differentiate institutional facts from **brute facts**, where the former exist only *through and in* human **consciousness**, and cannot exist independently of the “collective” mind (26-7).

Internal Duration: Bergson explains that there is in each individual an internal duration, which “grasps a succession which is not juxtaposition, a growth from within, the uninterrupted prolongation of the past into a present which is already blending into the future. It is the direct vision of the mind by the mind” (*Creative* 20).

Intuition: Bergsonian **duration** and internal duration exists relative to intuition. Intuition is the realization of the conscious self and its presence in space. It is intuition that allows “the direct vision of the mind by the mind” (*Creative* 20).

Merism: This is a term that dates back to Ancient Greek philosophy and rhetoric, and the *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* explains that a merism is a whole, or an **aggregate**, that is a united whole, although it is composed of seemingly opposing parts.

Mind-Space: I combine the terms “mind” and “space,” akin to the formulation of **space-time**, to create one unified concept, which describes a quasi-Cartesian explanation of the body occupying space, and the mind giving the body (a type of matter) form. Where the body is the corporeal portion of the dualism, the mind crafts an identity for the body via experiential data in universal space, and in the **actual world**. Therefore, the mind-space is quite similar to the Cartesian mind-body dualism, but I simply reconfigure the idea in order to match the given context of the individual being in space.

Possible Worlds: Ruth Ronen defines possible worlds in the context of narrative theory as spaces that “legitimize an interest in referential problems and in everything that concerns the relations between literature and the actual world” (20). I expand upon this definition slightly to argue that possible worlds are subjective spaces within the mind of the conscious being that assist the individual in sorting the data of consciousness from the **actual world**; they are spaces of **potentiality** for the data of the **mind-space** to be actualized and brought into one’s actual world in the form best suited to the individual’s best interests.

Potentiality: I use this term to describe one’s recognition of that which *could be* if *x* action is taken. It is to recognize something in oneself and to act, which is the initial stage

of **entelechy**. Potentiality is a quality within the begin that can assist one in one's process of self-amelioration.

Space-Time: Space-Time is a term developed to describe the four dimensions of matter in space (*i.e.* extensity); it is a concept derived from applied mathematics, and it combines the length, width, and height of matter with the additional fourth dimension of time; thus together, matter and the system of time are understood as space-time.

Substance: Christian Moevs describes the Aristotelean-Ptolemaic system of substantial forms, which are “material,” and “invariant (apparently self-subsistent) things of which changing attributes (accidents) are predicated, as ‘fat’ or ‘old’ is predicated of Socrates, who can be more or less fat, but not more or less Socrates” (79). I use this term to signify the presence of matter that occupies a dimension of **space-time**, and whose substance—that which is unique to that being, or essential to that being, and that which is at the very core of a being—informs the nature of the being and its form in “spatiotemporal identities” (39). Moevs elaborates on matter and its relation to form, the latter of which is that which “gives being to matter,” or that which defines matter as one specific thing, as opposed to another; the form allows matter to be identified, but it is the substance that is integral to that specific matter that defines its nature. I use “substance” in reference to human beings, and that which is within the individual, but must be recognized in order to take form, which is the end-process of **entelechy** in that given evolution.

Worlds within Worlds: This is a phrase developed by Leibniz that describes the nature of expansion of **infinitesimals** upon the **continuum**. Due to the fact that each infinitesimal can itself divide infinitely, the division creates a multiplicity, and from each new product of the division of the infinitesimal, there is a new “world,” or new source of **potentiality** that will, in turn, divide infinitely itself. I equate this with possible worlds to support my claim that the **mind-space**—in which the possible world exists—is infinite in potentiality, because it is a mirror image of infinite space that is specific to the individual. Therefore, each individual is a fragment of infinite space—each being is an infinitesimal—that has the possibility to create new experiential data in the mind-space of the individual, and which can enter the process of **entelechy**, which creates new worlds, or realities, that are transferred from the **possible world** to the actual, and are integrated into the **actual-world** modes of being.

Chapter 1.

Introduction

Neuroanthropologist Terrence Deacon provides a fascinating new way to reconcile modern sciences with the more qualitative phenomena of life—the matter that exists and behaves with no apparent algorithmic formula. Deacon studies the behaviour and function of matter and quantum phenomena, but Deacon’s most prominent message concerns potentiality: the possibility of non-actualized matter to become matter. “Modern sciences,” argues Deacon, is interested in understanding and explaining “how physical objects behave under all manner of circumstances” and “what sorts of objects they are in turn composed of” and the manifestation of their “physical properties” of one given moment (3). Here, we see the danger of empiricism in relation to the potentiality of “non-actualized matter” (3), especially if we were to consider what exactly this “non-actualized matter” encompasses.

I use the term “non-actualized matter” in reference to any thought, idea, and all potential outcomes imaginable in the context of the human mind, which is contingent upon Deacon’s description of non-actualized matter. That is, any potentiality—something that *could* happen if *x*-idea crosses neurological paths with *y*-knowledge or experiential data in the conscious mind. The space in which this occurs is what I refer to as the “mind-space,” which is the subjective and individuated space of one’s mind, facilitated by the brain, which is of the corporeal body; and in this space, experiential data is both recognized and created by the mind in spaces we refer to as “possible worlds,” which I will explain in more depth shortly to follow.

Possible Worlds theory offers various angles and definitions that define their purpose, therefore offering an array of lenses through which human beings come to understand the nature of the universe—a vast nature, which includes the nature of human thought, the potential for human thought to create new matter, and the use of language to create fictional literary texts that capture specific moments in being relative to human existence. Of course, we must also acknowledge the dynamic nature of Possible Worlds theory, because not only does it operate as a vehicle to assist the study of human existence in the world, it also offers new ideas that concern the nature of conscious

beings in existence, and additionally, the nature of actualized matter and the potentiality of further non-actualized matter beyond the scope of the human eye. By its name alone—*Possible Worlds*—there exists the necessarily implication: that “possible” could be considered synonymous with “non-actualized matter,” which is in fact matter, but has yet to register in one’s consciousness. This matter exists and it is immanent within the being, but it must be recognized and actualized by this being in the process of entelechy. Though this matter lacks the necessary form to register in human consciousness, it cannot be considered “absent,” as Deacon explains, but simply not *apparent*.

Before I offer a more detailed account of Possible Worlds theory, in addition to my argument that possible worlds should be considered entelechial spaces of potentiality-*cum*-actuality, I want to bring Gilles Deleuze’s take on the various purposes of literary texts into this discussion. Daniel W. Smith’s Introduction to *Essays Critical and Clinical* (1993) underscores Deleuze’s approach to literary texts, which he considers instances or various “series of concepts like so many motifs that appear and reappear in different essays . . . which could likewise be said to find a place in a logic of literature, or rather, a logic of ‘Life’” (*xiii*). Smith explains that “Deleuze extracts links from literary works that bring together literary arts and philosophy” (*xiii*), and he argues that “if Life has a direct relation to literature, it is because writing itself is [according to Deleuze] ‘a passage of Life that traverses both the livable and the lived’” (*xiv*). Smith illuminates Deleuze’s understanding of the “purpose” of literary texts, which act both as entertainment and as vehicles through which one can better understand the nature of one’s self relative to the “actual world,” or the space of brute facts that are non-interpretive data of consciousness presented as universally true—an indisputable reality. For Deleuze, the domain of literature and its analysis is not reserved solely for narratology and other methods of disseminating textual-fictional ideas—ones that remain under the illusory terminology “fiction.”

The concept of fiction—that which is not based on historical data or empirical evidence, and all that is imagined and has not yet occurred in the actual world, or is not imagined ever to occur in this world—is not one that can be easily defined. Of course, there are various words in common parlance, like “fictitious,” and phrases such as “in fact”; these syntactical constructs are designed to signify only one meaning; that is, in

using these words, one is asserting a binary system of truth, one that states that *x*-phrase is either true or false. This phrase can be true or false alone, and the application of such phraseologies as counter-attacks on alternative perspectives has the ability to assign immediate finitude to *x*-content. If a claim is true, it cannot be false; but at the same time, it is limited only to being true. Thus, when Smith argues via Deleuze that artists and philosophers are “‘physicians of culture’ for whom phenomena are signs or symptoms that reflect a certain state of forces” (*xvii*), it is quite reasonable that “artists and authors can go *further* in symptomatology than doctors and clinicians” precisely because “the work of art” allows authors, artists, and philosophers to develop a “new means” of understanding, or a Proustian “optical instrument” with which one can view the world through an alternative lens (*xvii*). Such a lens may perhaps be rather far removed from the institutional norms of each society and its structure, but this method of using the literary text to uncover truths concerning the nature of one’s own world—and even one’s own self—is exactly how I define potentiality: the possibility to do or create *x* in a possible world of the mind, which is an individuated fraction of infinite universal space. Potentiality finds its ontology in the mind-space, because that which is not actual is not of the actual world. What is more, we have possible worlds in *our* actual world as readers of literary fiction, and we are able to craft working and functioning possible worlds that are *of* the literary text—which are fictional.

If the fictional possible worlds are created by the human mind in the actual world of empiricism and brute facts, this necessarily implies that possible worlds have existed *a priori* to their fictional representations. Thus we see that the term “fictionality,” developed in the field of narratology, is a limiting force on potentiality, because if readers are designed to view the text as solely fictional with the connotation of being untrue, then the possible worlds of the text function only as points in a plot. As a result of this limitation, readers may forget that possible worlds existed first in their *own* world; and if the possible worlds existing in every mind of each conscious being are not recognized, then literary terminology manages to extinguish the potentiality of the reader to see possible worlds in fiction as representative of states of mind and being in the actual world. If one cannot recognize potentiality for what it is, the non-actualized matter cannot enter the process of entelechy within the mind-space, which is designed to actualize or

give form to that which is not yet actual. The infinite potentiality of the individual mind-space of the finite and corporeal being is lost in a sea of anonymity; it is immanent, but it cannot be recognized by one's conscious state of the logical mind, (*i.e.* cause and effect empirical and replicable knowledge), if the mind has already assigned the word "untrue" to possible worlds. If possible worlds created by beings in consciousness presented in the literary text are viewed as an artifice of fiction, then the perceiver forfeits his or her own potentiality simply in failing to recognize that the ontology of fiction is rooted in the mind and housed in the brain, which exists in the finite corporeal body in the actual world. Thus fiction becomes an untruth that forges the illusion which denies the bond between actual and possible worlds of both the literary creation and the space of existence for all readers. Deleuze, then, highlights the "fictitious" illusion that the literary text bears no meaning or parallel to the world of its readers. The denial of the relevance of fiction combined with its status as leisurely perpetuates the finitude that one places upon oneself in dismissing the fictional possible world's relevance outside the act of reading. Therefore, Deleuze subverts literary criticism in such a way that the literary text becomes a tool that allows the individual to understand the nature of one's world, rather than an escape from this world in the conviction that fiction will divide oneself from the so-called realities of the actual world. I adopt Deleuze's approach to literary sources as a means of understanding the actual world of readers with a simple question that he asks of the text: "how does it function?" (*xxii*).

I mobilize Deleuze's question concerning function in the context of possible worlds, and the effect that they have on readers of the text; and, consequently, how fictional possible worlds inspire "actual" possible worlds for readers in the shared space of the actual world. In order to acknowledge the various sources from which I draw my own definition of possible worlds and their function, I will describe in brief several examples of the various established definitions and applications of Possible Worlds Theory.

The fields which utilize the concept of Possible Worlds Theory have many premises in common, but they also bear marked differences. David Lewis, a logician, approaches possible worlds via modal realism, which narrative theorist Ruth Ronen describes as the most "radical" understanding of possible worlds, where "all modal

possibilities we might stipulate, as well as the actual world, are equally realized in some logical space where they possess a physical existence” (Ronen 22). Lewis defines modal realism as the acceptance of a “plurality of worlds,” which “consist of us and all our surroundings, however remote in time and space; just as it is one big thing having lesser things as parts, so likewise do other worlds have lesser other-worldly things as parts” (Lewis 2). Furthermore, Lewis describes possible worlds—those which are potentialities, but not current objective realities—as “*unactualized possibilities*” (5). Here, we see the groundwork for non-actualized matter to enter the process of entelechy within the individual mind-space; but what is more, that “unactualized” is followed directly by “possibilities,” which necessary implies the existence of potentiality inherent to matter, but relevant only when a stream of consciousness in one individual recognizes the matter and seeks to provide it with the form it demands for its existence in the actual world. This is a process of the subjective mind-space, and Lewis adds: “if my perceptual experience would be the same no matter what was going on around me, I would not be perceiving the world” (23). Perception is individuated, and necessarily subjective, and I return to the issue of perspective shortly. But first, I want to underscore a fundamental principle of possible worlds—both in fiction and in life—that is, the principle of action signified by Lewis’s use of the phrase “going on,” which can only validate further that the universe in which we live is an aggregate of all experience: possible, actual, sensorial, hallucinatory—simply stated, all experiences of all individuals. This aggregate is what I will later refer to as the world in constant flux, which works on the larger scheme of the actual world beyond the novel, and the possible worlds both of fiction and of experience in the actual world.

In my fourth chapter I discuss in detail the idea of both actual and possible worlds existing in a constant state of flux, so the last point made by Lewis that I wish to touch upon speaks to the idea of an aggregate as a whole of many parts in constant flux. Lewis argues that “a world is unified [] by the spatiotemporal interrelation of its parts” (71); and I argue in accordance with Lewis in the context of possible worlds in both fictional-actual worlds and the actual world of readers, whose various internal possible worlds exist relative to others surrounding them.

When I refer to the “actual world,” I will make a clear distinction as to whether I speak of the work of fiction or the world of readers; and though this differentiation is important, it is more for purpose of context, because the actual worlds which I discuss both concern what Ronen would call the “states of affairs” (21). I cannot deny that the term “actual world” is without its problems, because each individual in the actual world perceives that which is “actual” or “real” differently. However, for the purpose of this analysis, I define the actual world as a shared space between all conscious beings and all matter in the universe; and thus, there can be fictional universes with their own actual worlds, which are modelled according to the actual world in which the readers of fiction exist. Amidst these readers there are writers, and the literary text sustains possible and actual worlds as a simulacrum of the writer’s actual world. Ronen’s explanation of the actual world is the best definition in the context of my analysis, but I do move away from her definition of possible worlds, which are “other ways things could have been, that there exist other possible states of affairs” (21). Lubomir Doležel has a wider scope in the ideation of possible worlds than Ronen, and his research parallels some significant points made by Lewis, most specifically the idea of “non-actualized worlds” and their potential to spread in “uncountable” amounts (13). However, Doležel stipulates that possible worlds in the framework of his argument are of “empirical disciplines,” and that these worlds are necessarily “finite [in] possible particulars” (15). Doležel relies on empiricism, and it is here that my argument diverges from theories of narratology and linguistics.

Metaphysics is the study of first principles and abstract concepts concerning time and space, (and many other concepts, but for this study time and space are most prominent) and it has an unbreakable bond with natural sciences, or physics. In order for philosophers to study first principles, there must be substance, space, and energy that exist prior to *x*-given first principle. And in addition to the existence of this first principle, there must be already a conscious being, who can only exist within the framework of space and its status as *a priori* to metaphysics. Thus, where I part from Doležel, I converge with physicist Brian Greene. Though I will continue to argue that empiricism limits the potentiality of the human mind by assigning finitude in determining a definitive and deductive fact, there are concepts from physics—specifically theoretical physics—

that elucidate some metaphysical concerns that I address in terms of the mind in space and the mind *as* space. The overarching concept that I aim to elucidate in an analysis of conscious beings with infinite potentiality is that of infinite space. I do not attempt to validate the infinitude of space, because the best possible answer remains indefinite and vague; we cannot, at this time, see the “beginning” of space, and thus we conclude with the most reasonable scientific data that space is infinite, because it expands faster than the speed of light, and its nature cannot be defined by formulaic expression. My intent is to provide an analysis that argues in favour of infinite space, and I do this through the literary text and the various worlds created in these texts, as well as beyond the pages of the book.

Just as Deleuze questions the ways that the literary text functions in the actual world of its readers, I, too, adopt this approach because literature can in fact inform a greater body of knowledge that transcends the solitary reader. The initial step to this method seems rather apparent; that is, we must consider the literary text as impacting larger discourses in the actual world of readers. Unfortunately, this initial step is often overlooked simply based on the affiliation of the word “fiction” with the literary text. In a world where empirical sciences are the most prominent and influential discourses concerning the advancement of the human mind and all of which it creates, the non-empirical nature of theoretical sciences and metaphysics is not recognized by the collective consciousness as an unquantifiable resource for knowledge. This sole reader, however, is the vehicle through which the literary text asserts its relevance and presence in the actual world. The reader of the literary text can be either passive or active in their investment in the novel; it is the active reader who sees potentiality in the pages of the fantastical, the childish, the ridiculous, or the seemingly impossible nature of the text.

To read actively is a choice, but it is also indicative of the reader’s pre-established definition of his or her own self. As Gregory Chaitin states: “Mathematics is a wonderful, mad subject, full of imagination, fantasy, and creativity that is not limited by the petty detail of the physical world, but only by the strength of our inner light” (Pickover *ii*). Thus in the process of self-definition, the thinker chooses either an existence which adheres to empiricism, or the thinker chooses to believe that the unanswerable and non-empirical questions are similar to non-actualized matter as potentiality *to*. That a question

has no definitive answer does not speak to an impossible or impenetrable truth, but rather to an immanent truth that has yet to be recognized by the thinker. Possible worlds that exist in the literary text whose ontological origin is of the mind of a conscious being in the actual world—the infinite space of all existence—are prototypes of what *could* exist in the actual world *if* an immanent truth is recognized in the possible world as possessing a certain truth-value applicable to life in the actual world. Once identified, the conscious being sweeps up the non-actualized data of consciousness and brings it into the process of entelechy—the process that makes the non-actual *actual*. The only limitation upon the potentiality of the human mind is itself, and one must choose to break free from the institutional chains of finite thinking that operate only as a means to an end, nothing more. That which is finite offers nothing more than what is apparent to the eye or believed by the mind; but that which is unanswered is freed of its potential finitude. As such, the way by which a reader may profit from the literary text in his or her own life demands the acceptance of the undefined existence of something—a “something” that is not absent, but rather present in space, though undiscovered by the mind.

A temporary approach with which we may embark upon the study of possible worlds of the literary text is simply the idea of a change in perspective. Karsten Harries discusses René Descartes’s approach to the world, whose nature was commonly perceived as a labyrinth—and could justly be considered as such today. Harries explains the Cartesian approach to the nature of the universe through reference to anamorphic art, where the viewer continually shifts positions in order to view the painting from a different angle or perspective, only to find that the original perspective is now clouded by something not apparent to the eye in the original observation. One could in theory move through the entirety of the one-hundred and eighty-degree spectrum and note additional details that did not appear present at the former degree—a mere shift of one degree in perspective. Therefore, Harries contends that various perspectives “prevent us from taking even the second point of view too seriously. It, too, is incapable of giving us more than appearance. What is thus revealed is the deficiency of all perspectives” (314). It appears, then, that those who choose to venture into the realm of unanswered questions and non-actualized data are, in a literal sense, living in the moment, because the perspective of one individual’s comprehension of the nature of the universe is but a

fragment of the infinite space that hosts the unanswered questions, or the immanent truths. Nonetheless, possible worlds are the equivalent of a perspective, one whose interiority projects a variant of the perceived onto the fabric of universal space—the space of the actual world. The nature of this variant idea relies upon the mind-space and the various possible worlds within; and moreover, the nature of this variant relies heavily upon how the possible world “functions,” and how the being understands the mechanics of his or her own creation within the mind-space. Possible worlds, once removed from the actual world in which we exist, are those of the literary text; and just as one must recognize the potentiality to do or create *x* in the act of recognizing non-actualized internal matter, so too must the reader develop the aptitude that will allow these prototypical possible worlds to reveal themselves as potential actualized truths in the actual world.

I have outlined in brief several theoretical approaches to Possible Worlds Theory, all of which have informed my redefinition of possible worlds. I use the term “actual world” in its standard definition, and I acknowledge the value of current scholarship with the commonly defined notion of possible worlds; but more can be done—we can push the mind forward and expand our knowledge concerning the nature of the universe with a minor shift in perspective—by the revision of our current notion of possible worlds.

Possible Worlds Theory is loosely based upon the philosophy of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and his phrase “worlds within worlds.” In reading Leibniz’s research on metaphysics, physics, and mathematics, I mobilize his argument concerning the continuum—which I introduce in the Flaubert chapter—and for the purpose of this introduction we can consider it as the universal space that facilitates the redefinition of possible worlds as spaces of the mind, whose consciousness can recognize non-actualized matter and bring it into the actual world via entelechy. As I have stated earlier, there is an unbreakable bond between physics and metaphysics—or, more plainly, there is an inherent link between each individual mind—which is in itself a space—and universal space, that which we know as the universe. I argue that mind-space and universal space are akin to fragments of the infinite and the infinite aggregate in constant flux, respectively; and that if space is infinite and unbounded, then the human mind can also be conceived of in this way. Of course, the human mind relies upon the brain which is of the

finite body in the actual world, but there are no limitations on the mind's potentiality to do or create x in a possible world. Said otherwise, the mind cannot exist into infinity, although in its finite existence it has infinite potentiality to recognize non-actualized data in the possible worlds of the mind-space. The prominent discourses within the mind that are founded in actual-world logic are the only limiting factor on the magnitude of knowledge within reach of the mind-space. However, in order for the infinite potentiality of the mind-space to be true in the actual world, one must first accept that non-actualized matter exists in the immediate present, and that its absence of form does not signify nothingness, but rather something-ness that is yet to be given form by the conscious mind in the process of entelechy.

The literary text allows readers to identify with greater ease the presence, existence, and necessity of possible worlds, because it is not often that one will ponder the infrastructure of one's own mind. We do not recognize possible worlds in the self without some exterior indicator that prompts us to turn inwards; this is because our consciousness is the flow of duration between our internal possible worlds and the actual world. Most importantly, this duration of the self is homogeneous, because we do not juxtapose each event of each day with the one prior to it or the one to follow, simply because this disharmony would disrupt the cognitive functioning of the being in the actual world. The events of one being of one lifetime are united by the self-defined pronoun "I," and thus the universe hosts these homogeneous individual mind-spaces that continue to infinity.

To take this concept of homogeneous mind-spaces expanding to infinity to a meta-analytic level, I argue that each homogeneous mind-space that exists in infinite space has in itself infinite potentiality, which brings us full circle to Leibniz's "worlds within worlds." If each mind-space is perceived objectively, we should find that the being in universal space extends itself in various dimensions as it compiles the events of life and the experiential data that ensues. An individual mind-space is *of* universal space in its ontology, hence the mimicry in nature of spatiality; both bear features of the infinite, but where the mind-space has infinite potentiality in itself, this privilege is a result of the existence of universal space that allows the epistemic evolution of the mind and its

extension in space to occur. Mind-spaces are infinite in potentiality; space is, quite simply, infinite.

Following Greene's argument that "each of these ballooning universes has its own infinite spatial expanse, and hence contains infinitely many of the parallel worlds" (7), I approach the literary texts as vehicles through which a clearer understanding of the nature of infinity and the role of matter and energy allows a deeper understanding of the metaphysical properties immanent in the minds of all conscious beings.

The first body-chapter addresses the notion of an internal "void" within each individual, and how this void acts as a zone of transmission and continuity of thought between one's internal and external duration. I discuss the void in the context of Lawrence Durrell's short story "Zero" (1939), which presents itself as incoherent sentences that are syntactically correct, though there appears to be no coherence in the flow of sentences. What is most striking about this short story is that its very title signifies the problematic nature of the number 0 , which can often be affiliated with nothingness or non-existent matter; and moreover, the nonsensicality of the sentences suggests that there is no "meaning" to the text as a whole, but this idea of "nothing" or "void" is problematic in itself. Therefore, I discuss the void as a *space* of the mind that exists in the being of universal space, and how words such as "zero," "nothing," or "void" are not indicative of null-value of matter, but instead imply that the absence of matter is not the equivalent to "nothing," but simply "something" that has yet to be recognized by the conscious being.

I move from an analysis of the void as non-actualized matter to the concept of infinite potentiality of the mind-space, and I discuss this premise in the context of Gustave Flaubert's "Un coeur simple," or "A Simple Heart" (1877). And in developing an argument that expresses the potentiality of the mind-space to do or create x in a possible world, I move into the final chapter in which I argue in favour of Leibniz's "worlds within worlds" theory. I argue that the individual is a part, or building block, of the aggregate of all existence in infinite space; and at the same time, I explain how each homogeneous self-defined "I" is a whole of many parts, and thus we find that there are cycles of expansion in the mind that actualize experiential data, which, in turn, contribute to the ever-expanding matter in space that extends to infinity.

In the final body-chapter I discuss Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), where I discuss the theories of infinite progress and infinitesimal regress as systems of expansion of matter in space, which includes both mind-space and universal space. These systems of progress and regress are, again, systems that speak to perspective, or one's spatiotemporal position, because infinite progress unveils knowledge from a given point in space moving forward, whereas infinitesimal regress uncovers knowledge at a specified point of space moving backwards through the events in duration that lead to the current state of x -given matter or phenomenon.

My design is to illuminate the metaphysical nature of the human mind and its potentiality by way of storytelling. Each life is much like a narrative, and when we recount events in the flow of time, we compose them as narratives. Therefore, the literary text is a narrative that has the potential to expose various metaphysical features of the mind-space relative to universal space, because it is an account which beckons interpretation, which may suggest possible realities external to our own. Furthermore, possible worlds in the literary text are identifiable, and now the word "fiction" supports the epistemic development of the reader. When the reader recognizes the fictional nature of the literary text, there is no judgment as to whether the events are possible or impossible; the reader sees such events taking place in possible worlds, and the text itself can act as a possible world accessible by the reader. In turn, we find that the literary text has the ability to expand the consciousness of readers, which may allow them to become increasingly aware of their own internal discourses, and which may encourage them to question or redefine their understanding of what is possible or impossible. These processes occur in the mind-space, and in our textual analyses we come to identify the constant presence of possible worlds within the self. These possible worlds ensure the infinite potentiality of the mind, but only upon their recognition as existing spaces invisible to the eye. The mind-space is a possible world, but if we wish to capitalize on our own potentiality, we must find what is immanent within—that is, that the mind-space is a possible world that exists with or without our permission. Potentiality, on the other hand, comes into fruition only once one comes to accept the presence of possible worlds alongside the infinite potentiality of the mind-space of readers, and all conscious beings in our actual world.

Chapter 2.

Durrell's Excursion into Reality: Zero as a Place and the Void as a Space

"Humans are the horizon between the immaterial and the material, the infinite and the finite, the timeless and the temporal. In humans the ultimate ontological principle becomes aware of itself [] this is human consciousness or self-awareness."—Christian Moevs.¹

Lawrence Durrell's short story, "Zero" (1939), is the second and final installment of *Zero and Asylum in the Snow: Two Excursions into Reality*, a work that resembles in many ways French Surrealism, yet one that defies not only the left-wing politics of Surrealism, but politics *en masse*. In the late 1930s, Durrell was an enthusiastic follower of Henry Miller, an American author situated in Paris at the Villa Seurat. Miller's work was generally obscene in terms of sexual content, but Durrell praised Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* (1934), which was banned in the United States under pornography laws; and in 1938, Durrell published his homage to his authorial muse—a work which supported free speech in fiction—*The Black Book*. Strikingly obscene in nature, *The Black Book* seemed as if it were an emulation of *The Tropic of Cancer*, and it is undeniable the influence that Miller had upon Durrell's work; yet this mimicry was not for a lack of ideas of creativity, but rather a lack of direction.

After a lengthy epistolary correspondence, Durrell met Miller and Anaïs Nin at the Villa Seurat in Paris. The Villa Seurat became a hub for the exchange of artistic ideas, and a space in which the Orwellian "politics of the unpolitical" was expressed freely due to the bond between a group of antiauthoritarian artists and writers. "Zero" and "Asylum in the Snow" were dedicated to Henry Miller and Anaïs Nin, and the stories underscored the brand of anarchism prevalent in the Villa Seurat network during the Second World War. Durrell scholar, James Gifford, explains that the brand of anarchism to which the Villa Seurat members ascribed was a sort of "non-hierarchical" form of "mutualist individualism" ("Introduction" *x*), and thus there was no leader—no manifesto declaring a stance or a goal; it was simply those who wished to express themselves in writing, free from the confines of propriety and censorship.

¹ *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy* (6).

Durrell's two short stories act as unintentional manifestos, in that they declare no stance, but state every thought. The stories are an act of free associative discourse—one that occurs *within the mind* of the protagonist: “Lawrence Durrell.” Very little academic scholarship has come out of these dynamic stories—these tales of interiority and introspection, with no care for those outside of the self. Gifford is the only scholar who has provided in-depth analyses of these stories, and though they receive mention in larger monographs concerning Durrell's work, the references are fleeting and vague; no one has engaged what is arguably the true labyrinth of Durrell's literary corpus. Gifford explains that the two stories are “the first works being considered in this tracing of the development of [Durrell's] epistemological skepticism” (“Foucault” 71). Undoubtedly, the stories are unique and mimic no one;² and though one might find the quasi-surrealist tendencies in the *Excursion*, Durrell removes his art from the realm of politics which dominated wartime continental Europe and Britain. In fact, it seems as if the politics of war surrounding Durrell³ encouraged his defiance of politics: he neither supported nor refuted the war—he did not care to be involved. Gifford notes that “Unlike defined movements, such as Imagism or Surrealism, a definite manifesto and adherence to it is antithetical to the personalist and anti-authoritarian spirit of this group” (*Personal xix*), and in the stories we find an anti-manifesto, which in turns serves as a manifesto of the self, a self that does not defy hierarchy, but simply refuses to acknowledge its presence. Most importantly, as per the concept of the politics of the unpolitical, Durrell's “Zero” and “Asylum” do not shy away from controversy, nor do they escape the scathing eye of the more prominent publishing houses.

Gifford approaches the two short stories through the lens of madness, and the reason is rather apparent given the syntactical-semantic disconnect. In a sort of stream of consciousness, each sentence follows the previous, of course; but often readers find there is no necessary connection between a paragraph of sentences: it is, rather, an aggregate of many parts, which are related only by their situation relative to each other on paper. Thus

² It could be argued that “Zero” and “Asylum” resemble Anaïs Nin's early short work of fiction, the *House of Incest* (1936), but I would suggest that the style of writing is more a reflection of the antiauthoritarian—thus anti-structure—mentality, and likely inspired, though differentiated, from French Surrealist free association or stream of consciousness.

³ Durrell was living in Corfu in 1940, and when Germany invaded Greece, he escaped to Alexandria, but was forced to leave behind many of his manuscripts, including the original scripts for “Zero” and “Asylum in the Snow.” However, in this relocation to Egypt, the scene inspired Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet* (1957-60), which is the work that was most widely read, and the one for which he is best known.

readers see the illusion of madness, and Gifford argues that the protagonist, Lawrence Durrell, fears the “collapse of the dominant form of ‘sanity,’ which inspires the segregation of the asylum” (“Foucault” 76). But this sanity, given the temporal and political context, is insanity; it is the mechanistic devotion of young men who wish to die for the freedom of those whom they love; it is romanticized militarism, and a despicable ignorance according to the anarchists of the Villa Seurat network.⁴ But this segregation is important if we wish to consider the two stories beyond the heuristic of madness, and from the exterior of the dominant World War II politics. Though we can consider Durrell an affiliate of the Villa Seurat network, it was individuation that made each writer a part of this group; the common ground was self-definition and pure autonomy. Gifford states that:

The sense of identity most prevalent in anarchist theory as well as across the later 1930s writers I have identified as personalist is not necessarily immutable despite being individual, and it need not be stable nor essential. It need only be *one's own*. This is to say, the self may not be fully known even to the individual living it or who brings the self into being *by* living it; yet its necessary dream is of an existence beyond the determination of its material conditions. (*Personal* 54)

For Durrell, his writing was an act of self-definition and autonomy; his life was not *pre-*determined, but rather *self-*determined. As such, it seems that in the midst of wartime chaos and the anti-pacifist discourses that an interior space would be best both in terms of self-amelioration and artistic freedom. This interiority is the prevailing feature of “Zero” and “Asylum in the Snow,” and though these stories are together one excursion “into reality,” I focus on “Zero,” simply due to its suggestive title. That is, can we accept the word “zero” as meaning nothing? Or does it mean anything? After all, zero is a placeholder between the positive and negative whole numbers. But if we consider that the Ancient Babylonians solved numerous mysteries in the “discovery” of zero, I hold that a deeper analysis of that which feigns nothingness is truly something-ness.

⁴ Orwell was very well oriented in the politics of war, and he fought in the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) in the anti-Stalinist pro-Marxist division, and he was disgusted by the pacifism of Henry Miller and others at the Villa Seurat. But more notably, in his essay *Inside the Whale*, which unfavourably reviews Miller’s *Tropic of Cancer*, Orwell uses the term “boy scout mentality” to refer to the generation of author’s (the High Modernists), like Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, Ezra Pound, and T.S. Eliot, to name a few. Many of these writers were opposed to the war, or were known pacifists, which angered Orwell due to his Marxist attitude towards social responsibility. At the same time, Orwell had no problem accepting Miller’s overcoat after they met while Orwell was *en route* to Catalonia.

Between every actual and possible world lies a void—an equilibrium point between the two co-existing worlds of the possible and the actual. Terminologically speaking, “the void” sounds empty, and the phrase raises feelings of discomfort of the unknown and the indecipherable; but I want to suggest an alternative route around this obstacle in thought. In this chapter my aim is to configure a working definition of the void—what it means to be a void—and to illuminate the indisputable value of this space within the self as a means to assess, sort, and integrate new information into actual and possible worlds.

“Zero” exemplifies my conception of the void. A rendition of French Surrealism, “Zero” invites numerous readings, and I draw upon this text to explain the nature of the void that I claim exists between possible and actual worlds.⁵ If we were to view the void as a sort of quantum phenomenon, whose nature is “often described in terms of possible *physical* properties not yet actualized” (Deacon 3; emphasis mine), then we find that the infinitely small or the possible has substance, though often indeterminable by the eye. Thus, if quantum phenomena have substance, then they must necessarily be considered as matter, which receives its form—its fundamental structure—from substance (Moevs 50).⁶

Zero and infinity are two semiotic creations: the absence of substance and the unbounded nature of reality, but these are not numbers, these are symbols which attempt to quantify reality, when they are in fact qualifiers of the nature of the universe. It seems that Durrell’s “Zero” is a perfect place to begin an inquiry into the nature of human potentiality—even when one might suggest there is none, or that there is zero potentiality. If zero implies nothingness (*le néant*), then it might logically be said that it is a “void.” The qualifiers “zero” and “void” are easily likened to the “nothingness” of Sartrean existentialism; but I want readers to consider the void as a *space*, because if qualities are meant to describe space and its substances, and if the word “void” is a qualifier that signifies substance, (*i.e.* a void between layers of sediment and stone is a

⁵ Of course there are numerous definitions for the term “void,” but in using the definite article with this term, I refer specifically to a void space between possible and actual worlds, one that is void of substance.

⁶ This stream of thinking finds its roots in Ancient Greek philosophy, but it remains a valid mean of understanding the nature of the universe, in spite of the fact that the mathematics and sciences have long since abandoned Ancient sciences. However, the concept of zero was revealed by the Ancient Babylonians, and perfected in terms of division by zero much later by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Isaac Newton; so in spite of many antiquated ideas, most apparent in cosmology and science, the numeric universe requires existence for all formulas which needed to express *absence* of substance. See Amir D. Aczel’s *Finding Zero: A Mathematician’s Odyssey to Discover the Origin of Numbers*.

canyon, but was once akin to the rock walls by which it is now surrounded), then the void *is something*; in fact, it is the space with the strongest potentiality to develop or to host substance, whether it is the Bergsonian mind-energy or physical matter. The void awaits matter: it anticipates actuality. But prior to the textual analysis, I want to provide some context for the discussion of the nature of the void, as well as the processes which can occur within the space of the void.

Northrop Frye describes the void in terms of Buddhist thought, where “the world is everything within nothingness. As nothing is certain or permanent in the world, nothing either real or unreal, the secret of wisdom is detachment without withdrawal” (156). I look at this detachment as an objective and intentional action on behalf of the thinking individual, but what is more, this detachment allows the thinker to advance on what Lawrence Durrell describes as the “self-subsisting plane of reality towards which the spiritual self of man is trying to reach out through various media” (“Heraldic” 72). Frye would categorize Durrell’s plane of reality as “the medium by which the world becomes visible . . . an opportunity for human energy, not a stifling darkness or a concealed revelation” (157). The mind is the unbounded counterpart of the corporeal body, and it is observed by others as consciousness; and while the brain is physical matter, it is the mind that explores new planes of reality—the *mind-space*—the creative undercurrent of psychological energy and being. Time is the human construct which allows the thinking individual to situate events via temporal markers, like sequences or perceived cause and effect; as such, time signifies consciousness, because it is a system that aids memory, and therefore it exists in consciousness as each mind evolves in duration. Bergson sees consciousness simply as being characterized by its “most obvious feature: it means, before everything else, memory” (*Mind* 3). The duration experienced by consciousness is akin to internal, individuated duration within the mind; and thus the status afforded to universal, homogeneous duration, is that of the record-keeper of all substance, missing, potential, or present. (*Time* 154). In fact, Bergson states that duration *is* space (163)—an open plane or conceptual canvas upon which physical matter and the data of consciousness impress themselves upon this conceptual spatial fabric.

The recognition and experience of universal space, however, is by way of human consciousness, which is the ontological origin of the acknowledged *presence* of space.

We cannot confirm that space exists if there is no human consciousness, because if there were no consciousness, then the potential to deduce facts via experience is non-existent. Though human beings were born into universal, or homogeneous space, the existence of human consciousness is the only objective validation of the existence of *a priori* space.⁷ If there were not human consciousness, space may very well exist—and may do so with some sort of purpose—but in the context of perception and consciousness, if there were not such human faculties, we cannot say one way or another whether space exists. However, at this moment the study of space continues, and we know that the term “space-time” explains four-dimensional space; that is, the length, width, and height of matter impressing itself upon space, and thus the fourth dimension is the human construct of time—the quantification of perceived phenomena in motion and the relation between x and y matter. Space-time is a helpful definition of that which is difficult to conceptualize, therefore I will adapt this definition to explain the many dimensions of the mind, which is a part of space. At present, physicists argue that there are twenty-six dimensions in space (Gubser 3); but given that space is unbounded and infinite, and that the mind exists in this space and is limited only by itself, then I argue that mind has infinite potentiality to do or create x under the premise that anything is possible, though not necessarily plausible or immanent. Nonetheless, with infinite potentiality to do or create x , which I will return to shortly, it seems reasonable to consider the mind as having infinitely many dimensions.⁸ Therefore, I will use the term “mind-space” to refer to the subjective interior of individual consciousness, which exists as a part of the whole of space—much akin to Bergsonian duration, where an event does not place itself:

Alongside its actual state as one point alongside another, but forms both the past and the present states into an organic whole, as happens when we recall the notes of a tune, melting, so to speak, into one another.”
(Bergson, *Time* 100)

⁷ I say this under the assumption that human beings are the only form of life with analytic and cognitive-reasoning capacities due to consciousness, although in Physics one might argue that there exists a parallel universe where you and I both exist *as* you and I exist here—a duplicate world, and thus a duplicate reality. But this argument is also strongly opposed, so I make this statement concerning human consciousness under the supposition that Earth is the singular human reality.

⁸ If we accept the premise that the mind has infinite potentiality to do or create x , it is due to the mind’s relation to infinite space that I say the mind has infinitely many dimensions. If space is in fact a flat and open plane that expands at a speed faster than we can account for, then the mind is similar in this construct, because it is a part of space. But this requires the ability to perceive the mind as *hosted* by the brain of the body, but it relies on the body only for its existence, whereas its sustenance is of itself, and infinite. As such, there must be infinitely many dimensions, because there is no geometric shape that confines the mind to n -many dimensions.

The mind is relative to others, and it is part of the composition of homogeneous duration, or space; and as such, the mind-space is an unique unit in itself, while maintaining its position as a part of a whole of universal duration.

We have established the mind-space, but how does this relate to the void? And importantly, can we in good conscience dismiss the void as empty or as nothingness? I propose that this space of seeming nothingness has definite substance due to the presence of human energy, psychical or otherwise; and due to its linguistically qualified nature, it exists at least as psychical data, which may or may not be actualized into objectively existent data. Said otherwise, the syntactic structure that defies nothingness is the verb “to be,” which necessarily implies that it “is,” and therefore it exists as a linguistic and symbolic reality⁹ known to consciousness.

I have explained the use of Possible Worlds theory in terms of narrative theory, but to take this further, let us consider these imagined or fictional spaces as the counterpart to the actual world of each individual. It seems sensible, then, to consider the void as the point of equilibrium. This void is *within* the self, as a space of transmission, where data from the possible world are actualized and integrated into one’s actual-world reality, and likewise in reverse—between the actual and the possible. Let us say that the void within the self is a space of contemplation, self-creation, and the processing or ordering of new information—the immanent relative truths waiting to be uncovered within the self by way of the possible world, and which are characteristic to the individual thinker. I say relative, because what is true for one may have diminished or null truth value for another. Further, I want to clarify that these relative data unearthed in possible worlds are not the product of one’s decryption of hidden truths, but are rather fragmented data that have become relevant to the individual through his processes of becoming, or epistemic evolution.¹⁰ Much akin to a fractured mirror, the shards of which reflect the heterogeneous whole of the self, these heterogeneous parts of an individual that are made homogeneous by way of the self-identifying “I” will join the homogeneous

⁹ Linguistic and symbolic reality can be an either/or. For example, data in consciousness may allow for a linguistic definition—the mobilization of the *logos*, syntax and phonetics of spoken language; but on the other hand, the data of consciousness may only provoke an image, thus an intuitive knowledge or awareness of *x*, which cannot (yet) be described in words.

¹⁰ I equate the metaphysical concept of becoming to the epistemological concept of psychical maturation or evolution, because in both cases the self is in constant motion and flux through duration, and continually adapts according to experiential data in manifest in the mind-space.

duration of all that exists, all that is possible, and all that is missing yet immanent. The result of much like a mirror in its complete form: it reflects nothing, because it is everything; there is nothing beyond it, because there is not beyond.

If we consider the void as the equilibrium point between actual and possible worlds, then we must delve further into the purpose of this intermediary space. A defining characteristic of the void is memory; it is the act of recollection of experiences in worlds on both ends of the spectrum—actual and possible. Henri Bergson explains that memory “is just the intersection of mind and matter” (*Matter* 13), which is precisely how I define the unstable notion of the void. This equilibrium point is where the psychical events of the possible world of the mind cross paths with the physical matter of the actual world, but crossing paths is not necessarily synonymous with the pairing or bonding practice that unites mind and matter. Rather, it is through the individual processes of becoming that consciousness and matter unite in duration. Becoming is just as much a psychical event as it is physical; just as one’s body ages based on its evolution through space-time, the mind engages with external data, thus determining the relevance of each material stimulant, or each experience that merits psychical response. But let us turn towards a fictional example of becoming in the void, so as to draw upon a solid framework through which we can assess these claims.

Durrell provides a compelling analysis of the void in “Zero,” where he delves into the space of implicit nothingness through the perspective of his alter ego, Lawrence Durrell.¹¹ Lawrence exists in the actual world,¹² yet his mind flourishes in the possible space of an oil painting. “Zero” problematizes the concepts of relativity and reality, so there are no “givens” in this story; rather, readers are left to determine the status of Lawrence’s understanding of reality. One’s initial rendering of this quasi-surrealist¹³ narrative would likely err towards fictionalized madness expressed in free-associative

¹¹ I will refer to the protagonist as Lawrence, and to the author as Durrell.

¹² For the sake of clarity, when I use the term “actual world,” I am referring to the actual world of the fictional character; but if I refer to the actual world in which we as readers live, I will make this explicit.

¹³ “Zero” and “Asylum in the Snow” are two short stories of the English Surrealist rendition of French Surrealism in the 1930s, but where the French erred towards socialism, the English group (especially the Villa Seurat Network) veered towards anarchism: a “non-hierarchic” form of “mutual individualism.” See James Gifford’s *Personal Modernisms: Anarchist Networks and the Later Avant-Gardes* and “Introduction” in *Panic Spring* by Lawrence Durrell.

discourse, or stream of consciousness, but there is deeper substance to this void, this nothingness.

Prior to our inquiry into this vast space and substance of zero, I want to bring Durrell's personal notion of the sensible into the discussion. The foundation for the entirety of Durrell's writing is within the principles of his "Heraldic Universe," his space of creative energy; and in a sense, it acts as his personal manifesto, which elucidates his antiauthoritarianism. Durrell writes that "Nonsense is never just nonsense; it is more like good sense with all the logic removed" ("Heraldic" 73). Logic, according to Durrell, is the ill-equipped means of accounting for one's world, and he notes that "Logic tries to describe the world; but it is never found adequate for the task. Logic is not really an instrument: merely a method. Describing, logic limits. Its law is causality" (72). The Heraldic Universe will be integral to our understanding of "Zero," in that readers must forego initial "logical" deductions concerning Lawrence's state of mind, because as he declares, "EVERYTHING ILLOGICAL IS GOD: AND I AM GOD!" ("Zero" 8). Thus, seeming madness must be peeled back in order to reveal a layer of deeper substance. Readers must dismiss the superficialities of fictional "meaning," and stare deeply into the depths of the story to illuminate the less prominent features of the narrative, one example being Lawrence's process of becoming in nothing.

Durrell explains that logic limits, and while there exists both verbal (rhetorical) logic and numeric formal logic, each system is simply a set of symbols indicating that a and b therefore c , the standard format for logical syllogisms. But let us consider for a moment the natures of zero and the void in a metaphorical sense. Zero cannot be quantified, represented, reduced, or deduced by any number; and what is more, the void is not wholly conceivable to the mind, because the logic of language bars us from a logical explanation: how does one visualize nothing? It seems counter-intuitive to conceptualize the appearance or nature of nothing, but this is precisely what Durrell explains: "logic limits." But if we were to call upon Bergson's explanation of intuition, he would say that it is "the direct vision of the mind by the mind" (*Creative* 20). Intuition is the mind-space becoming conscious of itself as a mind-space, and thus understanding its infinite potentiality to create new realities and new durations, because as Bergson notes: "in duration, considered as a creative evolution, there is perpetual creation of

possibility and not only of reality” (10). Following this train of thought, then, it is valid to present the unquantifiable zero and the unqualifiable void as infinite in potentiality to create x simply because they are not limited by logic; our inability to comprehend these in full ensures their *freedom from* the limitations of the organizational logic that is inherent in the social systems that shape how human beings think as the progress through stages of life.

On entering Lawrence’s world, we encounter the algebraic expression of nothingness, though the solution is open to speculation, crafted intentionally as such:

$$\sin \frac{2\pi(x+3a)}{a} = \sin \frac{2\pi x}{a} \quad (8).$$

I would argue that $3a=0$ can be qualified as *something=nothing*, and thus we embark into a maze of nonsense that is good sense. At the same time, for $3a$ to equal 0 , it is necessary that the variable $a=0$. Stated otherwise, it seems that the equation constructed of both numeric and linguistic semiotic systems undermines itself: the letter is without meaning, and the letter therefore supplants the meaning of 3 based on their relation to each other, and consequently $3a$ becomes 0 . The equation is the breakdown of two semiotic systems, yet once the mathematics crusader or the linguistic formalist pursues the solution, the solution thus informs the discoverer that the systems of semiotic representations of reality are meaningless—because if 0 is equal to 0 , what is left to conceptualize? We must conceptualize the equivalency: nothingness, which is, of course, something-ness.

The short story, arguably crafted with the intent to confound more than to facilitate comprehension, is precisely what Ruth Ronen would call “fictionality”; this fictional space that represents the consciousness and mental traversing of space or spaces by the protagonist. Though “Zero” is indeed a work of fiction, it is also a tangible document that invites numerous interpretations. I suggest that the fictional mind-space offers data equally pertinent to life as the experiential data of the actual-world being in the here-now space-time. In terms of the opening equation, the avid reader will not accept that substance (3) is the equivalent of nothingness ($0=0$), because “ 0 ” itself signifies that nothing *is there*, therefore, the presence of the word “is” necessarily implies its existence. This word-play is not the semantics of nonsense, but rather the reality of the finite language that artificially and unnecessarily demarcates the possible from the actual—the plethora of sensorial and experiential data from both worlds. This story chronicles the

rich substance of the void within; that is, the narrative, penned as a journal by Lawrence, draws readers into the interiority of his individuated void, where he ponders the data pertinent to his processes of becoming, and integrates it into his thinking. In our analysis of Lawrence's reality, we may feel tempted to juxtapose Lawrence's actual world and his possible world, but there is a means by which we can avoid binaries and come to see that such divisions are quite often merisms¹⁴ for one complete idea. Bergson explains that:

If one considers two sufficiently divergent meanings, they will almost seem to be mutually exclusive. They are not exclusive because the chain of intermediary meanings links them up. By making the necessary effort to embrace the whole, one perceives that one is in the real and not in the presence of a mathematical essence which could be summed up in a simple formula. ("Creative" 22)

From Bergson's argument arises the idea of heterogeneous wholes; said otherwise, the merisms of one body, or one mind, or any aggregate. Each part should be identified as the thing in itself, which is whole and complete in its own context; but it should also be observed in a larger context—the environment in which it is a support system, a part of a whole, because without this single unity, the whole could not be whole, therefore *every* part is requisite to its corresponding whole. In terms of Lawrence's possible and actual worlds, they synthesize and become one unit, but I will return to this in more detail shortly.

The void within does not change in accordance with time, but rather with one's engagement with the possible world, and consequently, the data of consciousness transmitted between actual and possible worlds. Lawrence moves from his own actual world to the possible by way of the oil painting of an alluring woman: "I draw you aside to the corner," he writes, "and put my hands on your body to assure myself that you are a woman, and to recollect what you mean" (9). That Lawrence lusts after the woman in the oil painting is unclear until the end of the story, but already we can see that he engages in a possible world—an alternative universe, where this woman is matter embodied—and we are given a hint as to her ontological status: Lawrence aims to recollect what she "means." Art often elicits the desire to comprehend the meaning or the inspiration behind the art-work, and this urge is equally present in readers of literature. But in accordance

¹⁴ The earliest use of the term "merism" is dated to Ancient Greece, where rhetoricians use this word (*merisimos*) to mean a whole or totality expressed by seemingly opposing terms which are truly synonyms. See *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*.

with Durrell's Heraldic Universe, we must surrender our desire for logical meaning, and advance into the piece of art, or literature, which is "affective [] rather than causal" ("Heraldic" 72). Lawrence engages with the painting on an affective and internally sensorial level; the creative energy of the art-world and his actual-world response to the painting unite in the void—within Lawrence's self—and thus readers embark on the excursion into Lawrence's possible world, a realm relative to no world exterior to the one with which he presently engages. This excursion is one of self-amelioration, of re-creation and self-individuation. Frye notes that "When we turn to human creative power, we see that there is a quality in it better called re-creation, a transforming of the chaos within our ordinary experience in nature" (143). Lawrence's excursion within the possible world is the genesis of a new duration in an expansive mind-space, and before the reader's eyes, Lawrence engages with a new reality far more fruitful to his epistemic evolution than that of the actual world.

"I will tell you who I am," writes Lawrence, "and what I am doing here. I will speak with a nicety of language that would give ears to the blind, and eyes to the deaf who hear me, but you do not understand what my glossary is" (Durrell, "Zero" 8). Lawrence feels ostracized and misunderstood in the actual world, and therefore invests his energy in the possible world of his imagined lover in the depths of the painting. Equipped with a glossary foreign to those in his actual world with whom he co-exists, Lawrence explains his isolation with the language of illogic; "ears for the blind" is the implicit signifier of the disconnect between Lawrence and the actual world. Lawrence is surrounded by material excess—eyes for the deaf mock what Durrell believes is the crush and uninspired logic of the actual world. As a result of this actual-world deficiency, he becomes enraptured with the painting, thus investing his energy in the painting's hysteria of snow, or "moments in time" (8). While the animated world of the painting exists only in the realm of Lawrence's own possible world, the painting itself exists undeniably within Lawrence's actual world. Bergson argues that "the object exists in itself, and, on the other hand, the object is, in itself, pictorial, as we perceive it: image it is, but a self-existing image" (*Matter* 10). To Lawrence, the painting exists with or without him, just as Durrell's story exists with or without the reader. While possible worlds and their truths are relative solely to the creator of that world, the creator's existence is relative to

nothing; there is no indexical referent that validates the creator's existence, because the creator, or individual, exists regardless of external perception or validation. Here, I want to point out the relationship between relative possible worlds and what rhetorician John Searle would call "brute existence"; that is, brute existence is non-negotiable—one exists not as an institutional creation, but as a brute fact¹⁵—and while the mind is the source of creation for the possible world, the mind could not exist without the physiological brain in the physical body of the material word. Therefore, possible worlds should enjoy the status of "actual" even if their presence is but a trace in one's behaviour in the actual world. Though the mind has unlimited potential to create new realities, it is still a subset of the body in spite of the fact that the mind can achieve more dynamic evolution than the body alone. Additionally, the status "actual" requires potentiality, which is sensed by individual consciousness, so as to bring matter from the possible into the actual world. It is the self-reflexive recognition of one's own consciousness, and the potentiality for all unformed matter that can enter the process of actuality. This transfer of data signifies the unified mind—that the possible and actual are one part of a whole—and that, described alone are wholes in themselves, though they also act as building blocks for larger frameworks that constitute a whole. It seems apparent, then, that possible worlds have their ontological roots in the actual world—a claim that demands further investigation, so let us continue the examination of the validity and function of Lawrence's possible world, and the void in which he deciphers all possible-world data.

The possible-world structure crafted by Lawrence is a framework wherein he has the potential to uncover immanent relative truths, or data pertinent to his own epistemic maturation. The new information is then processed in the more objective or detached space of the void; it is meditative thought without awareness of anything beyond that thought. The possible world at play in Lawrence's mind allows for unexpected encounters with interior truths, which are neither cast in darkness nor hidden from the eye. These truths are steps forward in Lawrence's active process of becoming, his evolving epistemological existence; they are immanent and immediate because epistemological maturation will eventually discover these truths, but only following

¹⁵ Searle classifies brute facts as objective matter that does not require conscious validation to exist, like a mountain; an institutional fact however, is a reality imposed on, adopted by, and acted upon by the institution, *i.e.* the whole of the people of that given context. See *The Construction of Social Reality*.

truths that must be known or learned first. Lawrence's becoming is movement towards self-amelioration. This practice of self-amelioration need not be a complex system of actions, but can simply be understood as the process of becoming that satisfies one's creative and sensorial needs; said otherwise, it is a process of separation from the unwanted, (in Lawrence's case, the sane, actual world), and subsequent unification with desired existence.¹⁶ Lawrence's possible world begins with a gaze, and progresses into the imaginary as he begins a monologue with the object of his desire:

The memoryless hysteria of the snow closes on us like a man-trap, your arm in my arm. Do you think I do not understand? I see myself sitting here stiffly, like a robot, behind the taciturn driver. I am a figure of fun perhaps because I cannot find the right word, and you do not dare to speak to me.

(8)

Lawrence perceives the monotony of the actual world as a hysterical blizzard closing in on him, and here he is robotic, and thus lacks the freedom to express himself, or to move in directions that best serve his self-interest. In the present temporality of the actual world, Lawrence experiences the crushing affect of loneliness and enslavement to a world filled with meaningless matter; therefore, the genesis of a possible world that offers substance is the most appropriate way to recover the mental energy necessary to his existence in the actual world. He is in a process of epistemic maturation in which he must craft space for his mind's substance.

Though it seems that the actual world errs towards the unpleasant, whereas the possible world is the space in which substance is beauty, the understanding of these worlds as reciprocal counterparts is imperative to our understanding of becoming within the space of the mind, and correspondingly within the space of the actual. The framework of the actual world consists of brute and institutional facts; all that we might consider entities exists not according to relativity, but to empirical and verifiable data founded in logic and reason (Searle 66). As such, an individual has finite options in terms of his existence, because the strict binary between actual/real and possible/imaginary makes the actual world of physical matter finite, simply due to the reality that matter is finite in nature, and in order to transcend this finitude one must look beyond that which is visible to the objective eye. Such limitations spur the genesis of possible worlds as spaces to

¹⁶ I draw the concepts of unification and division from Kenneth Burke's *A Rhetoric of Motives*.

consider which substance is beckoned by the inviting nature of potential-*cum*-actual within the void. For every scientific discovery or institutional norm that we accept as factual and valid, a possible world was at play in the establishment of this fact. For example, in 1638 the first noted work of science fiction surfaced in England. Under a pseudonym, *The Man in the Moone*¹⁷ was published and passed through the hands of the literate, introducing them to the notion of space travel on a goose-propelled flying machine. Naturally, Francis Godwin feared public scrutiny: travel to the moon was heretical, yet three hundred and thirty-one years later, man did set foot on the moon. Thus we can see that innovation begins in possible worlds; what we now take for granted in terms of space travel, would once be deemed preposterous, but the possible world—an alternate reality—existed within Godwin nonetheless. Bergson makes a valid point, arguing that:

images themselves are not pictured in consciousness without some foreshadowing . . . of the movements by which these images would be acted or played in space—would, that is to say, impress particular attitudes upon the body, and set free all that they implicitly contain of spatial movement. (*Matter* 13-14)

The foreshadowing of the images contained in possible worlds is pure potentiality fuelled by that which is missing or lacking. A possible world can fill this actual-world omission, and more importantly, the knowledge acquired in possible worlds apparent in images and data is processed and contextualized in the void, and then integrated into one's behaviour and actions in the actual world. The spatiotemporal position of the mind informs the attitudes of the body, and what was once impossible is set free into the empirical world of fact and logic, quickly becoming a verifiable reality. Possible worlds are a vehicle with which one can create a new reality, often out of that which is missing in the actual, just as Lawrence does with the painting.

¹⁷ Interestingly, Godwin's novel was published during the Scientific Revolution at the time of the rise of Baconian Empiricism, so the fact that an action such as space travel that would require a command of the sciences must be hidden beneath a pseudonym speaks to the *en masse* epistemic evolution through history. Ideas must be proffered according to a given social context—they must be hypothesized only when what is *currently* possible is available to put the plan into motion, which is precisely the short fall of strict actual-world reasoning, because true innovation identifies an opportunity and develops it in such a way that the materials become readily available, even if they were unavailable at the time of the new idea. Instead, Godwin's idea of space travel was considered fiction rather than potentiality; and though we do not fly geese to the moon, we have in fact flown human beings to the moon, and the world accepts this as empirical data.

Lawrence navigates the possible world by recording his thoughts on paper, and his imagined lover is the answer to his questions—she is his muse—and Lawrence looks to her for answers:

Vasec says you must bring the canary: he will not believe until he sees it with his own eyes . . . how can he believe that the cage was created round it by God? It is slightly redundant: if God gave it wings, then why the cage which is too small for it to use them? (10)

Lawrence, as the creator of this asylum life, views himself as the teacher and the scribe of the world's truths, and he tells his lover that he is “teaching everyone how to experience phenomena. In this sector of experience there is only the creative activity. We are nothing ourselves: we do not let our imaginations even imagine that *we* have a part in the cosmic dance” (10). Creative activity in the possible world is fundamental to the actualization of psychical phenomena in the actual world, where the individual exists amidst brute realities and institutionally created facts. One who feels anonymous in the sea of empirical and impersonal data can return from the mind-space—the possible world—and in the transition between possible and actual worlds, one can transmit psychical data into the actual world, thus furnishing it with the manifestations of possible-world realities. What is more, one can adapt to the black-and-white binary logic of the actual world by extending the navigational skills of reality—skills that come to fruition in the possible world. These skills are designed with the intention of overcoming obstacles and keeping the self safe from all that could harm it; therefore, it is not as if in the possible world one is learning the art of flying—it is more likely that one develops a set of skills that are used to ensure a sense of well-being and contentedness: a set of skills that assist epistemic fruition. Lawrence's possible world exists within Bergsonian duration, freed from the shackles of institutional and organizational time, thus allowing events in the fabric of space to melt together like notes of a tune. Processes of becoming and the subsequent maturation exist in duration, and indicate that the finite mind within a worldly body has infinite potentiality to create new realities, because the mind-space enables this practice to occur. It comes as no surprise, then, that the void within each thinker is brimming with new and immanent information that must be *realized* and integrated into an actual or possible world. The void configures multiple durations of one being, and each duration has substance which holds the potential to influence its other sub-durations,

or planes of consciousness in the individual in both actual and possible worlds: the data moves to and fro continually, without interruption.

Vasec, though a manifestation of Lawrence's consciousness, is a part of Lawrence's internal duration in this specific possible world; and as a result, Vasec—as a fragmented portion of one person encapsulated in the form of Lawrence—would theoretically shape Lawrence's own consciousness when he returns to the actual world. If we consider the void as the internal, personal space between actual and possible worlds, then it seems that Lawrence desires to demarcate his void from the actual world, so as to exist wholly in the psychical realm. Durrell crafts this possible world within the painting as a narrative written by Lawrence, who seeks refuge from the actual. Noting that the world outside of the painting is suffocating like the hysterical snow, he writes that this space “would be fatal to [his] peace of mind if [he] had a mind” (9), therefore emphasizing the homogeneity and anonymity he sees in the actual world, which cannot suffice his epistemic craving to evolve and move forward unceasingly. What is more, Lawrence jettisons the identity imposed upon him by the institutional norms of the actual in his stark division from tangible matter: “I am no longer fish nor fruit, vegetable, mineral, oracle” (11). Instead, Lawrence finds autonomy only through the imaginary, through the channels of the mind projecting potentialities¹⁸ onto the open canvas—the space—of his possible world. But in this division from the actual world, Lawrence restricts his overall potentiality, that is, the combination of actual and possible worlds that form his “whole” self. Each duration has the potential to create new realities, but with one less world—as is the case with Lawrence—there is one less reality and one less chance for self-amelioration that leads to epistemic maturation.

Lawrence even goes so far as to populate his possible world, with each character as dynamically diverse as the last. One of the imagined beings, Hamlet, has “died in the future—how far ahead of us all we could not tell. Even the physicist could not tell. It was a moment of great nicety—because we could not bury him until he joined us in the present” (10). The concept of temporal structure, here, is reorganized: the character can

¹⁸ Here, I use the word “potentialities” to mean all alternative possibilities in possible worlds. Of course it appears to be an illogical term, because one is not likely to imagine one has grown large wings and can fly, so one would not attempt to actualize this in the actual world. However, no individual has the foresight to ban with certainty *any* potentiality, regardless of its seeming illogic. And in keeping with Durrell's Heraldic Universe and the notion that nonsense is good sense, the term, in this context, seems appropriate.

exist beyond the body; but more specifically, Lawrence seems to believe that corporeal boundaries limit the creative and exploratory potential of the mind. Hamlet has travelled into the future, which suggests that Lawrence's possible world has neither temporal constructs nor corporeal limitations. Though he uses words to acknowledge the institutional acceptance of time, the linear structure of actual-world temporality is abandoned—past and future are always present, and “present” is this very moment, now—now, *ad infinitum*. Bergson argues that:

even those few who have believed in free will, have reduced it to a simple “choice” between two or more alternatives, as if these alternatives were “possibles” outlined beforehand, and as if the will was limited to “bringing about” (“realiser”) one of them . . . But a real evolution, if ever it is accelerated or retarded, is entirely modified within; its acceleration or retardation is precisely that internal modification. Its content and its duration are one and the same thing. (*Time* 8-9)

Bergson's argument offers several critical ideas in relation to duration, and, albeit more indirectly, possible worlds. In terms of duration, Bergson's conception of one's content revised by epistemic evolution is the equivalent of duration; and what is more, Bergson discusses internal processes of becoming where one comes to terms with duration and begins to understand the self intuitively, familiarizing the self *with the self*, just as Bergson adds later the idea of the mind vis-à-vis the mind. In terms of free will, Bergson offers an ideal definition for the relation of choices in *time*; that is, when existing by the laws of institutional time, nothing can be planned in advance, simply because as each second crosses the threshold from present to past, one's consciousness is able to focus solely on the immediacy of the now.¹⁹ I want to suggest that if we consider possible worlds as a rejection of time due to the immediacy of the now as a limitation on one's intellectual freedom, we should logically discard numeric quantifiers of space, just as I described earlier the inability to quantify zero and infinity.²⁰ Time is but the finite, institutional structure that is designed to quantify unquantifiable space. As a being in existence there is still a world in motion in front of one's eyes, but to reject time is not to

¹⁹ I should note, here, that although one can entertain a possible world within the actual world, this implies that the actual world slows while the body is in a state of rest. Alternatively, one could take a stroll on the actual-world sidewalk and quickly find that full presence in two worlds is an impossibility, and thus each is able only to influence the other within one mind-space.

²⁰ I recognize that this is a project in itself—it is the foundation of my next research project, but I think it is worth pointing out in this context.

reject life, but rather to embrace duration as the unifying force between any and all durations.

Hamlet's situation mirrors closely the Platonic dialogue concerning the soul and body, wherein the body is temporal, while the soul has the potential to be eternal (Plato 42). Without diverting too far from Durrell's text, this conception of the eternal soul and temporal body speaks to my premise that time does not permeate the possible world or the imaginative faculties of the mind, because time is finite. It is duration which is omnipotent, and nothing can exist outside of this force. Following Bergson's logic that duration is space (*Time* 163), then if space is infinite, so too is duration, it being synonymous with space, hence the infinite potential to expand the epistemic horizon of the mind-space.

Duration is the infinite host, enabler, and record-keeper of matter in motion. As such, duration has in its presence entities and non-entities, bodies and souls, actual and possible worlds, and every potential conception of each cognitive, thinking individual. Therefore, Lawrence's statement that Hamlet had died in the future is not necessarily illogical in the context of possible worlds, where everything that exists is a product of the individual mind within the cerebral structure of the corporeal body, and is necessarily an entity in the actual world. Said otherwise, the solipsistic knowledge of one's own mind verifies that the individuated data and relative truths exist, but in terms of a more objective position, such truths cannot be verified, although opinions concerning one's own state of mind and Being are valid.²¹ The point I want to make clear is simply that "illogical" is synonymous neither with "impossible" nor "ridiculous"; it is often that when an idea seems most ridiculous that it requires careful consideration. The human mind is finite, but the potentiality of this mind is infinite; thus when the human mind cannot conceptualize an abstract thought or illogical expression, the subject of discussion should not be rendered incorrect, but rather in limbo. A subject in limbo must simply wait until the human mind can join it, like Hamlet's body joining the soul, following an evolution of consciousness: one awaits the immanent in the void.

²¹ Searle argues that opinions are always valid, although beliefs are subject to interrogation in the objective sphere. An opinion is subjective, then, and while a belief can be equally subjective, it is often dependent on some fragment of external, shared reality.

As Hamlet awaits his soul, he lies on a cot with “his claws holding the sheets” and Lawrence notes that “if you stare down on him you are drawn down, in ever-widening vortices, to a level of concentration which is magma. The lotus-depths in which my mind is the only one really at home” (11). Lawrence describes the fluidity of his thought, where amidst the murky waters of the lotus, he finds spiritual awakening and enlightenment; and this awakening is that his mind “*is*.” The present tense of the verb “to be” may go unnoticed in its esoteric nature, which mimics closely that of Tibetan Buddhist esotericism and epistemological revelation—a theme throughout the story. To say that one “*is*” implies a sense of presence-of-mind, which speaks to the syntax and seemingly discordant semantic content, and though “Zero” and “Asylum in the Snow” are of the English rendition of French Surrealism, as demonstrated by their lesser focus on free-associative revelation, Durrell crafts the stories as uncensored versions of Lawrence’s internal discourse. Quite similar, though far earlier, is the chapter in James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922), where readers are privy to the internal discourse(s) inside the mind of Molly, as she revisits and re-enacts moments from the past, but the dialogue is presented as private and internal, thus we find a striking similarity between Molly’s thoughts and those presented as Lawrence’s. This act of narrating one’s past in private is an act of self-definition. Readers encounter the opening line in “Zero”: “The night opens with a Tibetan delicacy; the shadows fall across the long nosed sun-dial and tell me that I exist, I exist” (8). The revelation is self-reflexive: Lawrence faces his definitive existence, so defined by the dialogue of conscious engagement with his inner space, and he does so in the “shadows” within which the sun-dial reveals its own nature: it is the keeper of time, and for time to exist there must be human consciousness, because time is a finite and man-made construct. As such, Durrell’s presentation of Lawrence’s interiority and revelatory self-definition acknowledges the existence both of Lawrence’s actual world, and the actual world in which the readers of Durrell’s fiction exist—but this task is completed via possible-world knowledge.

Buddhist thought runs through the veins of the narrative; Lawrence refers often to the Tibetan monks—their delicacies (8), and the monasteries in which “the aura of the mind” leads them to the divine (12). The lotus is yet another reference to Buddhist thought, and Lawrence declares, albeit inadvertently, his spiritual emancipation in the

murky realm of his mind where he feels “at home.” But where, to readers, Lawrence’s mind is far from transparent, it is he alone who possesses the tools to navigate this space; it is, to him, a space of clarity and creative energy, and from this space he gathers experiential data upon which he ponders in the void between the actual and possible worlds. The void is pure duration, an uninterrupted flow of thought which is not divided or defined by temporality, and in which each event in actual and possible worlds flow each into the other via the human consciousness of an individuated duration with space.

Lawrence records an interesting shift in consciousness when he begins to see himself through his own eyes *and* the eyes of his lover in the painting. Becoming aware of her thoughts, Lawrence writes to her in observation of her concerns:

That is why when you sit on the chair and do not know how to speak to us, I want you to realise our blood-brothership. Do not stammer and blush—you are beautiful enough as you are. It is impossible to believe that you are tribal . . . Are you one of them? If you were not you would not puzzle over this ... I think of you, and my mind is whirling with a million chisels, I am apostate, heretic, traitor ... would you say ‘hallucinated by the absolute?’ (12)

Lawrence’s possible world is his own craft, so the “absolute” (12), or the deified creator of his possible world is also self-created. Lawrence simply cannot be hallucinated by the Absolute in the possible world, because it is he who creates the Absolute; however, on the other hand, the actual-world Lawrence could plausibly hallucinate into existence his own possible world, which becomes his *sole* reality between actual and possible world, so if the creation is a hallucination, then the hallucinated Absolute can hallucinate Lawrence according to the ontological parameters of the possible world’s ontology, which is within Lawrence, himself. Lawrence uses the pronoun “I,” which indicates the cognitive recognition as himself as an individual. Even if Lawrence is the Absolute in his possible world, he cannot hallucinate himself into being, because he must be *a priori* to his hallucinated self. Stated plainly, a hallucination must follow an *a priori* thinker, *and* this thinker is one who creates a reality out of nothing, therefore if Lawrence is in a self-created space and the Absolute is a hallucination, there can be no grounds for the Absolute’s hallucination of its creator. It seems only logical, then, that considering the earlier fragment of his monologue he continues to view himself through a quasi-objective lens—through the eyes of his lover. Although she is not a hallucinated product of

Lawrence's mind, she is imaginary, and this practice of intuitive objectivity—seeing himself through her imagined eyes—operates only in possible worlds; that is to say, to attempt to see oneself objectively is common, but for the subject to see itself objectively through the eyes of subject-created-object is an extraordinary benefit of possible worlds.

The defining feature of all possible worlds is their subjectivity; these spaces are not only personal, but personalized, and thus there is no center, no location, or temporal framework for such spaces. Possible worlds exist outside of time, but as I noted earlier, they exist within duration, because duration is space, and space is undeniably everything; it hosts all content, imagined or otherwise. Furthermore, the ontological status of the possible world is in the mind of its creator; the mind is housed by the brain, and the brain by the body, so even these imaginary or alternate universes have their ontology in the actual world. Thus we must consider that Ronen's "non-entities" do have a place in the actual, that they are valid and relevant, though personal and intangible. Lawrence writes:

I tell you, now that the defined limit of language has fallen open on its hinges, there is no room for chicanery. We are more valid than human beings . . . It is a state of being more lucid than Euclid. We are an insoluble proposition, to which the hypotenuse has been lost. Perhaps you will enter Golgotha one day yourself in a tragic attempt to find me. All this data which I gather up for you: a chart written in a fine deft hand: but the treasure is buried. X marks no spot at all. (14)

Language is a logical construct meant to communicate, but Lawrence is not trying to share logical information here, but rather illogical disinformation. But if we were to accept this premise—that this illogical ramble is uninformative—then we have become lost in the superficialities of language. Lawrence's monologue demands readers to extend their thought to maximize the semiotic system of language, and in maximizing this system, we are able to gaze into Lawrence's dream-like possible world. This world has no center—X marks no spot at all. Yet Lawrence explains his lucidity amongst the other personalities populating his world; he is lucid amidst the murky waters of the lotus, because he has become enlightened with the relative truths of the possible world of his own making. To find enlightenment within the self—within the *mind*—is to engage in one's own epistemic evolution, and with each truth one's mind-space is shaped further in the constant evolutionary process of intentional practices of self-amelioration in possible and actual worlds. Possible worlds are the spot which X cannot mark, because they exist

in one duration of many, and consciousness is their source—a source that is itself non-tangible. Each instance of individual consciousness—any engagement with matter, imagined, perceived, generally excepted, or otherwise—is recorded by duration, and joins the whole, whose homogeneous nature is exemplified in its heterogeneity. Each individual is the homogeneous whole of its parts, and also becomes a part of the homogeneous, infinite space. Duration is the force that verifies one’s own existence both subjectively and objectively, and the matter with which duration engages can “create sensation out of a zero of consciousness, why should not consciousness in its turn create movement either out of a zero of kinetic and potential energy, or by making use of this energy in its own way?” (Bergson, *Time* 152). Thus it seems only logical to conclude that one’s conscious states in possible worlds can create substance through the potentiality of the mind’s energy, even if it is simply a manifestation in an actual-world behaviour. Furthermore, just as the infinite is the constant expansion of all existence, so too is the mind the expansion of the self, whose consciousness is consistently evolving. The mind is finite due to its corporeal limitations, but its epistemic potential to create new spaces of reality, new matter, and new energy is unquantifiable, and infinite so long as there are thinking, reasoning, self-reflecting beings.

The void within is the unifying force of opposites: possible and actual worlds should not be in juxtaposition as if each were its other, but should rather be in pure harmony with the collected durations of one mind-space, figuratively dancing gracefully in unison with all others. All relative entities or matter, all non-entities and invisible matter, possible, alternative, and actual worlds, all potentiality—the void unites *all*, because one’s consciousness is itself homogeneous in nature—it is the unified aggregate of many parts. By the end of the story, the void within Lawrence becomes more apparent as he faces the threat of returning to the actual world. In a panicked state, Lawrence records his fear of returning to the asylum of the actual space:

The pith of my thought is the silk girl, trampled in the late corn among the poppies, stuck in a framed oil-painting, out of date as mud, but instinct with pain . . . I run to where the old man is. I am in great agitation: “Look,” I say to him with the old gesture, “I throw my hand in. I am not understood here. Let me go . . . Send me back into the painting.” (18)

Agitated by his inability to live in the “equilibrium between two worlds” (18), Lawrence wishes to envelop himself wholly in the possible world, without using the void as an

objective buffer between actual and possible worlds. Yet in spite of Lawrence's rejection of the actual, all is not lost in this lesson. Lawrence is wholly unable to reject the actual world: his language, his syntax, physical sensations, desires, and knowledge are all products of his existence in the actual world. In fact, the actual world is *a priori* to the possible world, because even on the first instance of imaginary or alternate realities, the thinker has already existed in the actual world, which is evident by the fact that in order to conceive of an alternate reality, one must have first experienced the primary reality.

The void within is the site of synthesis: on entering a possible world, the mind departs from the actual-world obligations of the brain in the body in which it is housed, but upon returning to the body, and thus the actual world, the psychical and physical forces meet in the void. This void is where one deliberates on new data and integrates it into the actual; and in reverse, the void is where certain facets of actual-world knowledge or facts are woven into the atmospheric fiber of a possible world, Lawrence's syntax and glossary being one example. In spite of the oddities of Lawrence's thoughts, readers are still able to read and comprehend his language, a direct result of his *a priori* actual world. What is more, the value of relative data from actual and possible worlds is assessed in the void, a process recorded by duration. Frye's void encapsulates the infinite—the field of everything—and thus each thought, each action that Lawrence takes in these spaces is a part of the infinite space of existence within the void. Therefore, it is necessarily so that if the infinite is “in” the void, then the infinite is the void and its substance is plentiful. If the infinite is unbounded, then the void, too, is unbounded; and I would suggest that they are one and the same. The corporeal body, which necessarily implies that possible-world ontologies are an actual-world entity: they are the “quantum phenomena” described by Deacon, and since both worlds exist in duration, then the possible *can* become the actual when potentiality comes to fruition in the mind-space, thus beginning entelechial processes.

Apparent in Lawrence's preference for the possible world is that the void within is *always* at work, because each moment amidst the possible allows the opportunity for Lawrence to define further the state of being in which he exists in both actual and possible worlds concurrently. To reject or divide from the actual world in order to unite with the possible world is to assess and compare the data of both worlds, because in order

to compare, one must have the corresponding part with which to juxtapose. The void is the space where this juxtaposition occurs: it is within actual-world time, but it is the essence of pure duration—the uninterrupted flow of data and events—and the effortless movement of the mind between possible and actual allows one’s consciousness to consider both worlds that are one within the self. Of course, if one divides from the actual world, one’s physical existence is not terminated, so the fallout would likely be perceived as madness, but this is not the issue here.

“Be at peace,” the old man tells Lawrence, “You are there already, but have no compass, nothing magnetic” (18). Lawrence believes there is “no way forwards” in the actual world, and though he is ill-equipped in terms of a compass and maps of the oil-painting world, this is of no consequence. A compass is tangible matter from the actual world that shows the “correct” direction, and thus in the possible world it is arbitrary; he must forget and dismiss this contraption, because the possible world is the space where the right direction is intuitive, not prescriptive. And in discarding the shackles of the actual world, Lawrence continues to shape his mind-space in its epistemic evolution through the void, which represents both actual-world physical matter and possible-world psychical matter as a plethora of actualized potentiality in the form of experiential knowledge. Though his physical existence will pose a confusing case for those in his actual world, Lawrence weighs the merits of existing in the actual or possible world, and he chooses the path most suited to self-amelioration: to engage his potentiality, and sweep it into the motion of becoming, so as to capitalize on the satisfaction derived from the joy of new experiential data discovered in the depths of the mind. Lawrence’s great achievement, then, is that he detects the void of which substance is not present, and he creates the missing substance in his individuated duration, which flows between actual and possible worlds, thus contributing to the ever-evolving self that strives constantly for wholeness in the grand scheme of infinite space.

Chapter 3.

Une Belle Simplicité: La Potentialité Infinie de l’Esprit Libre dans Flaubert

“*Mathematics is a wonderful, mad subject, full of imagination, fantasy, and creativity that is not limited by the petty detail of the physical world, but only by the strength of our inner light.*” –Gregory Chaitin.²²

Gustave Flaubert’s genius is that he is able to convince readers that a character is *a* rather than *b*, and I would argue that this characterization acts as a veneer for a more dynamic and complex character, assuming the reader considers the deeply imbedded yet implicit issue of space and time relative to the specific character. Flaubert’s narratives, like *Madame Bovary* (1856) and *Bouvard et Pécuchet* (1881),²³ appear straightforward and linear, but in truth they are filled with the complexity of human emotion, outlandish behaviour or sheer stupidity, and the other inherent qualities one sees in others daily. Stated otherwise, Flaubert’s artistry makes the ordinary and quotidian appear exceptional and beautiful, if not sublime. Though “Un coeur simple” from Flaubert’s *Trois contes* (1877) seems to fit the prescriptive title, which implies the uncomplicated or linear narrative, and I argue that the so-called simplicity of the protagonist, Félicité, merits a more skeptical analysis.

In his discussion on Flaubert’s treatment of sainthood in *Trois contes*, Andrew Lytle argues that there is more substance to the adjective “simple” than meets the eye. Of Mme Aubain, Lytle writes that “she is not a bad woman. She is selfish. Into her life enters a simple heart, *but* a heart which is pure in love” (519; emphasis mine). Lytle undercuts his own argument when he negates the initial positive connotation of the simple heart with “but.” Instead of continuity, the “but” juxtaposes the simple heart with the heart pure in love; thus the implication that the heart pure in love, which is necessarily positive, is opposite the simple heart, which must then necessarily be of negative connotation. Lytle argues that between Mme Aubain and Félicité “the selfish ego and the loving heart, extreme opposites, are thus brought together and must have presented Flaubert the hardest demands on his skill” (519). Here Lytle underscores the “genius” I describe initially—that the characters, even the simple ones, are dynamic and complex—and they demand an analysis that is conceptually similar to peeling back layers

²² *Less Proof, More Truth* (2007); qtd. in *The Math Book: From Pythagoras to the 57th Dimension, 250 Milestones in the History of Mathematics*, Clifford A. Pickover.

²³ Published posthumously.

of an onion, with each new layer being unique and individuated. Arguably, Lytle's most relevant contribution in his analysis of Félicité is in raising awareness for the quandary faced by Flaubert: "The question must have been—how could any human being in the hard-bitten materialism of the day have remained untouched by it?" (519). Lytle's question is particularly relevant to my argument concerning possible worlds and the voids or deficits they fill, so let us return to this momentarily to elaborate further on an issue that speaks so truly to the dynamic of Félicité's "simple" heart.

Frederic J. Shepler, who discusses the *Trois contes* concerning the presence or absence of God between the three tales as a whole, argues in favour of Félicité's simplicity, and the absence of agency and intentionality to choose the path by which her life travels. Shepler argues that:

L'amour trouve son symbole finalement dans Loulou, le perroquet. Félicité finit même par la confondre avec Dieu. En cherchant à comprendre les doctrines de l'église elle découvre que le Saint-Esprit a 'quelque chose du perroquet.' Elle prie à genoux parfois devant l'oiseau empaillé. Alors que l'atmosphère d'*Hérodias* [le deuxième conte] est remplie d'espoir divin, que les événements de *La légende* [le troisième conte] révèlent la main de Dieu, Dieu est mourant dans *Un cœur simple*. La seule force extraordinaire semble être l'amour, qui est finalement sans grande influence et légèrement ridicule. (414)

Shepler's analysis approaches the sheer mockery of a dynamic character, which problematizes the quality of what should be an objective and detached literary analysis. Félicité learns the doctrines of the church but confuses the Holy Spirit with a parrot; Saint Julian sees the hand of God revealed, but Félicité's belief in God is empty, because he is dying; and what is more, a heart full of love, as Lytle describes Félicité, is very much present throughout the story, yet slightly ridiculous: in her stupidity (*bêtises*) she becomes a stupid object (*la bêtise*). Shepler's analysis of Félicité can be formulated as a series of subjective deductions, which are superficial and indicative of a reader who accepts the veneer of simplicity presented to readers via Félicité. *À faire la bêtise* or *à dire la bêtise* is, according to Shepler, the deductive conclusion that *elle est la bêtise*; said otherwise, Félicité does stupid things and says stupid things, and is therefore herself the product of her own stupidity: she is the reflexive object who commits acts of stupidity upon herself, only to make herself more of a fool each time she inflicts stupidity on *herself*. This analysis is *en pointe* if we are to accept Félicité for the simple or stupid

object who lacks the agency to choose how to live a life which is one of passionate concern for all whom she loves. I want to take a closer look at Félicité, described as “simple” by Flaubert, upon which Lytle comments that “simple is an adjective to a noun which is mysterious. He [Flaubert] does this by naming her Felicity” (520). To be felicitous is to be fitting, true, good, and pleasing; and “felicity” also carries similar positive connotations, such as “simple joy” and a “cause of happiness.” What is thus mysterious is whether “simple” is positive or negative, and on this there is much to consider, and I will revisit this point shortly.

The name “Félicité” seems to anticipate the Speech Act Theory of J.L. Austin, who discusses felicitous and infelicitous acts.²⁴ Austin explains that felicitous speech acts speak to the parallelism between what is said and the ensuing result based on the felicity conditions; whereas infelicitous speech acts encompass an act lacking in cohesiveness between what was uttered and what occurred. Both felicitous and infelicitous speech acts hold a positive correlation with their basic definition as words in the structure of the sentence—where felicitous is “fitting” and infelicitous is “unsuitable.” If we were to consider Flaubert’s construction of Félicité’s character through the terms “felicitous” and “infelicitous,” both derived from “felicity,” it seems that Austin’s theory of felicity conditions, specifically the conditions of a request, are a perfect example of Flaubert’s authorial presence in-text: he is suggesting that readers inquire into the verity of the label “simple.”

What is more, a closer analysis of the Flaubert’s Félicité as presented in the French source text requires an even deeper inquiry into what “Félicité” or “felicity” means in the context of the short story. In the translation from French into English the term “felicitous” used to characterize Félicité means “happy” (*heureux*) and “fortunate,” also defined as “heureux” (*Collins French*). Thus we see that in spite of the fact that the English equivalent of “felicity” is “fitting,” which appears to bear no etymological ties to the French equivalent of happiness, that Flaubertian critics cannot justly define Félicité as simple, “driven as if by clockwork,” because her *happiness* (*bonheur*) is in fact *fitting* to her situation. Throughout the narrative, Félicité crafts a world within her mind, one whose existence ensures her happiness, and thus her persistent happiness in the face of

²⁴ *How to Do Things with Words*.

hardship *is fitting*; Félicité has reframed a life of poverty and servitude with the power of a self-created possible world, and this most certainly is far from simple.

Moreover, the narrative voice underscores Félicité's clocklike quotidian life, but I would argue that the initial assumption that an unwavering routine is superficial. *Faire une bêtise* need not apply to Félicité; she is not a "stupid thing"; however, the question of whether Félicité behaves as a stupid thing or speaks like a stupid thing (*Dire une bêtise*) is a riddle—one that can arguably be settled via the true Flaubertian *bêtise*: *La dictionnaire des idées reçues*.²⁵ Félicité's devotion to Madame Aubain presents a woman who adores her mistress, almost as if Félicité is the blindly faithful dog-like companion of a woman whose garbage is Félicité's treasure. "If there was anything that Madame Aubain wanted to get rid of, she would find a place for it in her room" (34),²⁶ and shortly to follow the sudden death of her Mistress, Félicité found that she, too, had pneumonia (37). What is more, Félicité answered: "Ah! Comme Madame,' trouvant naturel de suivre sa maîtresse"; "Ah! Like Madame,' finding it quite natural that she should follow in her mistress's footsteps" (32; 37). Such avid devotion is often viewed as childlike or self-derogating, but the critics to whom I refer to above are *modern* critics who impose contemporary values upon a servant, whose devotion would have been prized and celebrated in the late nineteenth century. In *La dictionnaire*, Flaubert notes that devotion is something that humans "Complain of the lack of it in others. 'We are quite inferior to dogs, in this regard'" (26). And later, Flaubert claims that a dog is "Specially created to save the lie of its master. A dog is a man's best friend" (29), which necessarily implies that the human being void of devotion is inferior to his own dog, yet *this dog* still saves its inferior master as an act of *devotion*; therefore, the dog—or, in this case, the devotedness of Félicité—is always superior to its master or mistress so long as its loyal devotion rules its daily actions.

Such a comparison between two of Flaubert's mature works is humorous, but more importantly, the juxtaposition adds a new layer that should justly become part of the hermeneutics of definition and self-definition. What is more, as Félicité lies upon her deathbed with the parrot hovering above, we find in the act of juxtaposition Flaubert's

²⁵ Published posthumously in 1913.

²⁶ There is no corresponding translation of this sentence. Félicité is described as collecting the possessions of the family in general as her own treasures, but this specific English translation elaborates on the French source text.

love for birds: “Wish to be one, and say with a sigh: ‘Wings! Wings!’ Sign of a poetic soul” (11). The Flaubertian definition of a bird suggests that the bird, and thus the parrot as a sub-category, is a creature one should envy, and this envy speaks to the verity of the soul of a true poet. This labyrinth of definitions leads us, finally, to a common ground concerning the English definition “felicitous” compared to its French equivalent “heureux,” which bestows upon Flaubert’s simple maid the beauty of having everything she needs to be happy (*elle a toute pour être heureuse*). In a direct translation of her very *nom propre*, “Félicité” is the equivalent to the English word “bliss,” which, when described in English, is “perfect happiness” or “serene joy” (*Collins French*). Thus it appears that if a reader wishes to devote him or herself to the reaching the centre of Flaubert’s labyrinth, then the ultimate conclusion concerning this simple soul is anything but simplistic.

Lytle points out that Félicité’s unyielding love for the children is: “[t]he submersion of the self into another, unconsciously, it is the selflessness of love. So stimulated, ‘her simple heart’ quickened in the imagination rich and unblemished” (522). Just as Félicité tries to understand the world through the eyes of those she loves, let us move to and fro between the roles of objective reader and the submersed reader, who wishes to understand Félicité for her true nature. As readers, we may be tempted to compare Félicité’s understanding of reality and the actual world with what we determine is in fact the actual world based on the omniscient narrator’s description; but I think it would be far more profitable to see Félicité as she sees herself; or rather, it would benefit our inquiry to live vicariously through Félicité and the eyes through which she perceives the events of the world, thus internalizing it and making it *her own*, which consequently becomes the source of the reader’s knowledge.

I have discussed the oil-painting-like possible world of Lawrence in “Zero,” and I argue that there is a void—a space in the continuum of internal duration that hosts the mind’s motion between possible and actual world (and *vice versa*), and in this shift, or

movement from sub-Euclidean point to sub-Euclidean point,^{27 28} the mind is actively deliberating, sorting, and integrating new information between two spaces. Leibniz argues that motion, which I apply to the transition between possible and actual spaces, is: “The transition from place to place, and therefore is in both places at once, since it cannot be in neither, i.e. nowhere” (qtd. in Arthur *xli*)²⁹. The continuum of external, or universal, duration is the totality of all durations of all individuals, and this totality includes all possible-world realities from past and present. Leibniz’s continuum³⁰ has no fixed beginning or end, and it is the seventeenth-century version of what Bergson develops into the concept of pure duration. Bergson explains further that individuals have both internal and external durations:

The intuition we refer to then bears above all upon internal duration. It grasps a succession which is not juxtaposition, a growth from within, the uninterrupted prolongation of the past into the present which is already blending into the future. It is the direction vision of the mind by the mind. (*Creative 20*)

I argue that possible worlds constitute internal durations which unite with external duration by way of the actor—the conscious being in universal space, who is a building block of the homogeneous continuum, which is external duration. The harmonious flow of data between possible and actual worlds, and *vice versa*, is a dialogue between an extended self (*i.e.* the individual’s connection to the actual world of universal space), and the subjective self (*i.e.* the self-identified “I” that constitutes an internal duration). This

²⁷ Euclidean points are used in mathematics, as well as logic. Used in relation to metaphysics, (which we see shares boundaries with physics and necessarily mathematics), these points are unique and individuated points in space, which are without dimension, (no length, width, height). In terms of Leibniz’s continuum, these are considered infinitesimals that are parts of what was once whole in the universe (*i.e.* everything is of *one*, which in the seventeenth century, one was equivalent to God, the first mover), and though each point is “of one,” it is unique and allows for the continuation of the motion that Bergson recognizes as the nature of pure duration. See Richard T. W. Arthur, *The Yale Leibniz: The Labyrinth of the Continuum: Writings on the Continuum Problem, 1672-1686*, (xxiii-xliii).

²⁸ I have explained Euclidean points in terms of the one homogeneous continuum of universal space—the space in which all matter inhabits; but within this space, I describe micro continuums as the internal duration of an individual, that is, one’s movement between states of consciousness in various possible worlds and the actual world. Therefore, this micro continuum is within the mind of the individual, who also registers in the totality of all durations, the continuum described by Leibniz. Thus, what I call a “sub-Euclidean point” is meant to describe the points in consciousness of one individual and the corresponding internal duration, which Leibniz would describe as “worlds within worlds”; that is, infinitesimals on Leibniz’s continuum divide infinitely *to and towards* infinity, and the processes continues *ad infinitum*.

²⁹ Leibniz, *On the Cohesiveness of Bodies*, (1672-73). Much akin to Schrödinger’s cat experiment (1935).

³⁰ The continuum of infinitesimals was a hot debate in the early modern period and through the Scientific Revolution, only to be dropped in the nineteenth century, and later picked up in the twentieth century. There were various mathematicians who either supported or rejected infinitesimals, some of whom rejected this theory due to the belief that it contradicted God’s power, though this mentality was later subdued, so as to satisfy in part both Protestants and Catholics (although not much of a success). Other major contributors include Hobbes, Descartes, and Galileo, to name a few. I refer to the continuum as being of Leibniz simply to reduce redundancy or confusion.

“I” is the perceived, the self-identified autonomous being, whose brain and body are of and in the world, but whose mind—though influenced by external sensations—exists relative to nothing; it is the free-thinking and imaginative faculty that considers not “what is,” but rather “what if...?” Of course, one cannot deny that the mind engages with the external world, but it is not pre-destined nor is it at each moment determined by this world; in fact, I would argue that as a response to the actual world’s inability to complete the self, the mind takes charge of crafting a reality which fills a deficit of the particular substance the mind believes it lacks as a complete continuum of internal duration. It is the faculty of perception, enabled by the brain of the body in the actual world, but drawn to action by the consciousness of the mind-space that navigates both the possible and actual worlds.

To perceive is a dual-act of noting the presence of something and consecutively sorting this data via the judgment of its nature or purpose. This judgment chooses either to store the data pertinent to one’s existence, or to jettison the experiential data of the actual world, so as to remove all of which interrupts the harmony of one’s own duration. Leibniz scholar Richard T.W. Arthur discusses Leibniz’s continuum, noting that “the principle of cohesion is harmonizing motion (*motus conspirans*) . . . [e]ven in particular disturbances there is a general harmony (*conspiratio*) in certain laws of the system of the universe” (*xliv*). The perceptiveness which necessitates the harmony between internal and external durations—or possible and actual worlds—acts to order experiential data of the actual world, which exists in *x*-fashioned reality to supplement the internal duration with new data for the possible world. Thus we can see that which logically follows perception: potentiality—a harmonious “dialogue” between internal and external durations. Flaubert scholars have described Félicité as having a limited scope through which she understands the world, which articulates her seeming naivety and lack of education; and her faith in God is deemed unsubstantiated and ridiculous, because she does not understand the formal doctrines of the church. Superficially, this seems rather accurate given that Félicité confuses the parrot with the Holy Ghost, but I want to endeavour to explore the superficial narrative implications and overcome them, so as to see the world, in part, through Félicité’s eyes while maintaining a more detached

objectivity that permits a clear understanding of the cohesiveness I argue exists between Félicité's possible and actual worlds.

I posit that Leibniz's continuum of universal space, which Bergson calls duration, has subset realities, (*i.e.* sub-Euclidean points), that exist concurrently within the motion that sweeps from point to point, or from conscious individual to conscious individual. If we consider each point of the continuum as a "whole" being—that is, one who exists as a conscious being with internally and externally directed psychical processes, as a unit in itself, but also a unit of another whole—then this necessarily implies that each being composed of many parts and various durations has subset durations, or micro-spaces of possible-world realities as their individual composition.³¹ Thus we have universal or external space, which is the continuum, or the homogeneous duration of constant energy due to unending motion, composed of an uncountable amount of points, or beings in consciousness; and likewise, each point is constructed in a similar fashion, with each being in consciousness as a whole composed of subset, or internal durations.³² Furthermore, this continuum as described by Leibniz is infinite; there is no marked beginning or end, and it is this universal space (*i.e.* the shared external duration) illuminated by individuals in consciousness, who compose the continuum, which allows motion and energy, and which validates the existence of non-tangible spaces, like the mind. Therefore, if the continuum is infinite, then the mind is not assigned the same finitude of the corporeal body; so, while each individual is finite in terms of the volume of ideas or realities actualized in the process of entelechy in actual-world existence, (*i.e.* naissance to death), the mind is not limited in what it can think or imagine; the mind is infinite in potentiality to do or think *x*.³³

³¹ When I say "subset durations" or "micro-spaces," these are variants of sub-Euclidean points, and I do this to keep closer to Bergsonian metaphysics.

³² Leibniz would argue that there are no wholes possible in the continuum, because infinitesimals are only fractions. For the purpose of this argument, I suggest we consider each life (each Euclidean point) as original, and as having micro-worlds, which together create the composite point. This composite point is an infinitesimal with the potentiality for infinitely many parts, so it is a point of beginning from whole into parts of one part of infinitely many wholes.

³³ One might argue that there is no empirical data to prove this infinite potentiality, but it is crucial to note that physicists cannot see the end of the universe, and thus know not its genesis or its ontology. Rather, infinite space is accepted as infinite, because it is beyond the scope of scientists in terms of how we might classify the infinite. Therefore, we face a situation that in our ignorance, we assume space is infinite, and we base this conclusion on the best empirical data that would support this supposition, although it is not verifiable, and thus not certain. Infinite potentiality cannot be measured or quantified, and in its non-tangible state, one cannot accurately gauge its existence or potential, because there is no empirical data to validate or negate this argument.

Infinite potentiality is present within all conscious individuals, but whether or not this potentiality is uncovered and exercised depends entirely on the thinker. When this potentiality is immanent yet hidden, this is often a case of divisiveness in the thinker. In other words, it is one's understanding of the world according to "what should and should not be," rather than "what could be." Such divisions are institutionally imposed on individuals, and the mind operates in systems of binary thought without necessarily being conscious of such a damaging approach to the nature of the world and its beings. Geoffrey Wall, who introduced an English translation of *Trois contes*, writes explicitly in his commentary that "the protagonists all go mad" and that "each tale draws us towards the dark and fearful places of the mind" (xiv), and this is precisely the binary system of thinking to which I refer. Wall assumes madness plagues the end-days of Félicité's life, and he goes so far as to say that the three tales (*Trois contes*) take readers to an internal place—the mind—and its frightening maze of unrecognizable data that spurs a negative response in the mind, which would imply that the "I" faces the source of its madness in these "dark places."³⁴ Such a comment seems more indicative of Wall's personal meditations on the text, and his evidently closed subjectivity weakens the persuasiveness necessary to capture the attention of a larger readership. Just as all human beings bring into the text their own understanding of the self in the world, Wall seems inadvertently to ascribe his own understanding of madness to each protagonist. That Wall describes madness as each protagonist's demise is indicative only of his understanding of madness, and it is a binary understanding which juxtaposes "what is" in terms of the reader's perception of the textual affairs, and "what should be," which exemplifies the actual-world situation of the reader's mind, which in its subjectivity is applied to the world of the narrative as if it were empirical and verifiable truth. Critical to this debate on the subjective universal claims of narrative fiction, specifically interpretations of Flaubert's Félicité, Wall explains that Flaubert's own fear of madness explains his "persistent interest in other worlds of experience" (xvii), a precise and valid conclusion on states of being, such as madness. If we were to consider, for the sake of constructing a clear pattern of reason, that madness is in many ways a social construct, we might conclude that madness does not exist; but then this would refute serious and valid cases of mental

³⁴ Wall refers to all three tales and their protagonists: Félicité, Hérodiade, and Saint Julien.

illness. At the same time, however, if we were to consider that madness in many cases becomes an anomaly as it manifests differently in each human being, then this would validate the need to reconsider madness and its function. Said otherwise, mental illness is a verifiable truth, but it is a truth so large and with so many facets that no amount of research can account for x -assigned diagnosis combined with a given personality.³⁵

Michel Foucault explains that:

Madness and non-madness, reason and non-reason are inextricably involved: inseparable at the moment when they do not yet exist, and existing for each other, in relation to each other, in the exchange which separates them. (x)

Each individual displays manifestations of the illness differently, therefore deviating from the diagnostic manual. Here, I suggest that madness in its vast significations is often expected to fit into a mold of “what should be,” and all that fails to fit in this organizational heuristic is upsetting to objective bystanders. Foucault continues to argue that:

As for a common language, there is no such thing; or rather, there is no such thing any longer; the constitution of madness as a mental illness, at the end of the eighteenth century, affords the evidence of a broken dialogue, posits the separation as already effected, and thrusts into oblivion all those stammered, imperfect words without fixed syntax in which the exchange between madness and reason were made. (x)

As a result of the opposing discourses of “what should be” and “what is,” the individual like Félicité, is ruled out as one in the mode of being which constitutes the “normative” according to the institutional expectations inserted both into the actual world, and the fictional world of literary texts. I would argue that to focus on “what is” relative to Félicité’s perceived state of mind is a challenge worth accepting, because to see through the eyes of a fictional character—or even a being in the actual world—is a new world in itself, full of new possibilities. Relativity ensures infinitely many possibilities to do x in the world. For Félicité, “what is” is leagues apart from the “what should be” brought into

³⁵ This issue of linguistic accuracy relative to the medical phenomenon is a problem derived from the fact the all linguistic systems are manmade, and that these systems use symbols to communicate an observed phenomenon, but cannot accurately speak to the nature or essence of the direct object of interest. As such, language-users try to convey the most accurate comprehensive data via language, but then with each added detail in the attempt to clarify the issue, the issue at hand deviates from a standard definition. Standard definitions of mental illness are too broad, yet specific definitions are too exclusive; thus we are left to observe mental phenomena with which we are ill-equipped to understand. This inability to understand wholly the nature of the phenomenon can lead observers to create binaries of normal-abnormal, thus painting numerous variants of individuated illnesses with one broad stroke. This is to say, when perceived mental illness is an enigma, how can we define someone as “mad,” or in contemporary terms, “mentally ill”?

the text by readers, who accept that deviance from “what should be” according to customary standards is madness, or other exclusive terms that create unnecessary binaries.

Félicité’s self—the autonomous “I”—is that which experiences her variant of “what is,” better labelled “the subjective self”; and if we are to understand the world through Félicité’s eyes, then we must abandon the mentality of “what should be,” and remove ourselves temporarily from our personal understanding of the narrative’s “what is,” so as to adopt Félicité’s version of reality. At the same time, as critical thinkers we would find it most profitable to maintain a dualistic approach to the narrative, which includes necessarily Félicité’s “what is,” while concurrently being conscious of “what could be.” This “what could be” is the infinite potentiality which I have addressed earlier, and to embark on an inquiry into Félicité’s “what is” we must overcome the institutionally imposed binaries of mad-sane, real-imaginary, and most importantly, *possible-actual*. What becomes apparent in relaxing such boundaries is that Félicité has a cohesive continuum, or duration of self, between possible and actual worlds; she can move between these worlds with the ease of one who is bilingual, and who code switches with such a seamless transition that it is unnoticeable to listeners—and to readers—which I argue is the case for readers of the Flaubertian approach to alternative worlds enabled by the “play of energy” between “body and soul” (Wall xv).³⁶ Therefore, my analysis isolates binary systems throughout the narrative that also appear seamless in that two implicitly divisive terms go hand-in-hand, as if they were a dualism.³⁷

The narrative begins with a lengthy description of Félicité, Mme Aubain, and the house in which they dwell. But an important detail to note is the syntax: Félicité is not a servant or a housemaid; she is “Madame Aubain’s housemaid” and the “envy of all the *good* ladies of Pont-l’Évêque” (Flaubert 3; emphasis mine). Readers are introduced to Félicité as a possessed noun, and all that readers learn in this initial description is that the “good” ladies of Pont-l’Évêque envy her. First, we see the divisiveness of the word “good”: only the good—a subtle cue which implies the wealthy women, and not those of

³⁶ From Gustave Flaubert’s *Correspondence*, volume 1, ed. J. Bruneau, (1973).

³⁷ For the sake of argument, one might say that dualisms require their opposite to ensure their own existence; but the point I wish to convey is that the seamless dualism has two cohesive parts that forge one homogeneous whole. This whole dualism concept is pertinent to our discussion, because it will allow us to isolate terms that are either dualistic in nature or truly divisive.

Félicité's station; therefore, we have already established that Félicité is possessed, which erects the binary of owner-object or superior-inferior. We also see that there are good ladies and implicitly we learn there are "bad" ladies, those of unfortunate circumstances, which is the case for Félicité, herself. What is more, these good ladies who "envy" Félicité do not envy Félicité-the-servant, whose daily tasks they themselves would not like to do, but rather they envy the domestic results achieved by Félicité and enjoyed by Mme Aubain. Félicité is the humanized grammatical subject acting upon nouns—the objects that compose the duties of her life. She cleans the *kitchen*, she ensures a spotless *house*; and of course, Félicité acts upon *herself*—the unfortunate, thrifty help: "Économe, elle mangeait avec lenteur, et recueillait du doigt sur la table les miettes de son pain,— un pain de douze livres, cuit exprès pour elle, et qui durait vingt jours"; 'wasted nothing . . . gathering every crumb of her loaf from the table with her fingers, a twelve-pound loaf baked especially for her and which lasted her twenty days' (21; 4). It appears, at least by modern standards, and assumedly by contemporaneous standards, that Félicité is not envied by the "good women," nor is she envied by those of her so-called station either. Félicité was "so well liked by her employers, her friends were jealous of her" (5), but which friends are these? Aside from Théodore, the unfaithful lover bound loosely to Félicité in an ephemeral relationship, and who values money over love in his choice to elope with a "good" lady of fortune (7), Félicité has no friends, not one; neither the financially fortunate nor the impoverished maids and servicemen take interest in Félicité for what she offers as an autonomous, self-possessed being.

Félicité is the woman who cares for all who enter her life, and it is because of her constant role as the "helper" or "caretaker" of the wellbeing of others that she is isolated; she is not one to whom one would wish to draw close, or to engage in lively conversation. Félicité is the faithful servant whom no one cares much to acknowledge, yet who is praised in her own absence for her prudence. Félicité is a fixture that is imperative to daily life, yet one that must remain out of sight, anonymous, seemingly non-existent. Each Monday two farmers, one "a tall man with a hooked nose" and the other "short, fat and red in the face" (8), would adorn Félicité with, "Tous deux offraient à leur propriétaire des poules ou des fromages. Félicité invariablement déjouait leurs astuces; et ils s'en allaient pleins de considération pour elle"; 'chickens or cheeses which

they hoped they might persuade their landlady to buy. But Félicité was more than a match for their banter and they always respected her for this' (28; 9). Respected she was for her prudence and her steadfastness, and these male farmers revere her for executing to a tee her role as housemaid, whose faithfulness to "Madame" manifests in her rejection of unnecessary goods that her mistress truly cannot afford. Furthermore, readers are presented two *farmers* of the working lower class, who are described by terms otherwise offensive to any human being with personal dignity; and like Félicité, they are all fixtures whose existences are desired not for their essence, but for their trace—to complete the chore with the desired result present and the cause of this result absent. Though these men were not Félicité's friends, they could see in this woman the unbridled kindness of which they would not take advantage. In a similar situation, Félicité is reunited with her sister, separated in childhood, and readers see that, "Félicité se prit d'affection pour eux. Elle leur acheta une couverture, des chemises, un fourneau; évidemment ils l'exploitaient"; 'Félicité became very attached to them. She bought them a blanket, some shirts and a cooking stove. They were obviously out to take advantage of her. Madame Aubain was annoyed that Félicité was not more firm with them' (37; 14). Mme Aubain appears to care for Félicité to a degree, but it seems more likely that she is disappointed that Félicité falls into the traps of false pretense of her opportunistic sister. Though to follow, "Cette faiblesse agaçait Mme Aubain, qui d'ailleurs n'aimait pas les familiarités du neveu,—car il tutoyait son fils"; '[Mme Aubain] also took objection to the familiar way in which the nephew spoke to Paul' (14). Readers are left to wonder whether Mme Aubain cares, on some level, for Félicité as a human being, or if she is just disappointed that Félicité, who seems to operate so methodically "as if by clockwork," could fall prey to her own humanity (5). I make the distinction between Mme Aubain's attitude in these contrasting situations, because the sentence immediately to follow the description of Félicité's sister is Mme Aubain's objection that Félicité's nephew does not address her own son appropriately, thus underscoring the social hierarchy present even in the discourses of children. Félicité is individuated from her sister only because she is the possession of Mme Aubain, and this class distinction reinforces the social hierarchy, reminding readers that in spite of Félicité's love for the children and for "Madame," she is still the housemaid, not the friend, and not family.

Félicité faces numerous binary social situations throughout her life—she is a niece, yet a farm worker; she loves, but is separated from the object of her love by the hubris attached to monetary gain; and she is afforded the utmost respect by Mme Aubain and others throughout Pont-l'Évêque, yet is not their equal. Félicité plays the role of “servant” rather than “equal,” but even when she serves her mistress and the children in excessive faithfulness—like when she saves the mistress and her children from the bull—she can only be acted upon as an object of the will of others; the villagers adore Félicité’s courage while facing the bull, yet still she is an object, not an actor (31, 10). Nonetheless, Félicité is either unaware of her so-called otherness, or she ignores such divisions, so as to derive joy in the most trivial of events—the simple joys. The joy that Félicité derives from the simple moments of servitude are more endearing when the omniscient narrator describes events according to Félicité’s emotional response. These events are intrinsically human, and there appears to be hope that Félicité might finally enjoy a reciprocal relationship, one of love both given and received—the maid whose loving kindness is received and responded to in equal fortitude. But when readers are privy to Mme Aubain’s feelings, the tone of the narrative becomes almost harsh, or at the very least condescending; one example is Mme Aubain’s dismissal of Félicité’s long lost sister, who, after “a quarter of an hour,” is dismissed by Félicité’s *proprietor* (14). Thus we find another binary erected in the narrative—one that is central to our understanding of Félicité’s world through her own eyes, and one that is pertinent to the revelation we seek as readers, the revelation that regardless of actual-world circumstances, possible-world realities offer a plethora of gleeful enthusiasm for actual-world existence, derived from the kindness bestowed on the self by the self in the possible world.

Though one’s devotion to God is hierarchical, and individual submission of the self to God is a choice one is wholly free to make, for Félicité this choice becomes not a separation from the Almighty *from* Félicité, but rather, via the Holy Ghost, a unification of the Almighty and the servant, the Creator and the created. When Félicité is assigned the duty of taking Virginie to catechism, a new knowledge develops within Félicité’s simple heart:

Puis, elle pleura en écoutant la Passion. Pourquoi l’auraient-ils crucifié, lui qui chérissait les enfants, nourrissait les foules, guérissait les aveugles, et

avait voulu, par douceur, naître au milieu des pauvres, sur le fumier d'une étable ? (40)

The dazzling recital of events instilled in her a wholesome respect for the Almighty and a profound fear of his wrath. She wept at the story of Christ's passion. Why had they crucified a man who was so kind to children, fed the hungry, gave sight to the blind, and who had chosen, out of his own gentle nature, to be born amongst the poor on the rough straw of a stable? (15)

The narrator's description of how Félicité perceives the Almighty in His splendor and kindness is much akin to Félicité's own actions in daily life; she is a servant to those in need, just as Christ serves the people of God; and what is more, Félicité leads people along the path of righteousness by modeling what it means to love God. Félicité feeds the children; Félicité feeds the soldiers passing through town; and she devotes her spare time to the care of Comiche, an elderly man in a dismal state of health, who was rumoured to have committed "terrible atrocities" in *la Terreur* led by Robespierre at the height of the French Revolution in 1793 (28). Still Félicité refrains from judgment, and her selflessness mirrors the biblical parable of the good Samaritan in the New Testament Gospel of Luke.³⁸ Through the passage of time, "La bonté de son coeur se développa . . . Elle soigna des cholériques"; 'Félicité's natural kind-heartedness increased' (58; 28), and she "helped to nurse cholera victims and to look after the refugees from Poland" (28). Truly, Félicité is impartial when it comes to giving unconditional love. While she comes to the aid of Polish refugees, she also nurses Comiche, whose violations against God's people did not exclude him from Félicité's care. "Les gamins le regardaient par les fentes du mur, et lui jetaient des cailloux qui tombaient sur son grabat, où il gisait"; 'The boys in the town used to spy on [Comiche] through the cracks in the wall and throw stones at him as he lay coughing and choking on his straw bed' (58-9; 28), and though many would find this ill-treatment the consequence of his own heinous crimes, Félicité tends to his needs as if his atrocities had never come to pass.

Félicité's growing kindness is a result of her growing love for God, and with this reciprocal love, Félicité infuses others with the same kindness that puts her in a state of "rapture" while sitting in church (15). Concerning the foundation of a new knowledge—which for Félicité is the knowledge that she is loved by the Almighty—Bergson explains

³⁸ Luke 10:27: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

that “No matter how abstract a conception may be it always has its starting point in a perception . . . It must have a matter, and this matter can only reach [the conception] through the senses or the consciousness” (*Creative* 110). Félicité does not appear to recognize the source of her constant joy and unyielding kindness, because the love that flourishes in her heart is kindled by the abstract concept of God. Readers of the Bible can come to a worldly and finite understanding of God’s nature, but Félicité cannot read; but it is not the mechanistic dogma of the church that is at the core of one’s faith, rather it is one’s will to accept life as a gift from God. Félicité identifies with Christ in many ways, and we find that “Les semailles, les moissons, les pressoirs, toutes ces choses familières dont parle l’Évangile, se trouvaient dans sa vie”; ‘Seed-time and harvest, the fruits of the vine, all those familiar things mentioned in the gospels had their place in her life too’ (40; 15). With God as the giver of life, and Christ as the Saviour of God’s people, the third part of the Trinity—that of the Holy Spirit—becomes central to Félicité’s abstract knowledge of the Divine. Félicité “Elle avait peine à imaginer sa personne; car il n’était pas seulement oiseau, mais encore un feu, et d’autres fois un soufflé”; ‘found it difficult to imagine what the Holy Spirit actually looked like because he was not only a bird but sometimes a fire and sometimes a breath’ (40; 15), but this is precisely the knowledge of the senses—of intuition—that Bergson describes. Félicité’s faith is grounded in ceaseless devotion to God; that she cannot read the Scripture, or understand the “religious observances,” such as fasting and confession, is of no importance when it concerns the purity of her heart (15). In fact, I would argue that it is her *simple heart* that sanctifies her soul in preparation for the union with God in Heaven. Félicité need not concern herself with the monotonous actions so often repeated in mass, which can be habitual and mechanistic, rather than conscious acts of humility and awe for the greatness of God. As a result, Félicité’s simplicity allows her to *act* on her faith; finally, Félicité is the *actor*, rather than the object, and in her declaration of faith where she, “aima plus tendrement les agneaux par amour de l’Agneau, les Colombes à cause du Saint-Esprit”; ‘loved lambs all the more because of her love for the Lamb of God’ (40; 15), simplicity is the gift that allows her to give of herself continually.

When Virginie leaves her mother to attend a boarding school for girls, Mme Aubain becomes distraught when, for four days, she has not received word from her

daughter. But Félicité, too, bears this burden of helpless concern and anxiety, because her nephew Victor has not sent word from the Americas, which is uncharacteristic of him.

Félicité:

le voyait battu par cette même tempête, au sommet d'un mât francassé, tout le corps en arrière, sous une nappe d'écume ; ou bien,—souvenirs de la géographie en estampes,—il était mangé par les sauvages, pris dans un bois par des signes, se mourait le long d'une plage déserte. Et jamais elle ne parlait de ses inquiétudes. (47)

pictured [Victor] buffeted by [a] storm, clinging to the top of a broken mast and being flung backwards into a sheet of foam . . . she imagined him being eaten by savages, captured by monkeys in a forest or dying on some deserted beach. But she never spoke about these worries to anyone. (20)

Mme Aubain, however, does not reserve her feelings and anxieties for the internal space of her mind; instead, when Félicité, in an attempt to console her mistress, explains that she has not heard from Victor for six months, Mme Aubain shrugs her shoulders as if she “Je n’y pensais plus!”; “hadn’t given him a thought!” (48; 20). In the eyes of Mme Aubain, Victor is “‘Au surplus, je m’en moque! Un mousse, un gueux, belle affaire! . . . tandis que ma fille . . . songez donc!’”; ‘A mere ship’s boy, a scrounger; he’s not worth bothering about’ (48; 20), and though Félicité considered this attitude a travesty, she “soon got over it” (20). But now, after Paul and Virginie reside abroad, and word arrives that Victor has died of the fever, this binary of mistress-servant becomes more defined. When the “Negro” servant of the mistress next door presents Mme Aubain with a parrot, a new spark of life ignites Félicité’s soul (29). The parrot, Loulou, “occupait depuis longtemps l’imagination de Félicité, car il venait d’Amérique; et ce mot lui rappelait Victor”; ‘had been a constant source of wonder to Félicité for a long time, for it came from America, a word which always reminder her of Victor’ (59-60; 28-9). A parrot passed from one mistress—the neighbour—to her servant, and to another mistress—Mme Aubain—by this servant, only to be bestowed quickly upon Félicité in her devoted servitude. Loulou soon consumes Félicité’s consciousness—he is the pinnacle of her internal dialogue, which Bergson explains well:

As we are not accustomed to observe ourselves directly, but perceive ourselves through the forms borrowed from the external world, we are led to believe that real duration, the duration lived by consciousness, is the same as the duration which glides over the inert atoms without penetrating and altering them. (*Time* 154)

Félicité sees in Loulou a version of herself, although readers are not privy to whether or not she makes such a connection; and we see later the relation between Félicité and Christ, so to affiliate the parrot with the Holy Ghost of a tripartite God seems nearly appropriate, and though it remains nonsensical, readers can see the epistemic evolution of psychical association and projection. Never will Loulou be absent from her mind; in life just as in death, Loulou becomes the symbol of the epistemic evolution that occurs within the internal duration of Félicité's mind: it becomes part of her identity; it furnishes a mind of internal, personal durations.

The mind and the soul—two non-tangible entities observable through one's external actions and reactions alone—are not only internal to the individual, but intrinsic and self-aware. Though the individual is self-aware of his or her internal workings, this does not necessarily imply that this self-awareness is cohesive with the objective-external actual world. One who is harmed by the world, attacked and stripped of individual identity, responds to these provocations, and whether in the spirit of positivity or negativity, the potential for a new internal duration—as possible world within the mind—makes itself apparent to the individual in question. Bergson explains that “invention gives being to what did not exist” (*Creative* 37), and we thus see that the internal act of creation flourishes within the human mind. This mind—a space of unlimited potentiality to do x —limited only by itself, comes to fruition with each possible world; and as a result, one being can have numerous possible worlds, all of which are infinite in potentiality. If we consider each Euclidean point on Leibniz's continuum as an individual—whose life is *an event*—then it becomes apparent that each point-*cum*-being is wholly unique, and that each individual can expand his or her own mental horizon to infinity with the creative powers of actualizing the phenomenon of being. This is not to say that infinity is something that can be reached—not at all; but it is a concept that is described as having qualities, though it is understood as the totality of numbers in constant flux and expanding with no limit: the infinite is unbounded.³⁹ The infinite signifies the totality of everything: every particle or atom, every thought or belief, every creation or action; and while the infinite space continues to expand, there are no clear demarcations as to the

³⁹ Leibniz via Arthur explains that “infinity” is not a number, nor is it the end or final point of a series of numbers. Rather, it signifies a number that is uncountable, and one that in constant motion fends off all attempts to claim a knowledge of its unending nature.

borders of infinity, simply because it has not such. Infinity is non-transcendental, and this is the only means of explaining infinite potentiality, because there need be no borders to limit the creativity taking place in the mind—the new ideas and individuated realities made possible by the evolution of the mind in the creation of possible worlds. It should be apparent, then, that the mind is relative to no-thing, but infinite space—Bergsonian duration, or universal space—sweeps up the events of the mind-space, which exists as a conceptual Euclidean point in space, but in its pure subjectivity its nature cannot be quantified, which is exactly the case with the infinite. We cannot measure the nature of the infinite, and we cannot assign value to the nature of another’s mind, because it is a portion of space that is unique, individuated, and subjective; it has its own system of logic, and it responds to the external world in ways that best suit its internal needs.

I argue that on a smaller scale, the conceptual continuum of non-repeating points—the infinite infinitesimals—exists on a micro level within the mind. Each event that occurs and is recorded by one’s internal duration constitutes a point on this micro continuum. If we bring this unique infinitesimal with meta durations back to the continuum of the universe as a whole, it becomes apparent that the continuum is infinite in *all directions*; therefore, if each micro continuum has a meta duration that is heterogeneous in nature, but this micro continuum is united with all other micro continuums (*i.e.* all other infinitesimals), we see that these points contain the cycles of infinite progress and infinitesimal regress, which I discuss in the chapter to follow.⁴⁰ Moreover, the potential for the existence of infinitely many Euclidean points is unbounded, and it must logically follow that if a Euclidean point is infinite in potentiality, then the micro continuums are, too, infinite in potentiality to create or imagine x as the internal spaces of possible worlds. In order for a mind to have infinite potentiality, it must therefore be in constant evolution; it must be conscious, not necessarily of the specificities of the actual world, but in the basic function of responding to stimuli in the actual world. The mind of infinite potentiality is constantly approaching the infinite, which is due to what Bergson calls the “mind-energy”: the psychical data that have the potential to be actualized, and to make energy that manifests in one’s engagement with

⁴⁰ Leibniz would call the processes of infinite progress and infinitesimal regress “worlds within worlds,” meaning that each infinitesimal can divide to infinity, which supports my claim that the mind has infinite potentiality, because so long as the mind is conscious, new truths and new “worlds” develop in response to other worlds of the same self.

the actual world. Bergson poses the question that “if molecular movement can create sensation out of a zero of consciousness, why should not consciousness in its turn create movement either out of a zero kinetic and potential energy, or by making use of this energy in its own way?” (*Time* 152). If the molecules of matter can raise sensation in the conscious being, then what Bergson suggests is that in having consciousness and extensity as a cohesive body of matter, the potential to create “movement” is great. Furthermore, it is movement that characterizes homogeneous duration, so I would argue that what logically follows Bergson’s argument is that a conscious being has the potential to create internal durations which record the psychical events in the mind, and if we must consider molecules in this discussion, then psychical events are the engagement of molecules and neurological pathways in the corporeal brain, which constitutes the presence of energy in consciousness. But when the mind is no longer conscious, it ceases to have infinite potentiality, because it becomes stagnant and there are no cycles of progress and regress within the mind.⁴¹

On Félicité’s deathbed, the few who surround her insist that she is not conscious of her physical state of being, and that she is not lucid: her discourse is nonsensical and she appears senile. I will return to this point shortly, but I want to point out that consciousness does not have to be the participation of the self in shared reality, or the actual world of institutional and brute facts. Instead, I suggest that consciousness is simply an awareness of the “I” in-the-world; whether this “I” is within the mind, or in sync with the actual world, the “I” exists, and thus consciousness is established. It is Félicité’s consciousness of the actual world that sparks within her soul the need for a possible world, and though this is not an intentional creation, it is one necessitated by that which the actual world cannot provide: the uncompromising love she bestows upon others.

Though Leibniz and René Descartes were not necessarily in theoretical harmony—in fact, in many ways Leibniz fought the Cartesian mind-body dualism—there is a point of agreement that is worth pointing out, that of the “I”-subject and the originality of each Euclidean point, or infinitesimal—each individual. The awareness of

⁴¹ One example that suggests that infinite potentiality is possible only with the non-tangible mind is that one can be considered alive but unconscious, so the mind is presumably not active while the brain continues to live. It is the *mind* which is unconscious—not the being.

the world which Félicité possesses is difficult for readers to define, but let us imagine that we can synthesize her consciousness with ours, and the “I” identified by readers can become the “we” as thinkers and perceivers. Descartes explains that “‘I am’ precisely taken refers only to a conscious being; that is a mind, a soul (*animus*), an intellect, a reason—words whose meaning I did not previously know. I am a real being, and really exist; but what sort of being? As I said, a conscious being (*cogitans*)” (69). Certainly Félicité possesses an “I,” a first person singularity that constitutes the originality of her being, which is filled with her mind, or spirit. What is more, as readers, when we imagine the “I” that is hiding behind the omniscient narrative voice, the text becomes real in the sense that “we” becomes “I,” and thus our amalgamation of consciousness is homogeneous, because we see and understand the world through the eyes of Félicité. This is the challenge: to surrender the objective “I” which renders judgment on the “she”—Félicité—and consider to the best of our abilities how the events of the narrative alone, free of any implicit judgment or perceived narrative tone, would appear to Félicité—that would appear to “me.” We see, then, that “I am a real being, and I really exist,” but as the “I,” the question Descartes tries to answer—what *sort* of being—cannot occur to the subjective “I.” Of course, each individual in the actual world can attempt to perceive themselves from the outside looking in, but this process of self-ideation is tainted naturally by the fact that our understanding of the external world from the inside will permeate any attempt at an objective analysis of what makes the “I” unique because in the duration of life and daily events, we do not question what sort of being we are. If, when walking through a shopping center, one is stopped and in a flash of a second asked: “What sort of being are you?” I would imagine this would render most speechless, and I invite readers to consider what they might answer as an immediate response. If I were asked this question, my external answer would be “a human being,” and my internal dialogue would answer, “what a ridiculous question!” and this would manifest in the actual world in the rolling of my eyes. The question is not ridiculous, but we perceive it as such precisely because we do not ask this of ourselves. We assume that our being is defined as “human,” and the point I wish to make here is that Félicité conceives of her own world—possible and actual—and its events as entirely quotidian and not even remotely senile or simplistic. In terms of an individuated human being, again we face the

problem of the subjective influence on the objective. Where readers like Shepler see Félicité as simple, Félicité likely sees herself as entirely ordinary, because one's reality is accepted internally as real, just as Bergson explains that one understands the self via forms in the external world. It is through her actions that readers become aware of Félicité's nature: she is kind, loyal, and selfless; but unfortunately readers cannot determine how Félicité imagines herself as unique in some way or another, because her actions do not necessarily speak to her self-definition, though they do speak to the nature of her own reality.

“[Le perroquet] s'appelait Loulou. Son corps était vert, le bout de ses ailes rose, son front bleu, et sa gorge dorée”; ‘The parrot was called Loulou. His body was green, the tips of his wings were pink, the top of his head was blue and his breast was gold-coloured’ (Flaubert 61; 20). Here, Flaubert introduces readers to the parrot: “Mme Aubain, qu’il ennuyait, le donna pour toujours à Félicité”; ‘[he] thoroughly irritated Madame Aubain [] so she gave him to Félicité to look after’ (62; 29). An immediate attachment between Loulou and Félicité is noticeable from the genesis of their time together in the actual world, and this relationship is what allows for the longevity of Félicité's possible world, even after Loulou dies. Like Félicité, who is cast aside to an uncaring neighbour following the death of her parents, Loulou is also brushed off by his owner, who “could not take [Loulou] away with her” (29; emphasis mine).

Loulou becomes a faithful companion to Félicité, whereas the parrot is simply an aggravating and unnecessary pet tended to by the help. Félicité, “entreprit de l'instruire; bientôt il répéta: ‘Charmant garçon! Serviteur, monsieur! Je vous salue, Marie!’”; ‘decided she would teach him to speak and he was very soon able to say, ‘Pretty boy!,’ ‘Your servant, sir!,’ and ‘Hail Mary!’” (62; 29). What is so striking about this passage is that in the action of teaching Loulou—just as Monsieur Bourais shares his geographical knowledge with Mme Aubain's children, and subsequently Paul teaches Félicité points on the map—Félicité bestows upon a bird the gift of knowledge, which she is thrilled to have received when the children were still at home (9). But there is much more to be said behind this act of kindness. The phrases that Félicité teaches Loulou are wholly resonant of Félicité's nature. “Pretty boy” corresponds to Félicité's immediate and unconditional love for Loulou, as well as the praise that she lavishes upon others; “Your servant, sir!”

resounds her daily life in a service position, where her sole purpose is to ensure the wellbeing of others; and “Hail Mary!” draws our attention, again, to Félicité’s newfound love for the Holy Trinity, specifically the dove.

Francis A. Grabowski argues that “knowledge is similar to sensory perception in the sense that it involves the knowing subject becoming directly acquainted with its objects, namely, the Forms” (101). Félicité comes to know Loulou—not as an inanimate object, but rather as the object of her consciousness, which expands and continues to focus more and more upon Loulou—by way of the knowledge *of* sensory perception. One afternoon, Félicité:

pose sur l’herbe pour le rafraîchir, s’absenta une minute ; et, quand elle revint, plus du perroquet ! D’abord elle le chercha dans les buissons, au bord de l’eau et sur les toits.

Enfin, elle rentra épuisée, les savates en lambeaux, la mort dans l’âme ; et, assise au milieu du banc, près de Madame, elle racontait toutes ses démarches, quand un poids léger lui tomba sur l’épaule, Loulou !

Elle eut du mal à s’en remettre, ou plutôt ne s’en remit jamais.

Par suite d’un refroidissement, il lui vint une angine ; peu de temps après, un mal d’oreilles. Trois ans plus tard, elle était sourde ; et elle parlait très haut, même à l’église. (64-5)

put [Loulou] out on the grass to get some fresh air. She went indoors for a minute and, when she came back, the parrot had disappeared. She searched for him in the bushes, by the river and even on the rooftops, . . . [finally] [s]he sat down on the middle of the garden bench, next to Madame, . . . when suddenly she felt something drop gently on to her shoulder. It was Loulou!

It took Félicité quite a while to recover from this shock. If the truth were known, she never really recovered from it completely.

She caught tonsillitis, as a result of getting thoroughly chilled, and shortly afterwards developed pain in her ears. Within three years she was completely deaf and spoke in a very loud voice, even in church. (Flaubert 31)

Félicité’s state of terror brings her to search desperately for Loulou, and we see the pure love Félicité has for her little companion. When she feels something drop lightly upon her shoulder only to find that it is Loulou, she is beyond relief. The contact between Loulou and Félicité is not solely the sensorial response to touch, but a signification of the unbreakable bond between them, and when Loulou’s feet touch upon Félicité’s shoulder, all is well. But such a shock to her system exposes Félicité to illness, and in her movement from the world of sound to the world of silence, her ties to the actual world—

those of sound—loosen, and she indulges more in a world where Loulou is the pinnacle of her consciousness.

What doubles as both comic relief and the assertion of Félicité's purity of heart is the narrative description of Félicité and the projection of her voice—she speaks loudly, even in church; and those who have attended church, and many who have not, will likely find this somewhat humorous: it hints at Félicité's senility or detachment from the shared reality of the actual world. But the sentence to follow explains that:

Bien que ses péchés auraient pu sans déshonneur pour elle, ni inconvenient pour le monde, se répandre à tous les coins du diocèse, M. le Curé jugea convenable de ne plus recevoir sa confession que dans la sacristie. (65)

Even though her sins could have been proclaimed in every corner of the diocese without bringing any discredit to her or causing offence to others, the cure decided that it would now be best to hear her confession in the sacristy. (31)

While somewhat laughable based on the common understanding of institutionally defined etiquette in *x*-given situation, in this case, church and the privacy of confession, we see Félicité's seeming simplicity—that she confesses her sins, ignorant of her elevated pitch. However, to call her simplistic because in her deafness she cannot control the volume of her voice would be counter-intuitive. If one is deaf, one cannot hear; and if one who is deaf raises one's voice, one cannot be deemed simplistic due to the inability to hear the volume of one's own voice. This in itself is quite simple. At the same time, Félicité's purity of heart is rearticulated in the comment that her sins were so minor that it would matter not if others were to hear them. That Félicité confesses these self-identified sins speaks to her ability to reflect retrospectively, and therefore she must be considered conscious, because memory is the first signifier of consciousness. Bergson elucidates this point, noting: "I characterize consciousness by its most obvious feature: it means, before everything else, memory" (*Mind* 3). What is more, Félicité's approach to life is not to forget painful memories from the past, but to acknowledge them and use them to make her stronger. Bergson explains further that "Our memories, at a given moment, form one solidary whole, a pyramid whose point coincides with our present—with a present moving ceaselessly and plunging into the future" (69). Félicité mourns the deaths of Virginie and Victor, and she does the same for Loulou, but for each blow sustained to her

psyche, she becomes stronger, and she does so by investing more energy into the construction of her internal realm, the possible world within.

To most others, Félicité's minor transgressions are not sins, but rather minor trespasses; but to Félicité, to trespass is to sin, and no sin, no matter how small, can be dismissed in the eyes of God. It therefore seems more appropriate to observe complexity in the nature of Félicité; she could be perceived as child-like or immature to confess something so minor, yet at the same time, Félicité grounds her faith in God and in Christian integrity and ethics, which means that a small sin is still a sin, and thus must be confessed in order to be forgiven. To be forgiven is to be free of the burden of sin—it is to enjoy the felicities of life. Félicité is, at some level, conscious of the need to purge the negative events of life from her consciousness by surrendering them in confession, and in doing this she is free to enjoy life, which includes her possible world. Félicité's confession eliminates the discomfort of the guilt that opposes one's own values; naturally, then, Félicité's internal harmony ensures that her stream of consciousness is not impeded by the shadows of her past.

To return to Grabowski's explanation of knowledge as the conscious being coming to realize surrounding objects in the context of becoming, the notion of the Forms surfaces. I do not wish to digress too far, but I would suggest that as Félicité comes to know the Holy Ghost via Loulou, she comes to know the ultimate Platonic Form—that of the infinite God. This infinite God has crafted all human life in the reflection of his own image;⁴² these lives can be considered the allegorical Euclidean points on Leibniz's continuum, because each point moves towards infinity—towards God—and not to mention, each point or life is *of* God, who is the One, while concurrently occupying the numeric position "1": the whole, the entirety, the genesis of all matter according to Abrahamic faiths. Grabowski argues that:

Plato posits the Forms as eternal, simple, and changeless entities. Unlike the objects of everyday experience, Forms are entirely free of sensible imagery of the physical sort and always present themselves without hint of obscurity or ambiguity. And owing to their unwavering appearance and character, they alone qualify as the objects of knowledge. (28)

⁴² *Genesis* 1:27: "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them." Also, see James Miller's "Three Mirrors of Dante's *Paradiso*" (1977).

My contention is this: if we are to see the world through the eyes of Félicité, then it seems quite apparent that Félicité understands the eternal God to have presented himself unambiguously to her by way of the parrot, which she likens to the Holy Ghost; and furthermore, this parrot—both in life and in death—fuels a desire to learn of this Form, to learn of God, who, like Félicité, is simple in nature. Félicité, like the Christian understanding of the nature of God, is in many ways changeless; she is simple and straightforward through the course of her life; assaults do not embitter her; and loss does not poison her loving heart. But most important is that in spite of Félicité’s rather solitary life, relative to others who enjoy a bounty of personal relationships, she tends to the needs of others, and this act of giving of herself fulfills her spirit and her sense of being-in-the-world. The essence of Félicité is her loving spirit, which shows unwavering kindness to those badly in need of love—those who are the social outcasts, like the Polish man, and like Loulou—the latter taken from his natural habitat only to become an ephemeral interest to Mme Larsonierre, who discards him when the exotic excitement is no longer convenient, thus leaving her no reason to care any further for the parrot. If we were to accept Félicité’s character as complex, but with a simplistic approach to life, then this is much akin to the notion of God: “Does He speak and then not act? Does He promise and not fulfill?” (*Num.* 23.19). We see, then, the true simplicity of two complex beings: Félicité and the God to whom she devotes her life.

Mme Larsonierre rejects the parrot, but Félicité, on the other hand, is thrilled to receive Loulou, whom she comes to know as a companion, rather than a romanticized figure of a world vast and unknown to those who wish to behold its treasures. This is camaraderie between two simple souls: Félicité, whose “la taille droite et les gestes mesurés, semblait une femme en bois, fonctionnant d’une manière automatique”; ‘upright stance and deliberate movements gave her the appearance of a woman made out of wood, driven as if by clockwork’ (22; 5); and Loulou, who, “on le comparait à une dinde, à une bûche”; ‘[s]ome people said he looked more like a turkey or called him a blockhead’ (62; 29). What is more, the immediacy of the love bestowed upon Loulou by Félicité is apparent when she finds “these jibes very hurtful’ (29). But this is not simplicity in the context of the ignorance and dumbfounded servant as defined by Shepler and Lytle; this is the bonding of equals, defined as such by Félicité herself. Earlier in the story, Théodore

attempts to seduce Félicité against her will, but sometimes to trust is to be naïve, because the alternative is cynicism or the excessive suspicion of anyone—of *everyone*, and the disturbance of one's internal harmony. In allowing Théodore another chance to prove his love for Félicité. But readers observe that she is not completely naïve to the world:

Ils se rencontraient au fond des cours, derrière un mur, sous un arbre isolé. Elle n'était pas innocente à la manière des demoiselles,—les animaux l'avaient instruite ; mais la raison et l'instinct de l'honneur l'empêchèrent de faillir. Cette résistance exaspéra l'amour de Théodore. (25)

They would meet in a corner of some farmyard, behind a wall or beneath a solitary tree. Félicité was not naïve like other young girls of her age; working with the farm animals had taught her a great deal. However, her natural discretion and an intuitive sense of honour prevented her from giving in to Théodore's demands. (6)

The innuendo concerning the habits of farm animals is a good jest, but Flaubert's design is to mobilize humour in order to illuminate the obvious facts of life which Félicité has transferred from the context of primacy to her own personal life; she is aware of Théodore's desire, but she has the agency to deny him that for which he wishes. What is more, Théodore is annoyed by Félicité's desire to remain pure, but so early in the text Flaubert foreshadows one of the many things held in common between Félicité and Loulou; in this case, it is her "resistance" that informs her initial judgment of the parrot, that being his "Étrange obstination de Loulou, ne parlant plus du moment qu'on le regardait"; 'stubborn streak . . . which never ceased to amaze Félicité; he would refuse to talk the minute anyone looked at him!' (62; 29). Akin to an impertinent child, Loulou talks only to his adopted mother, who "doted upon him" as if he were *of* Félicité's généologie—Loulou becomes a reflection of his "mother" just as Félicité is a reflection of God, her own Creator. To be stubborn or to resist is not the behaviour characteristic of Félicité, but to persevere when life is most challenging is Félicité's claim to stubbornness. To resist is the mark of one who has considered the issue at hand, and subsequently chooses consciously to oppose *x* or *y*, whereas the definition of simplicity so defined by Shepler is one that suits a passive being, who allows life to pass by without engaging it. On the contrary, Félicité's simple heart is one that I characterize as free of the vanity, conceit, and pretense, which surrounds Félicité in her actual world, a place where her worth is founded in her servitude, and her person is valued only in filling the

demands of others. Félicité's simplicity, therefore, is an active approach to life: she is unafraid to love endlessly those with whom she crosses paths, and though many of these flâneurs *of-the-world* do not care for her in return, she does in fact internalize every ounce of love and courtesy bestowed upon her in a world whose inhabitants live unnecessarily complex—non-simplistic lives—that they forget the joy found in those who are simple in their approach to people and to life. Most important is the distinction inherent in this malleable and relative understanding of the narrative, that is, the flâneurs *of the world* exist passively, thus failing to engage the life bestowed upon the wanderer; and I place emphasis on the preposition “of,” because to be of the world means that one is a materialized being of a material world, whereas to be *in* the world implies an active engagement with life thus given, and regardless of the events and hardships one must face, the life *in the world* is the process of maturation and self-amelioration. Félicité is *in* the world, and though her responses to daily struggles seem somewhat shallow, it is not she who is simplistic; and though her love is rarely reciprocated, Félicité's own stubbornness—her insistence *to love*—defines one who is conscious both of herself and of others.

It is Mme Aubain's life that is monotonous: once her role as “mother” changes shape, she loses her identity. At the age of seventy-two, Mme Aubain dies from an illness prompted by the jarring revelation that the man she had employed to see to her finances had swindled her. We see the fragility which defines Mme Aubain when those who have tended to the quotidian and monotonous tasks complicate her life by dying: “Ces turpitudes l'affligèrent beaucoup. Au moins de mars 1853, elle fut prise d'une douleur dans la poitrine; . . . et le neuvième soir elle expira, ayant juste soixante-douze ans”; ‘This sordid business [caring for her own finances] was a source of great distress to Madame Aubain. In March 1853, she began to feel pains in her chest. . . . On the ninth evening of her illness, she died, aged just seventy-two’ (71-2; 36). What I wish to point out is the sheer irony of the word “simple,” because we see now that Félicité's life is significantly more eventful and consequently complex, whereas Mme Aubain enjoys the solitude of the country, caring for very little other than herself; Mme Aubain enjoys the simple life. What complicates the adjective “simple” even more is Félicité's response to Mme Aubain's death:

Félicité la pleura, comme on ne pleure pas les maîtres. Que Madame mourût avant elle, cela troublait ses idées, lui semblait contraire à l'ordre des choses, inadmissible et monstrueux. (72)

Félicité wept for her in a way that servants rarely weep for their masters. That Madame should die before her disturbed her whole way of thinking; it seemed to go against the natural order of things; it was something unacceptable and unreal. (36)

Again we see Félicité's natural tendency to love those who surround her, and though it is quite unfortunate that Félicité believes that her superior, or "master," should die *after* her, so as to respect the natural order of hierarchy, it is Félicité's simple approach to life that inspires her unyielding love and passion for service. Félicité chooses to love simply, rather than be subordinate for her simplicity; her love is a love that is indiscriminately kind—the love for human life, much akin to the New Testament declaration that: "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son" (*John* 3.16). Likewise, Félicité so loves the world that in her role of service, she loves Madame not out of necessity, but out of the overwhelming passion for God's creatures; she sees people not for their faults, but *simply* receives them as themselves. Most importantly, one's simplistic approach to life does not then define one as simple—this would be *post hoc* logic; rather, it suggests that this is a dynamic being who is conscious of and in touch with the world, but sees no need to complicate the act of giving of herself and loving—actions that serve as the guiding principle of her actions and the source of her happiness.

The plot takes a drastic turn from the pitiful "real" and the intriguing "(un)real." Félicité accepts all of God's creatures as they are, which poses a problem: if Félicité takes God's creatures for their true essence, what is it that allows her to equate the Holy Ghost in the form of the dove with the parrot, now stuffed and perched in her room?

Following the traumatic missing bird situation, for Félicité "tous les êtres fonctionnaient avec le silence des fantômes. Un seul bruit arrivait maintenant à ses oreilles, la voix du perroquet"; "became enclosed in an ever-diminishing world of her own' and that "[o]nly one sound now reached her ears, and that was the voice of the parrot" (65; 31). I would argue that if one were to consider the numerous hardships in which Félicité is abused, mocked, and slandered, one would determine that in finding a constant companion—Loulou—that the short period in which he goes missing would jar Félicité to such an extent that the overwhelming burdens of life begin to weigh upon her,

and a possible world develops in order to lighten that load. Félicité loves Loulou for himself, and Loulou senses in Félicité her natural kindness that is affective; it is not a façade, and it is free from hierarchic order, which is why Loulou lands upon her shoulder, rather than that of Madame. Of course, we are not privy to the mind of the parrot, but it is reasonable to consider that Félicité's genuine self is apparent to Loulou, simply because as a conscious being—though a bird, not a person—he prefers Félicité over all others. Loulou is unable to identify a hierarchic relationship, and therefore there is no corresponding notion that he must live amidst such a condescending order of existence.⁴³ Nonetheless, Félicité “simply doted on him” (31), and within her mind the vulnerable and maternal self appears in the absence of the social norms and roles by according to which she lives her life daily. The possible world within Félicité's mind is not one of retreat or safe harbour, but rather a space in which she is free to be herself, and she is understood and valued *for* this self, in spite of how she may appear to those who observe her from the actual world. Félicité exists in both the actual and possible worlds, but it is almost as if the mind is separated from the body, and the body functions via physiological patterns and automatic responses facilitated by the brain. The imaginative and self-subsisting faculties of Félicité's mind are not out of sync with the actual world—the place in which she is “Ne communiquant avec personne, elle vivait dans une torpeur de Somnambule”; ‘unable to hold a conversation with anyone, [therefore] she lived her life as if in a sleepwalker's trance’ (70; 34). Félicité no longer grounds her identity in the actual, material world; but instead, she holds conversations with Loulou, “Ils avaient des dialogues, lui, débitant à satiété les trois phrases de son repertoire, et elle, y répondant par des mots sans plus de suite, mais où son coeur s'épanchait”; ‘the parrot endlessly repeating the three stock phrases from his repertory and Félicité replying with words that made very little sense but which all came straight from the heart’ (66; 31). For something to “make sense” to an individual in the actual world, the thinker must be in accordance with the societal “norms,” or institutionally-created “realities,” but in the possible world, one need not worry, because such rules do not and cannot exist within this space, because

⁴³ It is worth pointing out that the colloquial term “bird brain,” which refers to one who is as stupid as a bird, is overturned in Loulou. For the parrot, his understanding of life is quite simple: he likes those who care for him, and this preference *is simple*, but it is also most logical. Thus it seems that man—who crafted the concept of Occam's razor, the theory of the simplistic method being best—is the only species who complicates life unnecessarily, thus imposing on the self so-called realities, like politics and hierarchy, that exist only in the human mind.

they would be self-defeating: if the possible world is a platform upon which the mind has infinite potentiality to act upon experiential psychical data and create *x* reality, it must be free from the shackles of mediocrity, that being the generally arbitrary social “rules” in the actual world. Such rules are defined by a given society, certainly, and social etiquette and perceived *faux pas* behaviour varies from society to society; but nonetheless, even if these rules are ingrained in one’s daily thinking, they are self-imposed binaries between what could be and what must be. But this is precisely the problem with the actual world: it is the epistemological *faux pas*, where one knowingly submits oneself to the power of social niceties, simply because these niceties allow one to be perceived as “normal” or sane; these are tactics of social in-grouping. If one cares about one’s reputation in the actual world, then these rules are an unfair negotiation of choice, and such restrictions are often in place to ensure the superficial comfort of *others*; but what if we were to forget the divisiveness of niceties and simply exist in the harmony between mind and body, relative to no one except our own perception of the actual or possible world? What “must be” is the self-imposed false consciousness that is not the nature of the world, but rather the nature of life, so crafted by cognitive human beings.

Discussing the early Christian church, philosopher Christian Moevs addresses the historical debate on the soul, whose presence is apparent in historical burial practices dating back to Ancient Egypt, and Ancient Greek philosophy, as we see in Plato’s dialogues, like the *Phaedo*. Moevs argues that:

Humans are the horizon between the immaterial and the material, the infinite and the finite, the timeless and the temporal. In humans the ultimate ontological principle becomes aware of itself [] this is human consciousness or self-awareness, the divine and immortal element of the human being, manifest in space-time through the human form.” (6)

I claim that the human mind has infinite potentiality to do or create *x*, and it seems quite clear in Moevs’s argument that the human form, which is the vehicle of the mind or soul, is at the brink between the finite and the infinite, and I extend this claim to posit the idea that the human form is the placeholder between the actual-finite world and the possible-infinite world. Félicité’s actual world—in the now dilapidated French country home of the late Mme Aubain—is finite, because this world limits her; she is bound by the laws of causality—that a conclusion must logically follow a set of deductions, and that for every conclusion—an effect—there is a logical cause that precedes it. But this is the linear

nature of the finite actual world. Once “we allow ourselves to live” (*Time* 100) and know the world intuitively for what it can offer, rather than what it presents *to* us, then we know the freedom of the possible-infinite world in pure duration. This world does not conform to the logic of linearity and cause and effect, but rather it operates as a relational system of the thinker relative to this thinker’s own mind; it is the internal duration—the *pure* duration—that sheds the weighty burden of conformity, so as to embrace all that *can be* in the space of the mind, the space developed and shaped by its possessor, and the space in which the possessor is the deity-like creator of existence, of experience and the internal harmony of the self vis-à-vis the self. It is in such a space that Félicité enjoys the company of her winged companion, and the reader who fails to understand the intricacies of Félicité’s mind is the one who views her through the actual-world lens—the standardized system of conforming to social norms and behaviours: it is the standardized system of implosion, where with each step inside the smothering realm of mediocrity, one eliminates in each movement and each thought the potential to do or be *x*, and one accepts in its place the limited *y*-reality as all that one can be and experience. This finitude is the equivalent of existing in the void of missing substance, and settling oneself in the empty atmosphere of what could be.

On her deathbed, Félicité thinks only of the parrot’s well-being, his body buried well beneath wreaths of roses and figures of the Virgin Mary on an Alter of the Corpus Christi parade. She asks: “‘Est-il bien?’ tourmentée du perroquet” (33). Having, in a sense, sacrificed Loulou’s finite-worldly body in contribution to the Corpus Christi celebrations, Félicité releases her worldly possessions, which are but a few, and draws closer to her own death. Most importantly, we see the mimicry of Jesus Christ by the parrot; Loulou’s finite-worldly body is left behind, but his divine connection with the Trinity ensures his place in Heaven. Naturally, it would be a religious *faux pas* to rise a common bird to the place of the Trinitarian dove, but we have considered Félicité’s world, and thus have considered her *beliefs* through her own eyes, and she believes that Loulou is the metonymic Holy Spirit, which in truth *no one* could possibly verify or deny. To anthropomorphize that which we cannot know is normal, not simple; it is the human quest for comprehension—it is to satisfy the craving for substance to fill the void.

Félicité no longer seeks truth, because believes she has found it in the parrot, and in her final breaths:

Les mouvements de son coeur se ralentirent un à un, plus vagues chaque fois, plus doux, comme une fontaine s'épuise, comme un écho disparaît ; et, quand elle exhala son dernier souffle, elle crut voir, dans les cieux entrouverts, un perroquet gigantesque, planant au-dessus de sa tête. (34)

One by one her heartbeats became slower, growing successively weaker and fainter like a fountain running dry, an echo fading away. With her dying breath she imagined she saw a huge parrot hovering above her head as the heavens parted to receive her. (40)

Loulou is Félicité's final earthly concern, but within her mind—or in this context, her *esprit*, the parrot hovers above according to the common spatial rationalization of Heaven being above the earth. Loulou waits for her, and he is there to welcome her into the one place that gives her eternal hope in the finite world: the Kingdom of God.

In her devotion to the Holy Spirit, Felicité dissolves into the divine realm, thereby transcending her seeming simplicity by merging with the infinitely complex. The result is the undoing of all assumptions made by her social environment regarding Felicité's alleged simple heart. This complexity through simplicity — divinely mediated or brought about through the accretion of semantic strata — is at the crux of Flaubert's subtle paradox. It is the paradox inherent in Jesus's pronouncements in the Sermon on the Mount:

Blessed are the *poor in spirit*,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are *those who mourn*,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are *the meek*,
for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those *who hunger and thirst for righteousness*,
for they will be filled.
Blessed are the *merciful*,
for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are *the pure in heart*,
for they will see God.
Blessed are the *peacemakers*,
for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those *who are persecuted because of righteousness*,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matt. 5.3-12; emphasis mine)

In each of these Beatitudes we see exemplified to a tee Félicité, and as we attempt to see the world through her own eyes, we find that her Christian faith—which is a selfless devotion to those whom she serves, and the praise she pours upon a common parrot-cum-Holy Spirit—is real simply due to her devotion to God the actual world; it matters not whether the Holy Ghost is a dove or a parrot; what makes Félicité’s faith true is her unwavering *belief* and commitment to living life according to biblical principles. Flaubert presents Félicité as if she were a sort of “wild card,” where she seems to fit whichever judgment is bestowed upon her. Though she is not Christ, Flaubert draws significant parallels between Félicité and the Christian figure of the personified God, the Son. Félicité does not achieve the fame akin to the name proper of Christ, but the Sermon on the Mount, spoken by the biblical Jesus, seems to capture the essence of each of Félicité’s characteristics and behaviours—it seems that Félicité’s nature within Flaubert’s narrative mirrors the Beatitudes of the Sermon, with each proclamation encapsulating a portion of the history of Félicité’s own life, her own torments, trials, and moments of jubilation. Flaubert paints Félicité as if she were a micro-Christ, the saviour of the poor and wretched, who loves rather than judges, and who gives while rarely receiving. Félicité’s gift is simply that she finds the sustenance she needs to live happily and freely in her faith—a faith founded in the Holy Trinity, and epitomized in the parrot.

Félicité triumphs upon her deathbed: within her simplicity is her perceived Salvation, and that for which she wishes—a union with the Trinity—is bestowed upon her in death as Loulou hovers above the finite body of the simple housemaid of Pont-l’Évêque. Félicité finds that to complete her internal duration, or continuum, she must situate herself where the space of her mind finds the harmony of peace and freedom *to be*. Therefore, we see that Loulou operates as a connective vehicle through which Félicité believes herself to enter the presence and sanctity of God. As the spirit of the parrot—her own hallucination, thus her own reality—hovers above, so below Félicité perishes, not as a life wasted in simplicity, but life whose inherent value is founded not in those who surround her deathbed and condemn her to senility and simplicity. Félicité cherishes her relationship with God, and this is explicit in her devout prayers and her raptures in

church; it does not matter that her devout prayers are to the stuffed and rotting corpse of a parrot, nor does it matter that her raptures in church are a response to her likening the Holy Dove to the Amazonian parrot. Indeed, Flaubert's narrative is all but simple, because in order for one to understand Félicité's reality, one must first see through her eyes God's simple message of Salvation. The need to appear anything other than simple-at-heart is unnecessary, because Félicité deigns for Salvation, and readers are left only with the sound assumption that it is Salvation which she receives. Félicité's simple mind and simple heart seem therefore the most direct means of her understanding the simple message of God, for whom and akin to whom she lives her external life daily, her internal life—her own reality—as the guiding principle for her worldly actions. The deified parrot becomes Félicité's "inner life," as we encounter in Chaitin's account of unbounded human potentiality; Félicité achieves all that she wishes, and as a result her potentiality to do or be x is exhausted in full, spanning from her beginning to her end.

Chapter 4.

A Theory of Infinite Flux: Wonderland and the Ever-Evolving Alice

“No continuous thing is divisible into things without parts.” –Aristotle.⁴⁴

Lewis Carroll’s⁴⁵ *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) is a product of the Victorian period, but this fact, albeit wholly obvious to most readers, is problematic. Nowhere in the novel are readers informed of the time, place, or social customs, but it seems too often these biographical and contextual ideas are brought into the text by readers.⁴⁶ Thus we are left with a girl, Alice, who falls asleep while sitting alongside her sister at a stream, and we follow Alice into the depths of her dream formed on a different level of consciousness. This variant level of consciousness—this dream-state—is a possible world, and consequently so, it has *its own* duration, one of numerous durations we would assume to exist if Alice were a real human being as opposed to a fictional character.

For each human being there is, at the very least, an internal and an external duration; said otherwise, there is a duration that is wholly personal and subjective—it is of the mind, whereas the external duration is of the actual world, wherein all bodies which house the brains that facilitate the mind exist and engage. Until this point I define possible worlds as entelechial⁴⁷ spaces of potentiality to do or create x within the mind; and the psychological data that ensues due to the energetic presence of consciousness creates matter, albeit matter without the necessary form to be considered actual. On matter and substance, Kurt Smith explains via Leibniz that “a body or material substance emerges as the result of a soul (mind) acting through the metaphysical medium of matter. A *material substance*, in other words, is a mind-matter unity” (156). Smith makes current

⁴⁴ *The Physics* (22).

⁴⁵ Penname for Charles Dodgson.

⁴⁶ Interestingly, we see that Carroll is a penname, which *may* appear odd considering its proximity to the *Belle Époque* in continental Europe, a time of curiosity and artistic innovation. But we know from Carroll’s biographical information that he chose the penname so as to maintain his status as a leader at Christ’s Church at Oxford University; he was a renowned mathematics scholar, and if we were to consider the biographic subtext, then the reason for a penname becomes clearer: a mathematician and logician at Oxford is writing a child’s book about talking rabbits and anthropomorphic decks of cards.

⁴⁷ Aristotle’s usage of the term “entelechy” applies to matter that has become actualized, or has thus gained Form; Leibniz considers entelechy to be a process of amelioration, or self-reflexive realization of a process of perfection, which exists due to consciousness. I err towards Leibniz’s usage, that is, that there is immanent data derived from possible worlds within the mind that await the conscious realization of the potential to be or do x , rather than accept the present reality of y .

seventeenth-century metaphysics by equating the soul with the mind, which is the shift from the religious—present throughout early church theology—to the secular; and in this context, the mind-matter unity is the individual consciousness or realization of substance-to-be, which must pass through the processes of entelechy. This version of possible worlds assumes the infinite *potentiality* of the mind to create new realities and new durations, and just as Bergson notes that each individual has an internal duration, I extend this to say that each possible world exists amidst a multiplicity of durations, all of which await the entelechial process of actualization within the mind-space. I use the term “mind-space” to describe the amalgamation of, or connection between, the individual mind and general, or universal space. This term thereby illustrates a space occupied by that mind alone, and in turn, this mind makes an impression on the actual-world of universal space, which will always maintain the trace of this mind’s presence.⁴⁸ Mind-space is akin to the natural sciences term, space-time, which describes space and time as interconnected to compose one concept representative of length, width, height, and time; mind-space, therefore, is the combination of the continuum of matter, energy, time, duration, and consciousness. Space-time is a conceptual unity borrowed from applied mathematics, and likewise, mind-space is a concept that defines the unity between the thinking-individual and the space in which he or she exists, as well as the space which their mind occupies. I raise awareness of mind-space as a concept, because it is imperative to one’s understanding of the potentiality of the mind to create new durations, which are infinite in potentiality.

Infinite potentiality relies upon perception—one’s state of mind or attitude—in order to enter the process of entelechy. Bergson argues that “action [] isolates that part of reality as a whole that interests us; it shows us less the things themselves than the use we can make of them . . . we scarcely look at the object, it is enough for us to know to which category it belongs” (*Creative* 114). Every so often one will “look at a thing, they see it for itself, and not for themselves” (114), or in other words, they see the superficial, but fail to see the potential for it to become *x*: “[t]hey do not perceive it simply with a view to action; they perceive it in order to perceive” (114). If we were to consider every possible world as a whole of many parts, we would have both infinite progress and infinitesimal

⁴⁸ One example would be Charles Dodgson’s creation of Wonderland, which we continue to read today.

regress. If a possible world represents the totality of events of one internal duration of one individual being, it acts as a sort of building block in the larger duration—the compilation of all durations both possible and actual: universal space. This process of expansion by way of adding one whole to create a larger whole is what I call “infinite progress,” because so long as there is human consciousness, there are infinitely many durations, thus forcing the totality of durations as the whole of existence to grow in infinite progress.^{49 50} But we also see infinitesimal regress coincide with infinite progress. By “infinitesimal regress” I mean to say just what Bergson implies: instead of accepting an object as a whole, one should be the individual who perceives the object for itself, for its essence, which necessarily implies that one observes the many parts that form this whole. If we were to begin with Alice as a human being, in spite of the fact we know her only through fiction, Alice’s self is an amalgamation of every event in her consciousness and its subsequent processing within the mind-space; Alice is a whole of many parts, or an aggregate. We also see Alice as a building block for the totality of durations which expands in infinite progress. The former statement that Alice is a compilation of every event in her consciousness, possible and actual world events, and imagined or real events, reveals a process less explicit. I propose that we consider Alice as a being of many parts, as well as a part of a larger whole. Alice is a building block in Carroll’s narrative, just as a student is a part of a department; and the department is an aggregate of students, staff, and faculty, but each student or staff is a complete unit in itself.⁵¹ Therefore, infinite progress, (a therefore b therefore $c \rightarrow \infty$), is—let us begin this example with one student—the expansion of a larger body by way of the amalgamation of its parts: students are to departments, departments are to faculties, and faculties to universities, *etcetera*. Though a series of expansion may appear to end, it is important to remember that the process of expansion encompasses many parts, and each part, or building block, of the

⁴⁹ This is a mathematical construct that works just as well linguistically. “Infinite progress” ($\rightarrow \infty$) is *1 therefore 2 therefore 3, ad infinitum*.

⁵⁰ Unfortunately, the language necessary to describe these ideas is self-defeating, but we cannot simply remove language of quantity from our semiotic systems of communication. Let us consider that “totality” is not a whole—because the infinite is everything ($n + 1 \rightarrow \infty$)—so the totality will mean all which exists, with the understanding that “everything” (matter, energy, consciousness) expands infinitely to infinity. Synonymous terms will include “continuum,” “continuity,” “compilation,” and “aggregate.”

⁵¹ “Infinitesimal regress ($\rightarrow - \infty$) is the counterpart to infinite progress, and the linguistic formula akin to its mathematical counterpart would be *a if b if c* $\rightarrow \infty$. Simply stated, *a* does not occur or take form if *b* does not ensure its necessity, and *b* is necessitated by *c*. This is the mathematical system of regress, rather than that of formal logic.

“departmental” expansion has also its own composition, and each part of this building block begins in series of expansion in and of themselves. For example, the student of a department could be composed of many life events, and though the student is part of the department, the student’s experience in the department causes an expansion within its self; therefore, the student’s experience in the department comprises the evolving student in itself, and this student may become a teacher or a lawyer, who is composed of many parts, one of which is the departmental-educational system. Thus we see the series is unending, because the interconnectivity between building blocks and their parts is unavoidable. These processes of expansion are akin to the continuum of infinitesimals described by Leibniz, (and later formulated as $\frac{1}{\infty}$ by Georg Cantor), but for a conceptual understanding, let us hold that the student who is of the department, which is of a faculty, is infinite progress; whereas the student who is composed of experiences and memories, $(x_1 + x_2 . . . x_n)$, which includes departmental relations, is the equivalent of infinitesimal regress. Simply stated, both progress and regress are systems of expansions, the former via addition, and the latter via division; but the idea is that both illuminate or create substance that was not apparent prior to the realization of the series. The difference between progress and regress is simply conceptual: it is to understand a whole and its role as a part, and to understand a whole as defined by its many parts. But regardless of our approach, both processes are mobilized to understand more completely the nature of the infinite, which is the aggregate of all matter and consciousness in its unending realm, expanding infinitely to infinity.

To divide Alice-the-whole into her many parts is to illuminate the building blocks of Alice’s self; but we do not stop here. If we divide continually the parts of parts, where each smaller part is also a whole of the larger part, Alice, is a product of infinite progress, so understood via infinitesimal regress: one can divide wholes into their corresponding parts in order to understand the nature of a whole which is also part of a larger, or different whole, which is the continuum of durations, or infinitesimals. That which we should seek is the nature of the continuum, the compilation of all durations expanding to infinity. Of course, we cannot know the entire nature of the universe, because it is infinite; but I argue that we can in fact understand our own place in the scheme of infinity—a universe illuminated by the consciousness of those who wish to become

enlightened through an understanding of the world surrounding each and every conscious being.

My ambition, here, is to consider Carroll's Alice as a whole comprised of many parts, or building blocks as I will call them; but I also want to discuss Alice as a part of a larger universal whole, which I will argue is the indefinite, or uncountable totality of all durations of all levels of consciousness expanding to infinity, thus with no end. That which I present suggests that my definition of possible worlds, which I apply to a work of fiction as a prototypical example of human potentiality *beyond* the literary text, is an effective way to consider the epistemological processes of human beings. Such processes have the potential to lead each individual to the center of the personal labyrinth—the mind-space—where the enigmatic infinite reveals a truth in itself relative to that given being. Possible worlds constitute a large part of individual epistemic evolution—the evolution of the mind through space—and what the fictional dream-world of Wonderland offers readers is more than a fantastical escape from reality: it realizes the necessity of multiple durations in every being. Duration necessarily implies continuity, yet we see that actual-world qualifications of possible-world “illogic” and “nonsensicality” are products of various internal durations, but are too often perceived as illogical or nonsensical strictly because they appear not to correspond with one's actual world understanding of the phenomena of life; to bond “possible” with “illogical” is the denial of potentiality, because what could be is dismissed as impossible. Following this logic, I argue that such socially-imposed binaries on the self can, in many cases, be eliminated, or at very least relaxed, so as to allow individuals to profit from the data of their consciousness, albeit consciousness of an internal duration at a different level of consciousness.⁵² Binaries are, in many cases, a display of ignorance—bias that leads to divisiveness, as well as common logic which stipulates that one must follow a pre-determined institutionally-created system of logic, or else appear mad or out of touch. But what we see in Wonderland is a

⁵² I say “levels of consciousness” to describe the connection between perception and actual-world “logic.” For example, in a dream-state, which is a possible world, Alice joins the Mad Hatter for tea, though it is a subversion of the tea service she would join in the actual world. Although this experience constitutes both consciousness and duration, the connection between the logic she would use in the actual world and her perceptions within Wonderland have a weaker correspondence than the logic she would use to contemplate whether she would take her tea with lemon or milk, which is, by standard philosophical and theoretical definition, a possible world.

variant duration unified in one body: Alice, who is of many parts, and who will become part of a whole, that is, the continuum.

British anarchist Herbert Read explains that “what we apprehend of the nature of things is subject to constant change, and the change is not so much inherent in the thing itself—in matter—as in our consciousness or apprehension of these essences” (146). Thus we see that our understanding of the world in which we live—the actual world—is in constant flux as our perception is shaped by the various internal durations. As a consequence, when one embraces such fluctuation it becomes very difficult to adhere to the socially or self-imposed binaries that lead to a sort of black and white model of thought. Read continues to argue that “essences do not change, nor do they subsist in space or time. They are merely there when we perceive them. They belong to the object, but can exist without its material presence, like the grin of the Cheshire cat in *Alice in Wonderland*” (146). Read’s description of unchanging essences supports my claim that possible worlds of internal durations of one being do in fact exist with or without the prerogative of other beings; and what is more, they are independent of socially-constructed binaries that demarcate one idea from another, thus making “right” and “wrong” the sole judge of all individual experience. Binaries attempt to bar the synthesis of durations within the individual, not to mention the cohesiveness of the individual with the continuum of durations. As such, we find no whole, but instead many directionless parts. Read’s argument also points out that the core of *x*-being does not change, because an essence or core is not an aggregate, but is organic and essential to the nature of the aggregate. I would extend Read’s logic concerning unchanging and eternal essences to argue that the only unity or homogeneous whole of unchanging essence is universal space—whose core is the very particle that brought it into existence. It is everything within space that changes, but all matter does have at its core a portion of space, because matter is of space, and thus the essence of space is extended to all matter upon the continuum.

In our considerations of wholes of many parts, alongside wholes of the whole, (*i.e.* the endlessly expanding infinite), I want to take this opportunity to contemplate whether it is in fact true that the whole is the unbounded and evolving aggregate of all durations—fictional or actual—with each part of the whole owning the potential of

experiencing the sweetness of infinity in various states of consciousness, because each part is a fragment of the infinite.⁵³ This “sweetness” in Italian is *dolcezza*, and I borrow Moevs’s definition, which is, “the sweetness of infinity and unity tasted in the finite” (9). This fraction of infinity is quite similar to Leibniz’s statement that:

It can indeed be said that every substance bears in some sort the character of God’s infinite wisdom and omnipotence, and imitates him as much as it is able to do; for it expresses, although confusedly, all that happens in the universe, past, present and future, deriving thus a certain resemblance to an infinite perception or power of knowing. (*Metaphysics* 10)

In a secular context, God can be replaced with “total consciousness,” which signifies individual durations that I equate to the infinitesimals of the continuum of universal space, which I argue is infinite.⁵⁴ Each finite individual has the potential to experience *dolcezza* within one or each of their own internal durations, simply because the totality of durations includes individual thinker *a*, and therefore *a* is a fraction of the composite substance of the universe, or total consciousness affiliated with universal homogeneous universal duration. *Dolcezza* is to realize one’s place in the world, and to act out this part in such a way that the mind matures and the self is in constant self-amelioration. At this moment the mind becomes a powerful tool of potentiality to do or create *x*-reality, and while immersed in new realities—new possible worlds and durations—one will, each in one’s own way, experience the sweetness of infinity due to the infinite *potentiality* of the mind-space, which is facilitated by the brain belonging to one’s actual-world corporeality, though the latter is itself limited by temporal finitude.⁵⁵ *Dolcezza* exists

⁵³ One could use this to argue in favour of Leibniz’s continuum, because the infinite is not a whole, but it expands infinitely to infinity, yet it can never be considered complete, because its unbounded nature as space frees it from the finitude of matter; and this is due to the fact that all matter is originally of one particle, therefore designating all matter and substance as infinitesimals. Matter began in one particle (1), and thus divides infinitely without limitation, thus never reaching zero, necessarily implying that everything that is of the continuum has substance, as signified by the cardinal number 1 and its infinitely many parts.

⁵⁴ The term “infinite” can be defined in various ways. I use the term to describe all of existence, which is all consciousness and all durations—past and present (and eventually the future as an event passes through present into the past). Although I do not go so deep as to define the existence of atoms and particles unseen by the human eye, we know that they exist, and we know that we do not understand every working component, or building block, of the universe. In this knowledge of our own deficit we signify its potentiality to advance, and that means that the object *a* has the potentiality to be actualized by a mind, given the circumstances that consciousness alone allows us to acknowledge the presence of environmental objects whether they exist as a projection of consciousness, or as *a priori* to consciousness.

⁵⁵ When I say that the mind is infinite in potentiality and that the body is finite, it appears contradictory; but what I want to underscore is that potentiality is not limited so long as there is consciousness, which implies a responsive brain in an actively live body. One cannot have infinite potentiality forever, then; but one’s potentiality is limited by nothing except itself while the body is live in the actual world.

already within the individual—it is immanent—and it is discovered in the persistent exploration of the labyrinth of the mind.

Immediately upon reading the poem preceding the actual story of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, we see an instance of events moving through duration. Carroll crafts a poem that tells the vague history of Wonderland's creation, but although the poem is placed first, it is written retrospectively. "All in the golden afternoon / Full leisurely we glide: / For both our oars, with little skill, / By little arms are plied" (Carroll *i*). These little arms are those of "three tongues" (*i*), or the three girls rowing down the river with Wonderland's creator, who writes of the "dream-child moving through a land / Of wonders wild and new, / In friendly chat with bird or beast— / And half believe it true" (*i*). Alice is introduced to the tale of Wonderland in the rowboat, half believing the fantasies to be true, and the poem is more akin to a sad lament for the loss of childhood. In fact, Alice's journey through Wonderland comes to a close as she awakens to find herself still upon the bank of the river with her older sister, who responds to Alice's account of her dream about Wonderland, saying "It *was* a curious dream, dear, certainly; but now run in to your tea: it's getting late" (102). Her sister displays a vague pretense that an older sibling develops as they mature, but "she too began dreaming after a fashion . . . the whole placed around her became alive with the strange creatures of her little sister's dream" (103), as "she sat on, with closed eyes, and half believed herself in Wonderland, though she knew she had but to open them again, and all would change to *dull reality*" (104; emphasis mine). Before I address the duration which flows from the riverboat ride and into Alice's dream with the solemn poem to follow, I want to point out a parallel between the narrator's account of the sister's thought processes and the joy which Alice's sister finds when engaging with what *could be*: the Wonderland of the mind-space. The poem speaks of "wonders new" that the adventurer "half believe it true" (*i*), just as the sister "half believed herself in Wonderland" (104), knowing only that in opening her eyes, it would be gone, much akin to the poetic reminiscence on Wonderland as a "childish" story that should "with a gentle hand, / Lay it where Childhood's dreams are twined / In memory's mystic band" (*ii*). We see the sister come close to returning to the story of Wonderland, for which she pleaded to hear as a child, but she reverts—almost as conscious choice to forget fairy tales—back to the "dull reality" of the actual-

world logic expected of a maturing child. Meanwhile we read that Wonderland is “Like pilgrim’s wither’d wreath of flowers / Pluck’d in a far-off land” (*ii*). The poem charts Wonderland’s very beginning, but a tone of sadness prevails. The wreath of flowers, much like the one Alice considers crafting as she lays beside the river (1), has been woven in Wonderland by a wandering pilgrim—also resembling Alice—but has faded and withered as time has progressed and the memory of Wonderland fades into the oblivion of the maturing mind, where actual-world logic is the only acceptable currency of thought.

We see the apparent flow of time as it progresses from a fantastical story from the girls’ childhood to Alice’s “curious” dream, and to the poet’s admission of Wonderland’s fading relevance—events that are indeed situated in socially-constructed time, though it is duration which reveals the large-scale or universal irrelevance of time. In fact, as far as the motions of the universe are concerned, time does not exist—there is just no need beyond human consciousness. We cannot conceive of time’s movement through space without the assistance of temporal markers; it is the use of qualifiers like “after lunch” or “before dusk” that give rise to the illusion of time as relevant outside of institutionally-created spaces. Duration, on the other hand, often goes unnoticed in our states of consciousness, but it is the sole register of *all* events experienced in the individual mind-space, as well all events experienced by all beings in the actual, physical world of reality. By “space,” I mean simply the fabric of life—the stage upon which we enact the data of consciousness as an event—and with every event there is a trace of its presence, past or present; duration is the universal and homogeneous continuum of memory, a compilation of subjective durations, and is therefore immeasurable by a system of numbers.

On the topic of subjectivity, I want to expand on my earlier definition of mind-space. In addition to this conceptual notion of a mind occupying a certain realm in total space, the mind-space is also the subjective synthesis of all durations of that particular being. I have argued that we understand space through temporal markers that manifest in the form of events, and we understand that space is necessary in order for time to exist, but if there is nothing in space, then how do we, as visually oriented thinkers, conceive of space? Of course, we have the realities of buildings and trees, but this does not account for the fabric of the mind-space, a purely subjective zone. The mind possesses an

imagination, whereas the world—universal space—is a prop for the continuum of durations, including imagined or possible worlds. Therefore, we see instances of imagination in particular durations, because imagination is simply another variant of perception via a different level of consciousness. Consciousness is another defining quality of the mind-space in the cognitive and perceiving being-in-the-world; and universal space is, again, the fabric onto which human consciousness maps its individual events and realities in internal durations. Space is homogeneous and it serves to unite heterogeneous matter as an aggregate, and this homogeneous space both influences the individual and is influenced or acted upon by the individual. Said otherwise, homogeneous space, in a sense, “holds” various other durations that impact the being; and likewise, this single being impacts the durations surrounding it in homogeneous space.

Bergson describes durations as “the form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself *live*, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states” (*Time* 100). What we see, here, is that duration is in its most perfect form when it moves through the mind unconsciously, and Bergson likens it to notes of a tune “melting, so to speak, into one another” (103). One lives within the continuum of durations—every possible internal duration projected into universal space—and a certain form of duration exists within one’s own mind. Bergson explains that “we are led to believe that real duration, the duration lived by [our] consciousness, is the same as the duration which glides over the inert atoms without penetrating them and altering them” (154). Thus we see a pattern: the internal-external battle; we note that mind-space is subjective and individuated, whereas universal space is objective, yet impersonal; and now we observe that duration, too, exists within this battle between interiority and exteriority. Duration that shapes one’s character—one’s mind—is internal duration; it is subjective, but also affective, because it both perceives the events in relation to the self, and records the affective response of the self in memory as a process of learning, or epistemic evolution. External duration is passive and impersonal, but it exists of necessity, because without external duration there can be no internal duration. The words “duration” and “space” are synonymous because universal space is the continuum of durations due to the fact that duration *is* homogeneous space, which is why

duration cannot be quantified, and often operates unknown to the human mind (162).

When Alice enters Wonderland as she falls asleep on the bank of the river, she does so by falling into a well, and this is the first noted experience of the relativity or subjectivity of duration. The narrator informs readers that:

[e]ither the well was very deep, or she fell very slowly, for she had plenty of time as she went down to look about her, and to wonder what was going to happen next. First, she tried to look down and make out what she was coming to, but it was too dark to see anything: then she looked at the sides of the well, and noticed that they were filled with cupboards and bookshelves: here and there she saw maps and pictures hung upon pegs. She took down a jar from one of the shelves as she passed: it was labelled 'ORANGE MARMELADE' but to her great disappointment it was empty: she did not like to drop the jar, for fear of killing somebody underneath, so managed to put it into one of the cupboards as she fell past it. (Carroll 2)

At first glance we observe that Alice does not fall at a rate that acknowledges actual-world laws of gravity, because in falling so far the first response would likely be terror, as the fight or flight response takes over the mind; but Alice has time to look at maps and pictures, as well as open a jar of marmalade, only to find it empty and return it to another shelf, because in this possible world, actual-world time—whose nature is fundamental to the concept of gravity⁵⁶—has no bearing on such events. Bergson argues that:

For though we reach a sum by taking into account a succession of different terms, yet it is necessary that each of these terms should remain when we pass to the following and should wait . . . to be added to the others: how could it wait, if it were nothing but an instant in duration? And where could it wait if we did not localize it in space? ("Time" 78-9)

Duration is the "fabric" that unites instances in both internal events in consciousness, as well as all events that occur in all durations within universal duration. We see and conceive of space based on the events woven into its body; without events, space would be invisible to the eye, and arguably if there is nothing to validate space, then we must ask logically whether duration exists. But of course, this is a circular line of reasoning, because we could not question the existence of duration if there were none, as there would be no consciousness and the experiential data which accompanies it; duration exists, so this question would be ridiculed, because there is life and consciousness, and necessarily, then, duration. We understand impersonal, or homogeneous duration, via the juxtaposition of visible matter and identifiable phenomena relative to other matter and

⁵⁶ So measured by the *rate* at which an object falls.

phenomena, and we understand that the changing nature of these substances is due to motion. As motion is energy that moves matter, it must have space in which to move. Without space there could exist no matter—space is the fabric of existence of any and all kinds of matter and substance. To question the validity of duration would be the equivalent of asking whether there is such a thing as death, because I have not died, and therefore I experience death from a detached view, and may wonder if this, too, will be my fate, though yet it has not been such. But these sorts of questions are the ones that must be asked, because when we focus on what is viewed as apparent or obvious, we are more likely to encounter ideas and realities that have been overlooked in the zealotry of the enlightened being, who pursues only empirical data to construct his or her understanding of the world. In the actual world in which *we* exist, a common mechanism of self-preservation is the autonomous being who attempts to establish a well-grounded understanding of the world, which in the existentialistic discourses that render human will and self-direction arbitrary amidst socio-political institutions bring to the individual a sense of security. We craft this security in our minds—this security is an aspiration, a dream, a goal—it is a potentiality; one can choose either to ignore the possible world bliss as non-pragmatic, or one can act on this sense of security by rejecting the empirical argument that matter is tangible alone, and all that is non-tangible is impossible.

On a superficial level, Wonderland is diametrically opposed to empiricism, but if empiricism is based on deductive facts with verifiable data, then it seems as if we can describe Alice's first encounter in Wonderland based on this model, however ridiculous this may seem. Alice finally reaches the floor of the well, and discovers a bottle and "tied around the neck of the bottle was a paper label, with the words "DRINK ME" beautifully printed on it in large letters (Carroll 5). Naturally, Alice wonders if it is poison, but determines that "the bottle was *not* marked 'poison,'" so [she] ventured to taste it, and finding it very nice (it had, in fact, a sort of mixed flavour of cherry-tart, custard, pineapple, roast turkey . . . [and] very soon finished it off" (6). Though Alice is rather pleased to find that the mixture was not poisonous, she is equally satisfied with her new height of ten inches (6). As is the case of Alice's extended fall down the well, a being in the actual world would be both mortified and terrified to become a mere ten inches tall, but this is because a being in the actual world is aware of the actual-world ramifications

for a person who is but ten inches tall. This height would be a tremendous handicap, but equally shocking is that it negates all empirical data that would validate the total impossibility of such circumstances. Alice's reasoning is deductive, but her motive for such reasoning is informed by possible-world logic, and as such when Alice finds herself a ten-inch tall girl she is thrilled now to be "the right size for going through the little door into the lovely garden" (6). The crushing force of defeat in actual-world events is a rational triumph in the possible world. Alice's defiance of Newtonian physics exists in the dream because it is *possible*; though I must emphasize that "actual" does not necessarily follow "possible," though what would appear empirically impossible can manifest in the actual world in a different form. Therefore, the possible-world deductive reasoning becomes the data of consciousness, and individual consciousness is the entirety of that being, necessarily implicating possible worlds as data of consciousness, which finds its ontological bearings in the actual world of the corporeal being. Possible world data are in fact experience, but though it may be possible, it may not be plausible in the same *form* which it takes in the possible world, but I will return to this point shortly.

It would appear that Alice is not conscious of her situation, because we do not see any correspondence between actual-world logic and possible-world events. But needing to change size again, Alice eats a portion of the cake:

And said anxiously to herself "Which way? Which way?" holding her hand on the top of her head to feel which way it was growing; and she was quite surprised to find that she remained the same size. To be sure, this is what generally happens when one eats cake; but Alice had got so much into the way of expecting nothing but out-of-the-way things to happen, that it seemed quite dull and stupid for life to go on in the common way.
(Carroll 7)

It is quite apparent that Alice *is* in fact conscious of her situation: she attempts to measure the size that she expects to become, which necessarily implies that she relies on her memory of the early shrinking incident to anticipate what might occur in a similar situation to follow, which implies memory. According to Bergson, consciousness is apparent "by its most obvious feature: it means, before anything else, memory" (*Mind* 3). Alice's fall through the well, followed by the non-poisonous potion, and the incident of the cake signifies not only durations within her mind-space, but the importance of memory as the primary feature of consciousness. Memory is pertinent to consciousness,

because it affirms one's own internal duration; this internal duration is the flow of events through Alice's mind-space and her engagement with the actual world, which furnishes the mind-space with the content on which it dwells. These events constitute psychological matter, as Bergson explains in *Time and Free Will*, but in order for them to take form, they must be swept up by consciousness (152); thus we find that it is the experiential data of consciousness in the flow of duration, recalled by memory that verifies one's existence and one's self. To be conscious indicates the active presence of pure duration, which means that events and their subsequent experiential data flow through the mind as a homogeneous whole, and not a juxtaposed awareness of events, formulated as such:

$$n_1 + n_2 \dots \rightarrow \infty .$$

Prior to describing Alice's own internal set of durations, I want to explore both one building block lower and one higher by way of the divisive and unifying power of language. As Alice wanders through the woods, she comes across the Cheshire Cat, of whom she asks the direction in which she should go; he responds: "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to" (49). The Cheshire Cat's comments seem confrontational and unhelpful, but this is a game of logic that Carroll creates throughout the text, and this logic breaks concepts into parts in infinitesimal regress. Alice responds, "I don't much care where—" to which the Cat replies, "Then it doesn't matter which way you go" (49). Alice then counters the Cat to qualify the vagueness of her former comment in saying: "so long as I get *somewhere*" (49), thinking that she has solidified her logic via specificity—*so long as* perceived by Alice as a means of receiving a finite and definitive answer—but her logic is shattered again by the Cat's ability to work towards the lowest common logical denominator: "Oh, you're sure to do that . . . if you only walk long enough" (50). Here, we can identify the divisive power of language, which in this particular case, finds its form in deductive logic. Alice asks a question expecting one answer, only to find that with each new qualification she becomes increasingly confused, as opposed to her initial hope of finding the right path. But this path is in no way defined, which thus allows the Cat to reduce each question and qualifier to sub-questions and qualifiers, and through this reading of *Wonderland* we find that infinitesimal regress is an expansion of the apparent into its many parts, which are then treated as separate wholes. Therefore, infinitesimal regress—if mapped on paper—would appear as Δ , an equilateral

triangle signifying what is truly inductive logic, which counters the model of deductive reasoning often described as narrowing possibilities akin to the image of an overturned equilateral triangle. In the end, the divisiveness of the cat's logic actually exacerbates Alice's confusion, and she becomes frustrated by the various possibilities that expand the potential outcomes, when truly that which she desires is to narrow down the possibilities, so as to find an answer to her seemingly simplistic question. If we consider the equilateral triangle as a symbol for inductive reasoning, we see that the cat has expanded the possible outcomes via infinitesimal regress, because he begins with one datum and expands outwards, much akin to inductivity. This process of regression has the possibility to divide without end, but in terms of individual consciousness, the subject of division does not notice the process; they *cannot* notice the process, because the fluidity of our internal duration does not allow us to recall each instance of cause and effect that leads to the created whole by which we view ourselves in the present. In terms of space and mind-space, we cannot view ourselves objectively from beyond our mind-space, because that is the limit of our consciousness; and likewise, no human being can think beyond the infinite body of space, because beyond the infinite there is neither nothing nor something; there is only the infinite,⁵⁷ and it has no Other by which we can juxtapose and compare their natures. Thus we find that the mind-space functions by similar principles as universal space, and I would argue that this similarity is due to the continuum of infinitesimals.

If we recall the chapter concerning Lawrence Durrell and the void, we can see that the protagonist has many identities, each akin to a fragment of a shattered mirror; as a consequence, the shards of mirror reflect the shards surrounding it, so each shard is a reflection of another, therefore, each shard is influenced by those which surround it. Then, if we were to consider the infinite as an entire mirror—a mirror that is free of cracks, because it represents the homogeneity of universal space—then we would find only that the infinite reflects nothing, because no matter or substance exists outside of the

⁵⁷ One possible objection to saying that there is *only* the infinite is that, in terms of natural science, space is believed to be infinite, yet it continues to expand at such a rate that we cannot conceive of following its movement. But in order to expand, it seems that there must be something into which the infinite can that we describe expand, which necessarily implies that there *is* something outside and beyond the infinite. In order to settle this matter, my suggestion is simply space as infinite, because our technology cannot follow the expansion of space at the speed of light, so we must settle with the term “infinite” which seems to be synonymous with the unimaginable, or inconceivable.

infinite, which is the aggregate of all matter, substance, and energy; it is the incomplete and ever-evolving aggregate of the totality of all that exists in duration. Let us consider this analogy in terms of the continuum, which can be equated to Bergsonian pure duration—the complete mirror is space, and all that occurs within space does so relative to its position on the continuum. Moreover, this is a continuum of infinitesimals, and therefore it is unending—it is the incomplete aggregate. As such, each point on the continuum that represents matter in motion, (which demands human consciousness in order for it to self-realize that it exists, simply because the point is a human being, and it is events in duration that surround the being), is the equivalent of an Euclidian point, which I have discussed in the Flaubert chapter. Thus every point is a being, and each being is unique, but at its core it still contains a portion of its beginning—its ontological roots are of the first particle and the motion, (energy), that ensues. Stated otherwise, according to the mirror analogy, each point, or possible world, can be considered a shard of mirror that reflects those which surround it; and as a shard, its necessary beginning was of the unbroken mirror, and is therefore a shard that has at its core a fragment of the whole mirror, which is akin to the notion of *dolcezza*: the individual fragment of infinity. We find, then, that each being is autonomous and free-thinking, and as a result *a life* begins to create the “worlds within worlds” as described by Leibniz. Said otherwise, each being extends outwards, and in each instance of energetic movement—objectively physical or subjectively psychological—new durations develop in the mind-space; and each duration is projected upon the fabric of universal space—the continuum—by way of the trace of human presence in space. Just as these sub-durations or micro-worlds reflect their creator, their ontologies coinciding with their own first mover, so too do the Euclidian points upon the continuum, or instances of new and individuated consciousness, reflect that original particle of the universe. That which is of the mind-space extends itself into space, but reflects the *initial* (the Alpha, the first) Euclidean point; and likewise, that which originates as a unique and individuated vessel of consciousness in space reflects—like a fragmented mirror—the essence of its ontological origin.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Essentially, this is quite similar to the logic of Xenophanes, who said “If cows and horses had hands and could draw, cows would draw gods that looked like cows and horses would draw gods that looked like horses.” The original particle would thus be the anthropomorphized (except we would change this term to describe an animal envisioning a god in its likeness) cow or horse, and it would be created by the corresponding cow or horse, which in this analogy would be the

As Alice continues her possible-world conversation with the Cheshire Cat, readers see a shift in the discourse: The Cat stops using divisive qualifiers that expose the composition of each of Alice's thoughts, and he begins to build a first-person plural foundation for unity: "we" + "all." It seems glaringly obvious, but in Wonderland there is an important distinction we must consider in terms of personal pronouns, and Alice does this well. In her vexing conversation with the Cat, Alice asks "What sort of people live about here?" (50), and the Cat kindly informs her that both the Hatter and the March Hare live to his left and to his right; they are "mad" (50). Alice counters this comment that she "[doesn't] want to go among mad people," but in her own belief that she is sane, the Cat draws her into the "we," thus making Alice a building block of Wonderland itself. The Cat, perfectly complacent, informs Alice: "we're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad," and when Alice demands that the Cat substantiate his claim, he offers additional deductive reason: "You must be [mad] . . . or you wouldn't be here" (50). Alice becomes a collective "we" in Wonderland, and resists this collective for only a marginal period of time before refusing to reject this logic; or more straightforward, she realizes the logic of Wonderland-logic and embraces it. In essence, Alice code-switches: though the language in terms of diction and words is identical to her own actual world (and to speakers of English), Wonderland logic uses the same diction, but its syntactical-semantic correspondence is different based on the association of words in a cause-effect formula. Alice demands of the Cat which "sort" of people live in Wonderland, and he responds that it is the mad who live here; but as a direct consequence of Alice's *assumption* that her state of being exemplifies what it means to be sane, she sees herself as other to those who are mad. Nonetheless, the Wonderland rhetoric envelops Alice, and she becomes a part of Wonderland—a building block of her own dream in Wonderland. Alice is the protagonist of her dream, which is a possible world within her mind-space, and this inclusive and unifying label of "we" makes Alice a building block for Wonderland in her own possible world; and, to follow, Wonderland is a building block in the composition of Alice's actual-world self.⁵⁹ This logic seems circuitous, but it is not in the least. Echoing

Euclidean points: each point is of the first particle, and thus they resemble the first particle and identify its presence in them, even if they are so far removed from this particle that there is no corresponding image.

⁵⁹ For clarification purposes, Alice's actual world is, to Carroll's readers, a possible world whereas Alice's possible world is a sub-reality in Alice's life. When I refer to Alice's actual world, this is a fictional actual world, but for the sake of understanding the dynamic nature of possible worlds in *our own* actual world—we, the readers—I avoid the

the logic of Lawrence Durrell, that “nonsense is good sense with all sense removed” (“Heraldic” 72), we see that due to the internal duration flowing between Alice’s actual world and possible world, she is able to project experiential data from the actual world—the childhood story of Wonderland—onto the space of her mind in the form of a dream. The level of consciousness that crafts Alice’s dream as a possible world is derived from the events of the actual world—the childhood story of Wonderland—and she places her own “self” as the protagonist of a possible-world adventure through Wonderland. Therefore, readers see that Alice shapes the events of her dream; yet upon waking, Wonderland’s existence, as both a story and a dream, becomes an undeniable part of her self—it is a building block that informs the “whole” Alice, the combination of all internal durations in one body, which is yet another duration within the continuum of durations, that is, the universal duration or infinite space. However, as Alice departs from the dream to begin to transition back into the actual world, the Queen’s soldiers, who resemble playing cards with feet and hands, revert to their “whole” form as *a* deck of cards, and:

rose up into the air, and came flying down upon her; she gave a little scream . . . and tried to beat them off, and found herself . . . with her head in the lap of her sister, who was gently brushing away some dead leaves that had fluttered down from the trees upon her face. (Carroll 102)

On dreams, Bergson states that “To hear sounds in a dream, it is generally necessary that real sounds should be perceived. Out of nothing the dream can make nothing” (*Mind* 67), and that “it is out of real sensation that we fabricate the dream” (69). It makes sense, then, that Alice awakens to find her sister brushing leaves off of her face, because inside the dream Alice frantically attempts to swat away the deck of cards falling upon her as the dream-world collapses.

Describing her dream as “curious,” Alice runs off to take her afternoon tea, “thinking while she ran, as well she might, what a wonderful dream it had been” (Carroll 102). Such a smooth transition signifies the continuous flow of data between actual and possible worlds. Alice has heard the story of Wonderland many times as she grew up, and her fondness for the story furnishes her possible world, which enters her mind-space as a dream that seems like reality; and it appears like reality because the shifting of her

redundant designation whenever possible, granted that readers understand that the actual world I describe is still fictional, albeit an exemplary prototype for my argument concerning possible worlds.

conscious states from waking to sleeping, and then to dreaming, are synthesized upon awakening as an “event” in consciousness that registers as a separate duration, though one that belongs to her self. Alice is the aggregate of her many durations, but in conferring upon herself the pronoun “I,” it is simple to see that in spite of various durations within Alice’s mind-space, she views herself as singular—she views herself as one; *I*; a whole. Alice is *a* self, and such a reality is likewise in the actual world of Carroll’s readers.⁶⁰

In Alice’s conversation with the Cheshire Cat, we find that Alice’s sentences can be broken down by infinitesimal regression, which appears to exclude her from Wonderland logic; at the same time, however, the Cat’s shift in reasoning leads to his adoption of the inclusive “we,” and readers find that Alice becomes part of the building block of Wonderland, which illuminates the fact that building blocks of many parts can increase in infinite progress at a swift pace, as well. Thus we see through the course of the novel the explicit heterogeneous wholes: Alice of many parts to Alice as part of a whole; and Alice of many parts, whose parts have individual parts, and each part has its own heterogeneous composition, *ad infinitum*. These wholes of many parts are the continuum to which I refer—Leibniz explains it as the continuum of infinitesimals, with each infinitesimal as a point that divides to infinity, therefore there are infinitely many infinities, or “worlds within worlds.” Richard Arthur explains that:

The doctrine of ‘worlds within worlds’ to infinity is held to be a consequence of continuity. Because of the infinite divisibility of the continuum, [Leibniz] says . . . that it is certainly possible that smaller things will have proportionately the same qualities as larger ones, and so on to infinity. (Arthur *xxxii*)

Thus we see that each unique point, (an infinitesimal to which I refer earlier as a Euclidean point), divides infinitely, so there must be infinitely many parts, and necessarily infinitely many components to each point; hence the infinite potentiality of

⁶⁰ I want to acknowledge that regardless of Leibniz’s insistence that there are no wholes which are composites, and in spite of my revision to Leibniz, where I argue that a composite can be an aggregate that constitutes a complete whole (although ever-evolving) upon the infinite continuum, I would still contend that a finite being as a composite can be a whole simply because it is finite: when it expires, it has been completed. Space is infinite and thus never complete; matter cannot follow this rule.

the mind, whose composition is of infinitely many substances—*actual or potential*—which expand to infinity.

The processes of infinite progress and infinitesimal regress as the building blocks of individuals and their durations imply consistent motion of various parts through the flow of universal space, because consciousness relies on the existence of duration (*i.e.* space), and duration requires the energy of motion through which matter evolves and leaves its trace upon the canvas of space. It seems logical to conclude, then, that all durations—which are the totality of durations in human consciousness—are in constant flux. The constant flux of universal duration is a result of its heterogeneous parts united as a homogeneous whole. Each of these parts are distinguished as human durations, which Bergson describes as the growth of the self as it:

expands and changes as it passes through the two contrary states [a state of consciousness that is aware of two actions, but only one possibility]: if not, how would it ever come to a decision? Hence there are not exactly two contrary states, but a large number of successive and different states within which I distinguish, by an effort of imagination, two opposite directions . . . in reality there are not two tendencies, or even two directions, but a self which lives and develops by means of its very hesitations. (*Time* 175)

These hesitations highlight the existence of traditional Possible Worlds theory from the realms of philosophy and literary theory, yet at the same time we see that in the self's "hesitations" there are the brief moment of consideration, which I have discussed earlier in relation to the void in Durrell's "Zero." The void between actual and possible worlds is a flash of the mind's energy and the data it relies upon to make choice *a* rather than *b*. Nonetheless, substance—though not yet actualized into a more definitive form—rises from such a choice, because for each thought process in the void, which beckons the fruition of substances, the energy involved in this process creates substance out of the "kinetic energy," so called by Bergson. But substance cannot come of nothing, which necessarily implies the existence of *some* substance that was, until that moment of realization, immanent: present, yet not realized. This immanent data is that which fuels the process of entelechy, where the conscious mind-space realizes the presence of substance, and works to actualize it; and in its actualization, the entelechial process produces the substance that allows the cycle of entelechy to repeat as each new instance or realization of immanent substance rises in one's consciousness. What I want to

consider more carefully is the pure potentiality of the mind-space of both internal and external durations to do or actualize x by way of bringing the data of consciousness into the actual world, in one way or another.

Alice's croquet mallet—the flamingo—which she uses when the Red Queen invites her to play, is in a slightly foul mood, and the Duchess, now appearing before Alice, is “doubtful about the temper of [her] flamingo” (Carroll 74). Alice responds that “He might bite,” though we find that Alice did not feel “at all anxious to have the experiment tried” (74). But as they continue to exchange words, the Duchess and Alice become increasingly distant from each other, in a figural sense, as the Duchess contemplates the moral of mustard: ““The more there is of mine, the less there is of yours,”” whereas Alice, who exists within a completely different duration, exclaims that mustard is “a vegetable. It doesn't look like one, but it is” (74). Clearly this is no mutual exchange of thoughts, but rather two streams of consciousness spatially located in close semantic proximity each to the other. But soon their monologues converge at the dialogic intersection of durations, and the Duchess responds to Alice's argument that mustard is a vegetable with the comment she finds most appropriate, which, we can see, is mildly related to the discussion of mustard:

“I quite agree with you,” said the Duchess; “and the moral of that is—“Be what you would seem to be”—or, if you'd like it put more simply—
“Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise that what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise.” (74)

More a riddle than a moral, the Duchess adds to the growing confusion of Wonderland as Alice's dream comes to a close; but Alice does not seem confused—in fact, she seems completely comfortable with the riddle, if only the Duchess would write it down (74). But if we deconstruct the riddle, it could be reformulated as: “I am otherwise than I appear to others in relation to their understanding of how I could have been, which they want to see as congruous with what I truly have been, because—if not—I would appear otherwise to their conception of who I am.” To simplify the formula further and place it in the context of the internal durations of others that, in one way or another, permeate our own internal duration, one could say: “I should imagine myself as wholly different in any potential or actual state of being than how others see me in my current state of being (which I likely see differently than they). Others wish to see congruity between what I

could have been if x and what I currently am as: y , because without this continuity I would be viewed as ‘otherwise,’ but not the type of ‘otherwise’ by which I define myself. (Others desire to see me as x , in any past or present duration, even if I define myself as y : $x = y$ but $y \neq x$.)” The Duchess assures Alice that this riddle is a present, and, to Alice’s disgust, the Duchess rests her “sharp little chin” on Alice’s shoulders (74). “Alice did not much like [the Duchess] keeping so close to her: first because the Duchess was *very* ugly; and secondly, because she was exactly the height to rest her chin on Alice’s shoulder, and it was an uncomfortably sharp chin” (73), but though Alice’s external reaction is one of general patience, her internal consciousness is plagued with the feeling of an invasion of her personal space. Given that this possible world belongs to Alice’s dream-state plane of consciousness, it is no surprise when the Duchess must face the Red Queen, who hisses: “either you or your head must be off, and that in about half no time! Take your choice!” (75). How fortunate for Alice that this bothersome projection of her own consciousness is eliminated from the scene by the threat of corporeal elimination—her impending execution in the dream world, if she refuses to vanish within the half second. Ironically, the Duchess “jabs” her chin into Alice’s shoulder, so for her to face the threat of decapitation does serve Alice’s possible-world self-interest best; but more importantly, what would enrage one in the actual world can manifest in the possible world in a hypothetical context that bears no consequences. Cutting off the Duchess’s head, which includes the chin which “jabs” Alice, is both humorous and eerie in the sense that the unconscious portion of the mind is free to act in the possible world, thus revealing that which lies beneath rational consciousness, and the self-censorship of internal dialogues that determine *when* one must act according to the binary of “right” and “wrong.”

As readers approach the final result of the entelechial cycle of Alice’s levels of consciousness, (*i.e.* dreaming, waking, imagining, *etcetera*), they come to recognize Alice’s moment of *dolcezza*. It is the moment of epiphany of Alice’s own consciousness of herself—her presence—in the world; it is Bergsonian intuition—the “direct vision of the mind by the mind—nothing intervening, no refraction through the prism”—that propels Alice towards the sweetness of infinity (*Creative* 20). To actualize the data of the mind-space, giving matter its form in the actual world, is the active consciousness that speaks to the harmony between internal durations and the universal space in which we

function daily. It appears that Alice becomes increasingly aware of her surroundings and her ability to exercise power over the matter surrounding her, and she possesses a heightened consciousness in the dream-state. Moving through the mad tea party and the trial at the end of the dream, Alice begins to impress upon the space of Wonderland—her mind-space—the authority that she holds as this world’s very creator. This epistemic maturation is a result of this particular duration in the possible world of Wonderland, Alice’s consciousness evokes her faculty of memory, which allows her to create in this possible world a narrative of self. What is more, the narrative of self is an act of self-definition relative to the Others in her own possible world, and this act is completed via Alice’s expanded consciousness and awareness of the trace she leaves upon this space. It is a space that is *of* Alice, and in reciprocation, a space upon which Alice impresses her existence, hence the act of self-definition. The events of Wonderland have impressed themselves upon the fabric of Alice’s mind-space as psychical data—events which leave a trace in Alice’s consciousness, resulting in epistemic maturation or evolution sustained by her memory of where she began, and her anticipation of where she might end. The journey through Wonderland is thus a cycle of infinitesimal regress, where Alice’s consciousness expands via the possible world, and evolves due to her newfound experiential data. This data is crafted in one duration of the mind-space—for Alice, this is her subconscious—and transferred to the possible-world dream-state. The beauty of possible worlds, then, is that an individual can craft his or her own spaces, in which he or she engages in possible-world experiences that become the data of consciousness in an internal duration, and can therefore manifest in some form in the actual world.

Alice finds her voice in Wonderland; she realizes that it is she who has power over the events, although in her dream-state consciousness she does not recognize that her power stems from her mind, the ontological beginning of this possible world. Wandering through the Queen’s garden, Alice sees a deck of playing cards—each card an individual subject of the queen—and they are painting the roses red. As the Queen approaches, the cards fall upon their faces in her procession; and if we consider these playing cards for their actual-world value, a game of cards consists of hiding the faces of the cards, and when the faces are hidden each card appears identical to the others as a homogeneous deck—a deck, or *the* deck of cards. It is interesting to note, then, that when

various durations of one whole being—in this case, the deck of cards—face another duration—in this case, the Red Queen—each duration is viewed objectively as a whole. The Queen sees the *deck* of cards with their faces down; and the cards lower their faces as they realize the presence of *the* Queen. Thus we see Bergson’s notion of pure duration, which is indiscriminate and impersonal. Pure duration is the force which unites all heterogeneous aggregates as a network of durations in constant flux and expansion to infinity.

When the Queen comes to a halt before Alice, there is a brief yet volatile dialogue between the two aggregate beings:

“What’s your name, child?”

“My name is Alice, so please your Majesty,” said Alice very politely; but she added, to herself, “Why they’re only a pack of cards after all. I needn’t be afraid of them!”

“And who are *these*?” [referring to the cards with the paint] said the Queen . . .

“How should *I* know?” said Alice, surprised at her own courage.

“It’s no business of *mine*.” . . .

The Queen turned crimson with fury, and after glaring at her for a moment like a wild beast, began screaming “Off with her head! Off with—”

“Nonsense!” said Alice, very loudly and decidedly, and the Queen was silent. (Carroll 65)

Alice is shocked by her own bravery in the shouting match with the Queen, and the processes of her epistemic evolution and self-realization continue, and while playing croquet with the Queen, she “was looking for some way of escape” (68). The ensuing result is a sort of hilarious rendition of the Sublime: with no hint of his physical presence, the Cheshire Cat appears floating through the air—but it is simply his head, which spans across the entire green upon which they are playing croquet. Alice’s initial experience with the Cat is already part of her collected data of consciousness from Wonderland, and the image of the Cat’s floating head—which, as it fades, leaves only its smile—can be considered a visual example of the trace that one leaves in space. In a dream-state this sort of vision is not abnormal, especially given the contextual atmosphere of nonsensicality in Wonderland; and this game of croquet, composed of players of Alice’s complex internal duration, renders various responses to the enormous Cat head hovering ominously above them. In a strikingly similar situation, Flaubert’s Félicité perceives the gargantuan parrot, Loulou, hovering over her as she is about to die, but the nurses

surrounding her do not see that which Félicité believes to be true. But this incongruity speaks to the truth that reality is always subjective. This is not to say that the experiential data of everyday life is necessarily disputable or interpretive; the difference I wish to underscore is that one's *perception* of reality is subjective. It is the possible world as an internal and subjective duration that processes all that we perceive in the actual world, because it is in the possible that one decides that which *is*, that which *could be*, and that which *should be*. And our expectation of the world around us—the model that we impose on existence—shapes what we perceive as reality. Our attitude towards the actual world is determined by the internal processes of the mind-space, and thus possible worlds are both places of potentiality, and spaces of self-definition.

The sublime moment frees Alice while concurrently defusing the situation she wishes to escape, but though the thought of a cat's head hovering over the garden is comical for readers, especially for children, it signifies a synthesis of Alice's internal duration with the external universal duration. It is this very continuity that allows Alice to see herself as a whole, while viewing the experiential data of possible and actual worlds as a unified self—a whole self united in one duration of the self, and positioned relative to the universal duration, or the continuum. The synthesis is one's possible worlds united with one's *comprehension* of actual-world reality—it is the “impersonal” homogeneous duration of all that is, what can be, and what could be.

In order for the conscious being to experience *dolcezza*, there must be internal harmony. Moevs uses this term in reference to Dante Alighieri's pilgrimage through *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*, so as to become illuminated by the Divine—the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Of course, Alice is not on a spiritual journey of enlightenment, but the parallel I want to draw is one of unity. For Dante, he began his journey in Hell, and as he moved through its various rings, followed by the upward hike of Purgatory, finally gazing upon Beatrice and the rings of Paradise, the Pilgrim Dante's⁶¹ illumination is a result of a chain of events in consciousness: he must first learn about sin, retribution, penance, forgiveness, and wisdom, and it is through his own epistemic “evolution” to a larger understanding of God's nature and purpose that he

⁶¹ In the *Divine Comedy*, Dante Alighieri characterizes himself as the Pilgrim who makes a spiritual journey, which he—Dante himself—later “recounts” for the betterment of those in the finite actual world of life.

becomes worthy of his encounter with the Divine. The unity which I describe is the synthesis of the interiority of the self with the exteriority of the world, which means that the being feels unity of mind and body *in* the actual world. For Alice, we see, too, that as she moves through Wonderland and its various events, she learns tactics to orient herself in a world so foreign to her actual-world system of logic and reason. In the specific duration of her internal Wonderland Alice gains control of her own creation, and her final comment to the Queen reveals Alice's piqued consciousness in the possible world: "Who cares for *you*? Said Alice (she had grown to her full size by this time). 'You're nothing but a pack of cards!'" (102). Alice's recognition is one that recalls all of which she once feared, now easily conquered as she reframes the situation, putting herself in control of her own destiny. "At this the whole pack rose up into the air, and came flying down upon her" and as Alice begins her gradual return to the actual world, she swats away the cards falling upon her head, only to awake in the lap of her sister who brushes leaves off of Alice's hair (102). This moment—when Alice reaches the pinnacle of consciousness necessary to navigate this specific duration—is the climax of the dream; it is the moment of *dolcezza*, where Alice's consciousness finds harmony in her mind-space, and for a flash of a moment in duration Alice witnesses the unity of the Infinite from her finite position *between* possible and actual worlds. The unity that Alice witnesses in the infinite is that which Dante faces vis-à-vis the Divine; by either term it is the ever-changing infinity in constant flux; it is everything that has existed and exists at present; it is everything potential, possible, actual, imagined, perceived, externalized, and internalized, and it will continue to expand rapidly without any imaginable termination. This is a flash moment of self-realization akin to lucid dreaming, where Alice recognizes the power she has to shape both actual and possible worlds, while still remaining free from the shackles of actual-world obligations; it is the stage between sleeping and waking, the shift in consciousness. Alice, as a building block for this totality, sees but for a moment her place in the infinite, and this pleasure is a result of the harmony of durations within Alice—the parts of the whole that she does not detect as parts, but simply as experience, as pure duration, just as Bergson describes. But most importantly, this moment of *dolcezza* is Alice's revelation—that is, within her mind-space she has infinite potentiality to do or create *x*, simply because she is *of* the infinite, the first particle

that allows all other Euclidean points, or lives upon the continuum, to come into existence.

To be between possible and actual worlds is a momentary lapse in Alice's full consciousness, where intuition guides her as she transitions back into the actual world where the possible-world data of experience is unified in one entire self. *Dolcezza* is intuitive, something that is experienced internally without penetration by the actual-world realities, but this unique experience will bear its affective nature in the mind-space of the thinker, not necessarily as a memory, but as a moment of uninterrupted harmony—the dance of durations within the self, each moving around the other as an intricate whole in constant motion akin to the celestial spheres. Bergson's description of this moment as one akin of *dolcezza*:

The intuition we refer to then bears above all upon internal duration. It grasps a succession which is not juxtaposition . . . It is the direction vision of the mind by the mind—nothing intervening, no refraction through the prism . . . Instead of states contiguous to states . . . we have the indivisible and therefore substantial continuity of the flow of the inner life. Intuition, then, signifies first of all consciousness. (*Creative* 20)

Bergson's description of intuition positions the thinker vis-à-vis the self, and in order to see the whole self, one must live in the free flow of pure duration. This uninterrupted state of internal harmony gives birth to a consciousness that sees things external to the self as objects of many parts, but one cannot conceive of each event in one's life as separate, because in the use of the pronoun "I," all events unite in the self-realization of *the self*, or, as Bergson would say, the mind vis-à-vis itself. All events experienced by the self unite within the mind-space as *a life*, or in one's internal dialogue "my life." One *can* see durations external to the self as dynamic and consisting of many parts in constant flux in an individual, as well as the place that this individual and exterior "building block" takes in the larger structure of universal duration. Bergson was well-versed in the history of philosophy, and was both an exceptional mathematician and metaphysician, and he calls upon Leibniz, who uses a garden as analogy to underscore the truism that matter is of many parts. Leibniz writes:

Every portion of matter may be conceived as like a garden full of plants and like a pond full of fish. But every branch of a plant, every member of an animal, and every drop of the fluids within it, is also such a garden or such a pond. (59)

Akin to Bergson's suggestion that parts of wholes should be described as parts in their own nature, Leibniz crafts a sort of ecosystem, whose building blocks have nature in their parts and wholes in both infinitesimal regress and infinite progress. Another example would be to look at a classroom of students. There are twenty students, but we call this *a class*; we call this a mass noun, but the problem, then, is that we can still count twenty students. It is not that the class is uncountable, but rather that the human scope of understanding is designed to simplify concepts for the faculty of perception and corresponding sorting of data; it is much like learning multiplication, where 3×3 takes the place of $3+3+3$, yielding the same result with less effort. Nonetheless, countable or not, there are twenty apparent parts of the whole we call *a class*, and we cannot forget that each of these twenty students is a whole composed of many parts. At the same time, if we count this one class as one of thirty classes in the school, we see that these twenty students form one building block, (*i.e.* the class), of the school—the whole. Naturally it would follow that this school is a part of a district, but we need not go this far to see the cycles of infinite progress at work *concurrently* with the cycles of infinitesimal regress. In terms of Alice's dream, the aggregate of the experiences of that specific duration could be *quantified* by the addition of each separate experience, simplified by a mass-noun; but instead we *qualify* it as *an* experience, rather than a sequence and finite number of events. To assign a number is to assign finitude, thereby extinguishing one's infinite potentiality.

Moreover, it is impossible to assign quantity to Alice's dream, because there is an uncountable amount of data that exists and contributes to her experience: it is not mentioned or realized, but rather taken for granted.⁶² For example, Alice walks through forests and upon lawns and through gardens, but the narrator does not describe the grass; it is a component of background matter that becomes part of the fabric of that specific space, and though we do not consider the role of the grass, if it were not present, we would likely find this somewhat jarring based on our understanding of gardens and forests.

⁶² An important item to consider is that in each internal duration, like Alice's dream and various other internal spaces, there exists possible worlds that are in themselves finite; they are self-contained and have a beginning and an end. However, infinite potentiality still applies, because we can consider each possible world, or internal duration, as an evolution and maturation of the mind-space, whose experiential data enters the process of entelechy in order to actualize the possible. By creating data in the possible world and bringing it into the process of entelechy, one has infinite potentiality to do or create *x*, because one's consciousness is in constant flux in response to every new datum.

Thus we see that even the grass is one of the many parts of the space of Wonderland, which becomes a building block of Alice's self in her actual world, though necessarily unnoticed, because the mind is crafted to give attention to the most relevant or prominent data that can directly affect the self. But the grass remains a building block, without which Wonderland would not be Wonderland, although what it would be without the grass is indeterminable. The data of Alice's dream possible world is in constant flux as it enters Alice's consciousness and so too is the whole of the self in flux relative to the other building blocks of the infinite continuum. Leibniz concludes that in:

a plenum or filled space every movement has an effect upon bodies in proportion to this distance, so that not only is every body affected by those which are in contact with it and respond in some way to whatever happens to them, but also by means of them, the body responds to those bodies adjoining them, and their intercommunication reaches to any distance whatsoever. (57)

If, in space, one body—one duration of one being as whole—has an “effect” on those in its vicinity, and a dialogue of some sort becomes a reciprocal “intercommunication” between relative durations, then the universal space—the totality of all durations, plus one to infinity—is that of many evolving parts, and as a result, the aggregate evolves constantly in its homogeneous self. The whole expands, the whole changes shape and substance, and its nature changes with each reconfiguration. The most appropriate conclusion, therefore, is that if in macro-analysis we see the nature of the whole in flux, then it logically follows that in a micro-analysis we see each heterogeneous part of each homogeneous whole change its nature based on internal events, like dreams and possible world experiences. It is essentially the ripple effect.

The flux we see in the durations external to our own is what I would call the “dance of duration.” Imagine that you have an eagle's eye view of a nineteenth-century dancefloor; there is a ball, and as you observe the entirety of movement within each waltz, you see the carefully coordinated movements of each couple dancing in complete unity with the other couples. Each ordered system functions in relation to those external to it, and each movement advances the waltz and adds to the sweetness—or in the basic definition of the word—*dolcezza* of the harmony of couples, (*i.e.*, durations), as they move amidst others in space. Leibniz argues that each body permeates and affects those surrounding it, and in turn, the affected body continues the chain of

“intercommunication” in its affecting of another body or duration. What I want to address is the simple notion that, in many cases, binaries that separate *a* from *b* are unnecessarily self-imposed structures that limit the mind’s potentiality; and in the context of the dance, a binary between couples, or between those who form a couple, would destroy the harmony of the waltz. In order for this analogy to describe accurately the dance of duration, it must therefore consider each couple as a working part of a whole—the waltz—and that together these couples are an aggregate, but if they are alone the social decorum of dinner parties is disturbed. Likewise with duration: it is composed of the many heterogeneous parts—the infinitesimals, or the Euclidean points—but universal duration is homogeneous, because it is simply the blank canvas of space awaiting the matter that characterizes its nature at that given point on the continuum. What is more, based on Leibniz’s argument, we have no choice but to be affected by the matter and form surrounding us in space, so it seems only logical that self-imposed binaries crafted by finite beings are maintained only through the stubborn opposition that we are wholly self-subsistent and individuated beings. I do not mean to suggest that we are in no way individuated, because we have already discussed what it means to be a whole of many parts; each being in consciousness is akin to a Euclidean point on the continuum; what I do wish to suggest, though, is that each individual is something beyond itself: it is a portion of *dolcezza*, but in order to experience such a phenomenon one must tear down the binaries that separate possible from actual. The entelechial process cannot proceed in the being who sees the world in juxtaposed states, as if life is a simple act of sorting black from white, so as to construct a controlled environment. If there is only black and only white, the environment can be only finite, because there is no potential for anything to be other than black or white; there can be no grey. This analogy is fundamental to my argument concerning human potentiality, because if we were to consider all of which we experience in consciousness as either one or the other, and thus to follow, *only* one or the other, then the continuity of each being’s internal duration would be destroyed: if there is no grey—no transition between actual and possible, and therefore no penetration each of the other—then one’s potentiality to do or create *x* cannot exist. Such a possibility requires the existence of both actual and possible worlds; there must be an actual in which the possible comes to fruition, and there must be a possible in order for that which

is actual to enter the process of entelechy, or actualization. The possible worlds validate the actual world, because it allows the being to develop a stronger sense of objectivity of the actual viewed from the possible.

Wonderland logic undercuts the foundation of one-dimensional black-and-white logic: it challenges the actual-world logic which Alice imposes upon the dream world; yet at the same time, Wonderland logic confuses Alice due to the incongruity between “how things should be” and “how things are.” Eventually, readers find that actual-world logic is jettisoned from their minds, because what once was foreign has become the common currency of the fictional discourse. The nonsensical word-games or the sort of mad tea party logic illustrate the malleable nature of language; they force readers in their attempt to understand the intellectual processes of Wonderland to consider that for every common phrase of colloquialism there can be various interpretations. Such a variety of interpretations is humorous, but serves the larger purpose of illuminating the necessity of context and spatiotemporal position in the world. It calls into question the influence of language on individual reality—it demands that readers consider the history of one’s society and the building blocks that determine what is proper, or improper—what is logical, and what is not; and thus we are left with proof derived from a story written for three young girls that although we are all part of the continuum, or universal duration, the micro-worlds or sub-durations that develop from each point on the continuum will differ in their relation to other micro-worlds, or “worlds within worlds,” whose ontology begins in the initial Euclidean point. Here, we are faced with the undeniable presence of the theory of building blocks: all that informs Canadian culture, for example, is an aggregate of all that has been and currently is, and it will continue to exist in flux so long as there are people who identify as Canadian. The building blocks of our environment shape us; and likewise, as beings of consciousness in space, we, too, shape the building blocks of the present that will eventually inform the present-to-be.

What is entertaining and humorous to Carroll’s readers is simply the subversion of the British social niceties—the standards to which children and adults are expected to conform. When the Hatter comments that Alice’s hair “needs cutting” (53), Alice reproaches him: ““You should learn not to make personal remarks,” Alice said with some severity: ‘It’s very rude’” (Carroll 54). The Hatter’s response seems an appropriate

response to Alice's objection, but only for the first half of the sentence. "The Hatter opened his eyes very wide on hearing this; but all he *said* was 'Why is a raven like a writing-desk?'" (54). Carroll emphasizes two components of this sentence: first, he places a semi-colon after the main clause, as if he means deliberately to overturn the logic behind the Hatter's appropriate response in the main clause; and second, Carroll emphasizes the words "all" and "said," so as to underscore that "all" the Hatter offered was a riddle, rather than an apology. A bit of a disconnect, surely, but it does not end here. The Hatter glances at his watch: "'Two days wrong!' sighed the Hatter. 'I told you butter wouldn't suit the works!' he added, looking angrily at the March Hare'" (55). The apparent disconnect, here, is one that juxtaposes actual-world logic—where one refrains from putting butter in one's watch—and possible-world logic, where the March Hare insists "It was the *best* butter" (55). But the complete overthrow of actual-world logic is when the Hatter and the Hare agree that the problem was not the butter, but rather that the Hare installed it with a bread-knife, hence the crumbs in the butter, which, according to Wonderland logic, explains the faulty clockwork (55). Alice comments: "'What a funny watch! . . . It tells the day of the month, and doesn't tell what o'clock it is!'" to which the Hatter responds "'Why should it?' . . . Does *your* watch tell you what year it is?'" And Alice responds with the actual-world logic affiliated with conventional, man-made time: "'Of course not . . . but that's because it stays the same year for such a long time together'" (55). The Hatter responds "'Which is just the case with *mine*'" (55). The conversation seems counterintuitive, but after discussing the faulty watch, the conversation progresses to discuss time and Time, the latter being the name of the dormouse. Alice, disheartened by such a seemingly ridiculous conversation, sighs wearily and asserts "'I think you might do something better with *the* time . . . than wasting it in asking riddles that have no answers'" (56; emphasis mine). The measurable time of which Alice speaks is the lower-case time, preceded by a definite article which implies the generic, universal time. But we find shortly to follow that since the dormouse, Time, is constantly napping, drifting in and out of conversation, that the universal time of which Alice speaks does not exist in Wonderland.

The Hatter mourns the loss of Time's constant presence, and laments that "'It's always six o'clock now'" (57). Readers find that six o'clock is tea time, and it is always

tea time, because Time no longer cooperates, which is likely the cause of the broken watch, if we were to base our conclusion on Wonderland logic; if there is no time, there is no day, no month, no year; yet there are tea parties, and boat rides on the river, as well as meetings with the Red Queen, and new friends, like the Cheshire Cat. The Hatter explains the twelve places are set, because “‘It’s always tea-time, and we’ve no time to wash the things between whiles’” (57). But all the while they continue their tea party, Time sleeps at the table; the Hatter asks questions to which he already knows the answer; and the Hare attacks Alice’s dimensionless reasoning. These are events in duration, and they exist in space. In this connection, Bergson argues that duration is space, which necessarily implies that space records all times and holds all durations, because matter can only take form in space, and potentiality can become actualized only in space; whether it be universal space or the mind-space, both exist in harmony. Time is the actual-world currency with which humans can conceive of the events that take place; it allows them to remember events and conversations *in relation* to other events and conversations; it signifies events by way of temporal markers, which are notable events in consciousness with which one situates oneself in the continuity and progression of one’s own life. As beings actively engaged in and with space, *we* are events impressed upon the fabric of space; we have moments of illumination—connections between ideas and various durations external to us that have not been discovered—and this is the slice of individuated infinity—*dolcezza*, via the possible world.

Carroll manipulates the qualities of language to undermine the concept of time, the general understanding of which is numerical.⁶³ Time, in the context of Wonderland, is an empty signifier—it is an illusion, or a conceptual knowledge of something that exists elsewhere, though never experienced by any in Wonderland. The idea of a singular chronology that tacks all life events of all individuals onto a line moving forward—often imagined as rightward linearity—is archaic and it retards the potentiality that exists already within each individual mind. This linear time makes the world seem one-

⁶³ I say “generally” simply because we have linguistic qualifiers that are in no way numerical, such as “when,” “how long,” “it took x amount of time,” “minutes,” “hours,” “seconds.” At the same time, this is somewhat of an illusion, because quantifiers (15h00, etc.) are a branch of qualifiers that are presented with numerals, which we receive and convert this into language that is meaningful and relevant to the given context. Numbers are a means of quickening conversation; for example, I would not say there is a monkey, and a monkey, and a monkey, and a monkey; I would say: “there are four monkeys.” Numbers are also symbols, just as rhetorician Kenneth Burke says “man is a symbol-using animal.” See *On Symbols and Society*.

dimensional and uneventful, when in fact we see in Lawrence Durrell's short stories "Zero" and "Asylum in the Snow" that the protagonist's friend thinks "in many clever dimensions,"⁶⁴ therefore dismissing the relevance of such one-dimensional thinking (Durrell, "Asylum" 45). Carroll crafts Alice as thinking in a different dimension than the four-dimensional actual world; this alternative dimension—this possible world—is another plane of consciousness,⁶⁵ another duration. These alternate durations are possible worlds within the mind-space that *allow* the thinker infinite potentiality to do *x*, and the information that informs these possible worlds is immanent within the mind of the individual, but requires a means of becoming apparent. In its essence, this knowledge is the "potentiality" underlying entelechy; and as we see in Wonderland, the story is not one of nonsense, and it is not a mere fictional possible world. Wonderland has complexities that inform actual-world readers of Carroll's novel of "the many clever dimensions" of consciousness, and the opportunity to bring the data of consciousness into the actual world via entelechy. Possible worlds within the minds of all thinkers can create substance or give psychical matter form in the actual world, because our own internal durations inform our understanding of the actual world, though the possible-world data is context-dependent. By "context-dependent,"⁶⁶ I mean knowledge that is immanent in every reader who engages a possible world, and it is tailor-made based on what particulars and subjective themes arise in the individual mind according to one's spatiotemporal position. In a sense, it fills a need in the particular thinker.

Just as is the case with Alice, whose whole self is comprised of the totality of experiential data from possible and actual worlds, and whose whole self becomes a building block in her actual world of Victorian England; so, too, is the case for Carroll's readers. Each thought, each moment of internal discourse alongside moments where we ponder what the text "means" to us, is part of an event in our lives that contributes to our

⁶⁴ There are ten dimensions which we can prove now, and there are in theory at least twenty-six. See Gubser, *The Little Book of String Theory*.

⁶⁵ I borrow this phraseology from Herbert Read, an English Surrealist and leader in the anarchist movement in 1930s and 40s England and continental Europe. Read describes the evolving thinker as rising to "new planes of existence" (156), *Anarchy and Order*. Interestingly, Durrell and Read had a common connection—Henry Miller—with whom Read corresponded, the letters of this epistolary relationship later passed from Miller to Durrell. Durrell writes much later than Read, describing the "spiritual self of man" which extends its self into the world as "a continuous self-subsisting plane of reality" that aims to "strike the Universe" to find its symbolic truths ("Heraldic" 72).

⁶⁶ Here, I allude to Deborah Cameron's claim that language is context-dependent, which she discusses in her book *Verbal Hygiene*.

existence as a whole, homogeneous individual; but with the dynamic planes of consciousness, and the potential vis-à-vis with infinity by the self—the part and the whole—figure into universal space and therefore the totality of all durations that move from present to past. Seeing as the universe is composed of building blocks—the pond and the garden as described by Leibniz, or the internal durations of every individual described by Bergson—necessarily implies unity amidst all parts. Every part is of another, either in infinite progress or infinitesimal regress. If we take one building block, like a given individual and place this person in the larger scale of the world, we have infinite progress: this person is one part of a larger whole, which in its superlative form is universal duration. Likewise, if we take the same individual and examine him or her objectively with the knowledge of every life event in this whole, we see that this individual is a whole of many parts; each part is also a whole of many parts, and we can do this *ad infinitum*. Between progress and regress we have the body of the infinite in consistent flux, reflecting each and every change of each and every duration, or building block. Incidentally, infinite progress is matter expanding in space: it is multiplicity by way of addition; yet at the same time, infinitesimal regress is also a multiplicity of matter in space by way of division. Therefore, I would argue that if both processes produce multiplicities to infinity—worlds within worlds—then this is indicative of the presence of the continuum of infinitesimals. All matter that is possible or actual, and even that which is in the process of entelechy, is bonded to the continuum by one or many extensions of matter in space—the open place of potentiality, the unbounded fabric of what *could be*.

In determining this spatial unity, I would say that the next reasonable step is to question what it means to be “possible” and what it means to be “actual”; in fact, I propose that we consider possible worlds as *real* experience, because the mind is of the brain, and the brain of the body;—it is a whole working in harmony amidst an infinite symphony of uncountable musicians and vocalists, each with a specific role, and each executing their role in the sweetness of perfect harmony. It is, as Bergson describes so gracefully, the pure duration that is heterogeneous in ontology, yet homogeneous by nature—the notes of a tune, each melting into the next.

If something is possible, it may be plausible, and if swept up by the right consciousness of the right individual, it can become actual in its own form. This “right

individual” is any being who acknowledges his or her own mind-space as a possible world, and who recognizes that the experiences upon which one partakes in the mind *can become* actual-world realities via self-propelled entelechy, though such realities will most likely manifest in a different form than that of the possible world. When matter is transmitted from the possible world to the actual world, its form need not be that of which it was in the possible; instead, it can transpire in the actual world of the *creator* of its being, and it will do so in such a way as to fill a deficit or void in the life of the person who brought it into being. Potentiality is, then, the equivalent of plausibility, because if the possible-world reality enters the process of entelechy, which recognizes the applicability of the possible-world data in the actual world, then in the case of Wonderland, the Hatter need not be the Hatter in Alice’s England, but instead a newfound understanding by Alice of the limitations that are institutionally imposed on the individual through the medium of language, which consequently limits human potentiality.

The process of entelechy is, therefore, the recognition of potentiality to do *x* by *creating* new data within the framework of parts and wholes: that which they are comprised of and that which they comprise. Each individual unit—as part and/or a whole—is both dependent upon other units while subsequently enjoying its autonomy; because as Bergson explains, the space of the mind hosts “deep seated psychic phenomena, the cause of which is within us and not outside” (*Creative* 5). As such, the autonomous unit has its internal cycles, but these internal cycles are eventually externalized as an extension of matter into space, thus shaping other dependent-autonomous units, or building blocks. The cycles of space—infinite progress and infinitesimal regress—are not merely uncountable, they are unending. Bergson’s description of the mind in space is strikingly similar to the entelechial thinker’s mind-space: potential-*cum*-actual requires “the active intervention of the mind” (*Time* 94), and so long as there is human consciousness, universal space—the continuum of durations—there exists a heterogeneous aggregate which is a united space—the homogeneous whole: all which has existed and exists, and all of which could exist: this is the infinite.

Chapter 5.

Conclusion

As readers, we have the chance to be the great philosophers of consciousness—the ones who strive for knowledge, who seek wisdom, and who find a passion: these ideals already exist, but first we must recognize them as immanent within the self. I borrow the endeavour suggested by Alfred, Lord Tennyson: “To follow knowledge, like a sinking start, / Beyond the utmost bound of human thought” (31-32). Tennyson also offers a formula for *life*, to which I will return.

I have presented three extraordinarily diverse texts, each with their own sort of “personality,” so to speak. We have considered a short story by Lawrence Durrell, one whose content reflects the “anti-everything” attitude that is present in many of the Villa Seurat literary texts, although I argue that it is not anti-everything, because the product is of *something*. The literary product of the young Lawrence Durrell models an attitude of “freedom to,” rather than the more prominent “freedom from,” as Europe became the battlefield of the Allied and Axis forces—the complete rule over the individual. Anti-everything is pro-something; this pro-something, for Durrell’s story, is a defiance of the politics of patriotism, and an adherence to the politics of the self: the faithfulness to one’s own beliefs and convictions, and a blatant disregard for the imposition of political authority on the fleeting population of truly autonomous, self-governed beings.

Deleuze underscores the value and potentiality of the literary text; it is “a logic of ‘Life’ (*xiii*), and in spite of the quasi-surrealist and non-cohesive nature of Durrell’s narrative, Lawrence guides readers through the labyrinth of the mind. A logic of Life need not be “good sense,” which Durrell mocks in his “Heraldic Universe”; instead, we should consider Deleuze’s phrase as the logic for *a* life, thus allowing the logic to fit the individual mind, rather than the individual mind attempting to adhere to a universal and generic logic. In fact, we see that Lawrence’s possible world within the painting is a space where the “right” direction is intuitive, not prescriptive. Madness does not define Lawrence’s consciousness, but rather his consciousness creates a beautiful madness. Lawrence does not feel whole in his actual world, and thus we see the possible world as a space that facilitates the creative processes of new durations. Inside the painting Lawrence is the artist of his own world, and is thus the designer of his own experience—

the experiential data of consciousness that defines each individual as a unit in itself, whose harmony is the combination of various internal durations and an external duration, which unites the individual with the universal duration—the continuum.

Durrell’s “Zero” exemplifies the nature of space; that is, there is internal space and external space; the former is specific, the latter is generic; and what is more, it is the former that acts as a stage upon which Lawrence defines his own self, the “I” that unites both his possible and actual worlds. Durrell also raises the question of what it means to have a zero, or null, value—he questions the nature and truth of nothingness. Is it possible that the void within the individual—which is missing a specific substance—is a place of potentiality? Words are designed to describe, but how can one describe nothing? This is simple: one can only describe nothingness based on the something-ness it lacks; and to lack some substance or another is predicated by the truism that declares nothing as something: the subject cannot be nothing—it cannot be affiliated with a verb (*i.e.* to lack, or to be void of)—unless it is first *something*. Thus we see that the subject intuits the void within, and begins to search for that which he or she believes will replenish the incomplete self. This act of replenishment is a process that takes place in possible worlds, because for each idea we ponder, and for everything we question, interrogate, or consider, we find the answer in the possible world. The answer is recognized by the self vis-à-vis the self: as the mind sorts the data of consciousness of both possible and actual worlds, it considers various alternatives, which implicates the presence of the possible world within. This presence is a possible world recognized by the self as *potentiality* to do *x* in *y* context.

To find within the depths of the mind the potentiality that each being possesses is the initial movement towards actualization; it is the acknowledgment of what *could be*. The next necessary act is to bring this idea into the process of entelechy within the mind—it is the act of self-amelioration, and as a consequence, self-definition in the actual world. But this self-definition is at the end of an entelechial cycle; I use the word cycle to suggest that the ever-evolving being of the aggregate of all durations in constant flux experiences the entelechy of consciousness in every moment of being. So long as there is consciousness in the actual world, a possible world will exist; and so long as there is a possible world, experiential data will rise into one’s consciousness; and the consciousness

in each being in each possible world will find the *je ne sais quoi* immanent within their own self, and thus ensues entelechy. It is the desire to act out one's own upon the stage of life—the actual world. Every play has various characters, costumes and acts: no moment can ever be replicated by the principles of one that precedes it.

The *je ne sais quoi* is an interesting concept to consider, because it is not easily defined even in its manifest state in individual consciousness; yet on the other hand, when it is not identified, the individual is aware of its absence, or more specifically, its non-presence. It is the age-old feeling that “something is missing,” and it is only logical that this void of substance propels the creation of possible worlds, even if their genesis is not intentional. For Flaubert's Félicité, those who surround her in the actual world of the narrative see her as odd, or simple; they see her as naïve, juvenile, and eventually senile; and *readers* are left to question whether Flaubert crafts Félicité as truly out of touch with reality, or if there is more that exists in the depths of this character. The question of Félicité's true nature—is she mad, is she sane, is she simple, or stupid?—is really of no consequence when it comes to her own processes of entelechy. Self-amelioration is precisely this: it is an improvement of the self; it need not consider the judgments or questions of those surrounding the individual, because the self-definition that follows self-amelioration is a free act—it is the distinction between the “I” and the rest of the world. Thus we may conclude that if one wishes to define oneself, which necessarily implies individuation, then there is no need to conform, and there is no point in considering whether one's own reality seems “normal” to those outside of our consciousness.

Self-preservation is instinctual, and if appearing “normal” is one's sole focus, it can easily become self-defeating. That Félicité unwittingly crafts a world that no one else can comprehend speaks to her ability to ignore the socially created binary of normal-abnormal. Indeed, it may simply be that in her blissful subjectivity Félicité is able to free herself from the confines of social institutions; and this is precisely why Félicité dies happily on her deathbed, laying beneath the two things she loves most: God and Loulou.

Potentiality, then, is not dependent upon intelligence and the ability to make advances that push the human race forward; potentiality is, quite simply, to know one's own purpose and to live life with the passion of purpose. I say the passion of purpose,

because passion is the recognition of something internal, by which one may define the self. Moreover, there is no misguided purpose, as such; one's actions can be misguided, but one's purpose is indicative of the internal workings of the mind. As a result of the subjectivity in the possible-world setting, one's purpose conceived by the self and for the self is not wrong, nor can it be incorrect. Such terms do not apply, because purpose is a subjective truth; it is much akin to Searle's distinction between beliefs and opinions: beliefs can be incorrect based on factual data, whereas opinions are formed only via personal experience and engagement with the world; as such, in our inability to return to the moments of the past which define our opinions, we cannot assign a value-judgment to experience, because it is again one's *own* subjective vis-à-vis with the universe.

Literary critics attack Flaubert's Félicité on various levels. In either her ignorance, her naivety, her simplicity, or her senility, readers tend to see Félicité only for her superficialities; and this is the brilliance of Flaubert's narrative. Potentiality—*infinite potentiality*—is defined by *nothing* but subjective consciousness; it is one's consciousness of the self in the world, and the recognition of that spark of “somethingness” that illuminates the world around us, because we have found our purpose. That being said, it is valid to argue that Félicité is senile in the end, and even that she is simple of mind throughout the story; but in Félicité, readers see a passion for life and a love for people, so it is no surprise that she bears an unbreakable bond with Loulou, both in his life and in his “afterlife,” so to speak. That Félicité is a maid—a “fixture,” as the narrator describes her in the beginning of the story—does not bar Félicité from living her life with passionate purpose, and in her passion readers see that even those who are simple of mind have the potentiality to create realities for the self that allow one to love the life that one lives in the actual world.

Félicité's possible world—the world where a parrot has replaced the Trinitarian dove, and a world in which Félicité prays to a stuffed bird with the conviction that these prayers reach God via the parrot-*cum*-Holy Spirit—is her own reality, and those who exist in her actual world cannot say that this reality is wrong, or that it is out of touch. The true reality is that Félicité lives in a self-created world with which she engages, and to external observers her reality may seem odd, or crazy; but in fact, all experience is

valid regardless of whether it is completely rational, or entirely imagined. It is the data of consciousness, and this cannot be deemed correct or incorrect; it simply *is*.

What readers may judge as madness or senility in Félicité is in fact Flaubert's removal of a binary embedded in the minds of most actual-world beings, whether it be the actual world of the literary text, or the actual world of the text's readers. In crafting the character of Félicité as one who can be interpreted on various levels, the socially-imposed binary of normal-abnormal is blurred; and for Félicité, this binary does not exist. In his introduction to Deleuze's *Essays Critical and Clinical*, Daniel Smith explains how Deleuze used literary texts to traverse "the livable and the lived" (xiv), as well as mobilizing them "to free life from what imprisons it" (xv). If we were to consider Flaubert's *Un coeur simple* as a prototype for freeing oneself from the shackles of socially imposed binaries, and as an example of how to "let the ego *live*" akin to the harmony which Bergson attributes to pure duration, then I would argue that life would be far simpler. And as I have stated in the Flaubert chapter, life need not be over-complicated to be relevant or important; in fact, sometimes the simplest of lives are the ones lived by the most dynamic of people. Many of the complexities faced by individuals in daily life are the sources of inspiration for novels, and this is why literary texts—much like Durrell's "Zero" and "Asylum in the Snow"—seem difficult to comprehend; and sometimes there can be no comprehension, because the data of consciousness reconfigured and recorded in fiction makes the content doubly confusing. The content has moved from one mind to another (*i.e.* the author), and then through the mind of the author to the page of a book, and then processed in a third mind, that of the reader. It seems, then, that Flaubert's straightforward narrative—filled with details that require little processing on behalf of the reader—exemplifies Bergsonian duration. As a result, Félicité's possible-world duration is in harmony with her actual-world duration, because she does not juxtapose these worlds, but sees them as one complete experience—the experience of her own consciousness—which is the development of a possible world to supplement an internal void. To follow, we see that this possible world transpires in Félicité's actual world; though odd to others, it is familiar to herself. Félicité lives passionately, and thus she lives out her mission, her purpose: it is to love—simply.

Flaubert's prototype is one that can clarify our understanding of the world. Smith explains that "Marcel Proust suggested that his readers use his book as an optical instrument, 'a kind of magnifying glass' that would provide them with 'the means of reading within themselves'" (xxi-xxii), and I want to underscore that the literary experience of readers offers much more than enjoyment: it offers an avenue through which readers can juxtapose fictionality with their own actual world. Again, we find potentiality. The opportunities for epistemic growth in readers is immanent in Flaubert's text—and each opportunity is designed for that specific reader—because in uncovering that which assists us in understanding ourselves via the literary text, we are actually uncovering our own selves. One's spatiotemporal position most often determines the substance that our consciousness recognizes; it is fictional, but it is substance nonetheless, because it is an experience that registers in our consciousness, and is solidified as a part of the self by memory, the signifier of consciousness. To emphasize the underlying truth—that spatiotemporal position informs potentiality, and potentiality is what assists consciousness in the act of self-definition—if I were to say I have a pet goose, this says nothing about me, an individual; rather, it signifies my encounter with matter in the actual world, and it is substantive matter based on the many items and events that compose my own self. What you see in my claim to this goose is not a vehicle through which you can characterize me, or apply some sort of term—simple, childish, *etcetera*; instead, you seem to have the objective lens that allows you to see my engagement with the experiential data that defines me. At the same time, there can be no such thing as an objective lens when it concerns the consciousness and possible worlds of others; it is impossible to know the labyrinth of my mind, just as I cannot possibly know yours. You may see me feeding the goose, yet I see myself through the eyes of a goose, and vis-à-vis myself, I enjoy a fantastic dinner. What you *are* able to witness is substance (the experiential data of myself with the goose) that becomes a building block of my own self—the "I" of the self-subsistent being—the "I" as a unit in itself. How this substance is described by those external to me is a non-issue relative to my aggregate self; I need not acknowledge external understandings of my reality in order to live this reality. In a sense, my perceived reality as observed by one external to my self is in fact the reality of the

one who observes; the perceiver's comprehension of my reality relies on his or her own reality.

The self-identified and self-defined "I" is a unit in itself: it is comprised of the various events and experiences in consciousness, and these events are situated relative to each other, and relative to our sensorial or emotional responses as conscious beings. But the "I" is also a building block for something larger than itself. Heterogeneous in nature, the "I" becomes a homogeneous whole in its recognition of its own self; and this situation is likewise when the "I" becomes a part of many which compose a larger unit—a unit whose nature is heterogeneous, though in its identification as *x*, it secures a homogeneous status, and thus we continue to infinity.

The structures of expanding matter—the building block that expands in its division, as well as the building block that aids the expansion by addition—are apparent throughout Carroll's *Wonderland*. The name in itself—*Wonderland*—beckons the potentiality and the passion required to actualize that which is momentarily possible, or potential. Given that the psychical matter of consciousness is continually given substantial form by way of entelechy, the structures of space are in constant flux. Each unit is in flux, and thus the necessary conclusion is that if a part of a whole is moving, then the whole—in its parts—is in motion; and that this flux expands outwards to infinity. This motion of substance in space is the energy of potentiality; it is the Bergsonian "mind-energy," or the passionate undercurrents of the conscious awareness of that which *could be*. *Wonderland* is a space of the mind—it is a possible world imagined by Lewis Carroll that engages his readers with the promise of infinitely many perspectives concerning this fictional world. What I mean by this is that *Wonderland* begins as a possible world in the mind of Carroll, and Carroll can be considered a Euclidean point—the unique in-itself being upon the continuum of space—and we know that each point upon the continuum divides to infinity, which necessitates the infinite division of the sub-durations or micro-worlds, like *Wonderland*. Carroll's possible world becomes a point in itself, though it remains a building block of Carroll's own experience in life through the passage of space. A point that is *of* a larger point is still composed of infinitely many parts, but the logic behind this is not blatantly obvious. As readers of fiction, or as beings observing the substantial forms or building blocks of the actual world

surrounding us, we are infinitely divisible, which means there are infinitely many parts to each being. But we cannot suppose that the nature of an infinitesimal is in its quantity: an infinitesimal divides to infinity, but we cannot claim to know that it has infinitely many parts, because this would require complete objectivity—and omnipotence not enjoyed by finite beings. Therefore, what we are able to conclude with the most confidence is that given the constant state of flux in all dimensions of space, and upon all planes of space—the mind-space and universal space together—potentiality exists, and matter is in the constant cycle of entelechy in the conscious being. Thus we see that so long as there is consciousness, there is the expansion of matter—possible and actual, as well as psychical and physical. The energy or passion of potentiality fuels the individual—the unit-in-itself—and consequently, the individual fuelled by potentiality returns the energy to its source by expanding the data of consciousness, bringing it into an identifiable form upon which we bestow a name—we grant this new matter its autonomy. But with each expansion, there must be potentiality, because without this energy, entelechy could not continue in its infinite cycles; and in expansion and the production of new substantial forms in the actual world, these new units that are building blocks of the universe contribute to the economy of energy—the passage of matter expanding infinitely to infinity, though never reaching the borders of the infinite. These borders do not exist, and consequently they are non-transcendental; there is simply nothing to transcend. But this is not a loss, no—this non-existent limit is indeed the guarantee that the data of consciousness within the mind-space will press forward in cycles of infinite progress and infinitesimal regress. The non-existent limit *is* in itself unbounded space.

Infinite progress and infinitesimal regress are adverbs that attempt to describe the evolution of consciousness in each being, as well as the aggregate of all conscious beings. Progress and regress appear to oppose each other—their counterparts. However, if we consider them not as binary terms relative to their other, but instead as two systems through which the conscious being understands the nature of the universe, we find that the outcome of the cycles is exactly the same in terms of their nature. Where infinite progress is an apparent expansion of matter in space, with each building block creating something bigger than itself, infinitesimal regress is also a source of multiplicity, or the infinite worlds within worlds division. In the process of division, we can consider the

conceptual underpinning as a process of expansion due to the individuation of each building block that composes a whole. In turn, each building block individuated as a unit in itself, while concurrently existing as a part of a whole, reveals its own substantive form—its own building blocks, which are *also* worlds within worlds. The process of division that individuates parts of a whole contributes to the multiplicity of substantial forms in space; and we see, then, that infinite progress—also a contributor to spatial multiplicity—expands to infinity, as well. This idea seems counter-intuitive based on the system of mathematics which the majority of us learn in our formative years, but this is because mathematics is a semiological system—it has no substantive form if there is no consciousness to recognize the potentiality that it signifies.

Just as mathematics is an institutionally-created system—a manmade and socially accepted system—so too are the cycles of infinite progress and infinitesimal regress. These systems are challenging to visualize, because our minds insist on the logic of western mathematics. It is when we break free from the “logic” imposed on the individual—a logic whose nature is to provide definitive truths that are replicable and verifiable—that is, the empirical evidence that *x*-discovery is now what it will be in one hundred years. Logic imposes finitude, and finitude eliminates the possibility of potentiality. It seems that too often in the pursuit of the truths the logic which provides the tools to name something and assign to it some value or temporal location relative to another numerical truth is self-defeating. There could be no Wonderland if Lewis Carroll accepted the limitations of Victorian Oxbridge mathematics, specifically Euclidean mathematics;⁶⁷ because as soon as he would acknowledge that Wonderland is impossible, the avenue of potentially and the expansion of psychical data is lost—; or more to the point, it is not lost, because it never existed.

In “Asylum in the Snow,” Lawrence Durrell—the alter-ego of the author—refers to *his* alter-ego, Hamlet, who thinks in “many clever dimensions,” and we see in

⁶⁷ The issue with Euclidean mathematics in the Victorian period is that they could only account for three dimensions. Non-Euclidean mathematics began to rise, but these innovators, who would eventually discover a fourth dimension, were chastised by the scholars of mathematics, hence the reason Carroll published with his pseudonym. One point of clarification is that the Euclidean points to which I refer are in fact one dimension, but each point is unique in its nature. If we mobilize Euclidean points as a conceptual explanation of infinitesimals—whose nature is both infinite and unique—then we find that though these points are singular dimensions, their infinite nature implies that they can be divided to infinity; essentially, this is a complete denial of Euclidean mathematics, because it suggests the possibility of infinitely many dimensions in space based on infinite expansion, and implies that one infinitesimal of one dimension can create of itself infinitely many dimensions.

Durrell's short story an explicit truth: that there are many dimensions to one being, which is apparent in the layering of alter-egos in Durrell's short story. If we were to take the author Durrell as a Euclidean point, or the ontology of the worlds within worlds developing in his mind-space—we would see that he develops an alter-ego, Lawrence Durrell, in this fictional possible world. What is more, the first-order alter-ego, Lawrence the narrator, has his own alter-egos, and these alter-egos continue to expand, because each alter-ego that is of the first-order or initial alter-ego has its own clever dimensions. Therefore, Durrell-the-author illustrates infinitesimal regress as a process of extension in space to create a multiplicity. Durrell-the-author figures into the corpus of twentieth-century literature, which is larger than Durrell's collected works as a unit which is *of* the author. Importantly, any reader fluent in the western canon of literature knows that Hamlet is the tortured prince in Shakespeare's tragedy. This is not revelatory—it is glaringly obvious; but just as I describe Alice's visualization of Wonderland, where the blades of grass are implicit in consciousness, and would be noticed only in their absence, so too is the case of Hamlet in the contemporary reader of the western literary canon. Hamlet is not strikingly out of place, because he has become a common literary currency and the prototype for the tortured protagonist; this retrieval of a Renaissance character is thus not an antiquated allusion, but rather a reference to a proper name that signifies a specific type of being. Nonetheless, Shakespeare prevails: hundreds of years later, his name and all that is affiliated with it—all that is *of* Shakespeare as a unit in himself—is relevant, and this is because he is a building block of a larger discourse concerning literature.

Potentiality is a force of nature that is embodied by the conscious being, and roused to action in that being's mind-space; it is inherent to any and all matter that we encounter in space, whether it is immanent data awaiting recognition to enter entelechy, or it is actualized matter present in the actual world; the state of being of *x*-given matter is a nominal issue of temporality, because in the larger picture the aggregate of matter of all sorts is the product of potentiality. In turn, the potentiality that bestows upon matter its substantive form gives way to further potentiality; it is an infinite cycle, and whether the cycle is one of infinite progress or infinitesimal regress is an institutional issue. That is, cycles of progress and regress are conceptual vehicles through which we can contemplate

a universe whose ontological genesis occurred at some given point in infinite space. But we must take one final step in order to comprehend what it is that inspires the potentiality of the mind-space, through which we understand the nature of our own consciousness.

I have used upon the metaphysics of both Leibniz and Bergson, although there exists a seeming problematic relationship that may erect a binary in the continuity of our understanding of the metaphysical nature of our existence via Leibniz and Bergson. Where Leibniz argues that the continuum is composed of infinitely many parts due to the fact that it invites and fosters an infinite cycle of division, Bergson insists that consciousness and pure duration are indivisible continuities (*Mind* 9), which seems to oppose the continuum of infinitesimals. If it were true that duration is akin to one indivisible sweeping movement through space to infinity, then Leibniz's continuum may appear to jar this continuity; but at the same time, if homogeneous and impersonal duration is space, and necessarily the record of everything in existence, then there is no way to account for each individual life, and each possible world of each mind expanding in space. Both Leibniz and Bergson suggest implicitly and explicitly the infinite nature of space, but that which allows two metaphysicians with seemingly opposing ideas to agree that the grand scheme of things—infinity—the ultimate of non-transcendentals, is simply that their reasoning intersects in the infinite potentiality of the mind. Leibniz's continuum of infinitesimals is the framework upon which I rely to offer a clearer understanding of Bergsonian duration, which is, according to Bergson, synonymous with space. But how can we conceptualize space? We know that there is matter, and that the existence of matter relies upon some phenomenon that differentiates a car from a horse, and permits us to revisit the moments of frustration as we learned to tie our shoes—a memory that may occasionally surface as we now tie our shoes. Space exists, but we know this only because of the relationship between matter, and the mind's perception and recognition of matter as substance that exists with apparent form, or could exist when provided the opportunity to seize that form. Thus, I liken the continuum of infinitesimals—a concept that can be explained in the semiotic system of quantitative language *created by* conscious beings, with the purpose of understanding the various natures of the matter we can and cannot see.

Let us return full-circle to Deacon, who argues that “even though quantum phenomena are often described in terms of possible physical properties not yet actualized, they are physically present in some as-yet unspecified sense” (3). These quantum phenomena are one example of matter that enters the scope of consciousness, with the potential to become actualized physical properties apparent to the skeptics of psychical data and possible worlds. The being represented in mathematics as an infinitesimal upon a continuum, which, when brought into philosophy can justifiably be interchangeable with space, is the conscious being—the unique Euclidean point—upon a continuum that is in fact the visual and mathematical articulation of space. Space is duration, which necessarily implies that everything upon the continuum (*i.e.* the aggregate of all matter in all states that expands constantly, thus shedding the limiting nature of finitude) is the matter that exists in and as a result of the presence of space. Therefore, the infinitesimal becomes the being in consciousness, and it is interchangeable with the infinitesimal—a symbolic formulation of a phenomenon which defies a definitive explanation of its nature. It would logically follow that since an infinitesimal divides infinitely, and in doing so its extension in space contributes to the multiplicity of matter, then the individual—the anthropomorphic version of mathematical terminology—also has the potential to expand infinitely in space. In terms of the individual-infinitesimal, this extensity is the direct result of an individuated duration whose consciousness leaves its trace upon the fabric of universal space. This trace is of a being whose corporeal finitude cannot repress the infinite potentiality of its own mind-space. Furthermore, the individuated duration of this being is a homogeneous duration representative of a being composed of many parts; and in order for this individual to exist in the collective consciousness of the actual world, he or she must combine the internal durations of the various possible worlds with the actual world relative to that specific individual.

We can see that the individual who signifies his or her homogeneity with the pronoun “I,” is a being composed of the building blocks of his or her consciousness through time in space. Bergson argues that there must be harmony between the events registering in our consciousness; he insists with good reason that our mind does not juxtapose our daily events, but rather it sees them as a continuous whole, hence the pronoun “I”: the aggregate of one unit-in-itself. To follow, then, is that this being can be

considered a heterogeneous part of a larger whole, and in this context, the larger whole is infinite space, which we find is in constant flux due to the ceaseless expansion of matter resulting from the energy of entelechy fuelled by potentiality. To state the obvious: we know the concept of space by its very name: space; likewise, we know ourselves as beings in consciousness, and we refer to ourselves as a whole: "I." If "I" implies a homogeneous continuity of one consciousness, then I would argue that the formula of this approach is applicable to the word "space." Thus we find that space is homogeneous, as Bergson argues consistently through his life's work.

Bergson elucidates a phenomenon that is difficult to conceptualize; but just as important is Leibniz's explanation of the infinitesimals, where each is infinitely divisible, and each and every point divides to infinity, *ad infinitum*. Between Bergson and Leibniz, it appears logical to conclude that these philosophers were offering variant perspectives on the same idea: the building blocks of the universe. The idea is to understand the nature of our universe in space, and since space cannot be considered a totality from which we can isolate its many parts, we must begin with the smallest of phenomena: *a* single individual in consciousness. *This* individual is a fragment of the infinite, and this individual experiences the sweetness of unbounded space as *dolcezza*, the recognition of one's self in the grand scheme of space.

In the introduction to this paper, I discuss the anamorphic art that inspires Descartes revelatory contribution to the Scientific Revolution: that we cannot know the entire truth of one thing from a single perspective. Between Lawrence Durrell, Gustave Flaubert, and Lewis Carroll, we find a multiplicity of perspectives; we find endless possibilities to imagine *x* in the context of an asylum, or through the eyes of a simple soul; and our invitation to enter the space of Wonderland is the opportunity to experience a world where a deck of cards divides itself into beings akin to people, and where a Hare takes endless tea times with the corresponding endless discourse permitted by a possible world that allows the glossary of human beings to be shared with a rabbit. Deleuze argues that the literary text can pose as a point of departure for thoughts and ideas which are applicable to the actual world of readers of fiction. This is a compelling argument with which I must agree, because if the mind is infinite in potentiality and is capable of creating a possible world of non-actualized matter awaiting entelechy, then this possible

world of the novel—this fiction—is in itself new data, and from this data there are infinitely more possibilities. These are Leibniz’s “worlds within worlds,” and these are, too, Bergson’s internal durations of the self; the fiction we create becomes a building block of our own experience as a conscious being in space, and thus the trace or fingerprint we leave upon the fabric of existence must include all events and all data of that being, who knows itself as “I.”

The building blocks of human experience must include the data of possible worlds, because if these spaces did not exist, the advances we attribute to science—like Godwin’s *Man in the Moone*—a discipline which boasts of its “applicability,” could not occur. Innovation is the product of potentiality, but each individual with the subjective mind-space cannot rely on finite empiricism; where the sciences fail, we find that language and literature together are the sole path towards a deeper knowledge of a universe understood primarily by what the factual data of science can prove. Innovative progress, therefore, must rely on the space in which empiricism cannot tread—the mind-space of infinite potentiality. Space records the trace and presence of each and every individual through the passage of time, so it seems that the knowledge of the nature of infinity is an epic journey, like that of Ulysses—who inspires Tennyson’s recognition of the relationship between knowledge and potentiality: “to strive, to seek, to find” (163), though most important is Tennyson’s ultimate imperative: in the quest for each and every truth, we *cannot* yield.

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Curriculum Vitae

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Publications

“The Building Blocks of Time and Space: Humanities Leadership and the Metaphysical Self,” *International Journal of Humanities Education*, (Forthcoming)

Excerpt from ‘How Possible is Impossible?: Zero as a Place and the Void as a Space,’ in “‘Being ‘Becomes you’: Actualizing Possible Worlds in Carroll, Flaubert, and Durrell,” *Scattered Pelican Graduate Journal of Comparative Literature* 1.1 (2016), (Invited)

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“Skeptics, Game and Deviance: Strategizing for Societal Contemplation in Durrell’s ‘Zero’ and ‘Asylum in the Snow.’” International Lawrence Durrell Society, “On Miracle Ground XVIII – Durrell and Place: Translation, Migration, Location,” Fairleigh Dickinson University, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, June 2014

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Steering Committee Member: UWO Comparative Literature Graduate Journal, *The Scattered Pelican*. Committee members had regular meetings to construct the formal proposal of the journal, including guidelines for calls for papers, formal journal regulations, referring processes, editing processes, publishing standards and medium, and duties pertaining to the establishment of the new graduate student journal

Master’s Student Representative: The Comparative Literature Graduate Studies Committee, 2014-2015 academic year

Conference Assistant: 23rd Annual Virginia Woolf Conference, “Virginia Woolf and the Common(wealth) Literature,” Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, June 6-9, 2013

Affiliations

- Dante Society of America, 2016-2017
- Canadian Comparative Literature Association, 2015-2017
- Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, 2015-2016
- International Lawrence Durrell Society, 2015-2016

Other Related Experience

“Conflict Resolution Skills,” online course via University of California, Irvine, July 2016-August 2016

“Effective Problem-Solving and Decision Making,” online course via University of California, Irvine, July 2016-August 2016

“Strengthening Your Widening Network,” online course via National University of Singapore, July 2016-August 2016

“Introduction to Personal Branding,” online course via University of Virginia, August 2016-September 2016

Private Tutor: tutored a grade 10 student in French grammar and reading comprehension, and English literature; designed two-hour lessons and exercises. West Vancouver, BC, April 2012-February 2014

Teaching Assistant: assisted program director, teacher, and support staff in an alternative education setting; mentored at-risk students completing grades 8 and 9. Britannia High School, East Vancouver, BC, February 2012-June 2012

Peer Mediator: as a trained mediator of conflict resolution and Restorative Justice, I ran mediations through the counselling centre for students in grades 8-12 experiencing interpersonal conflicts. Britannia High School, East Vancouver, BC, February 2012-June 2012

Languages

- English (native, fluent)
- French (intermediate reading/writing/speaking)
- Italian (competent introductory)