

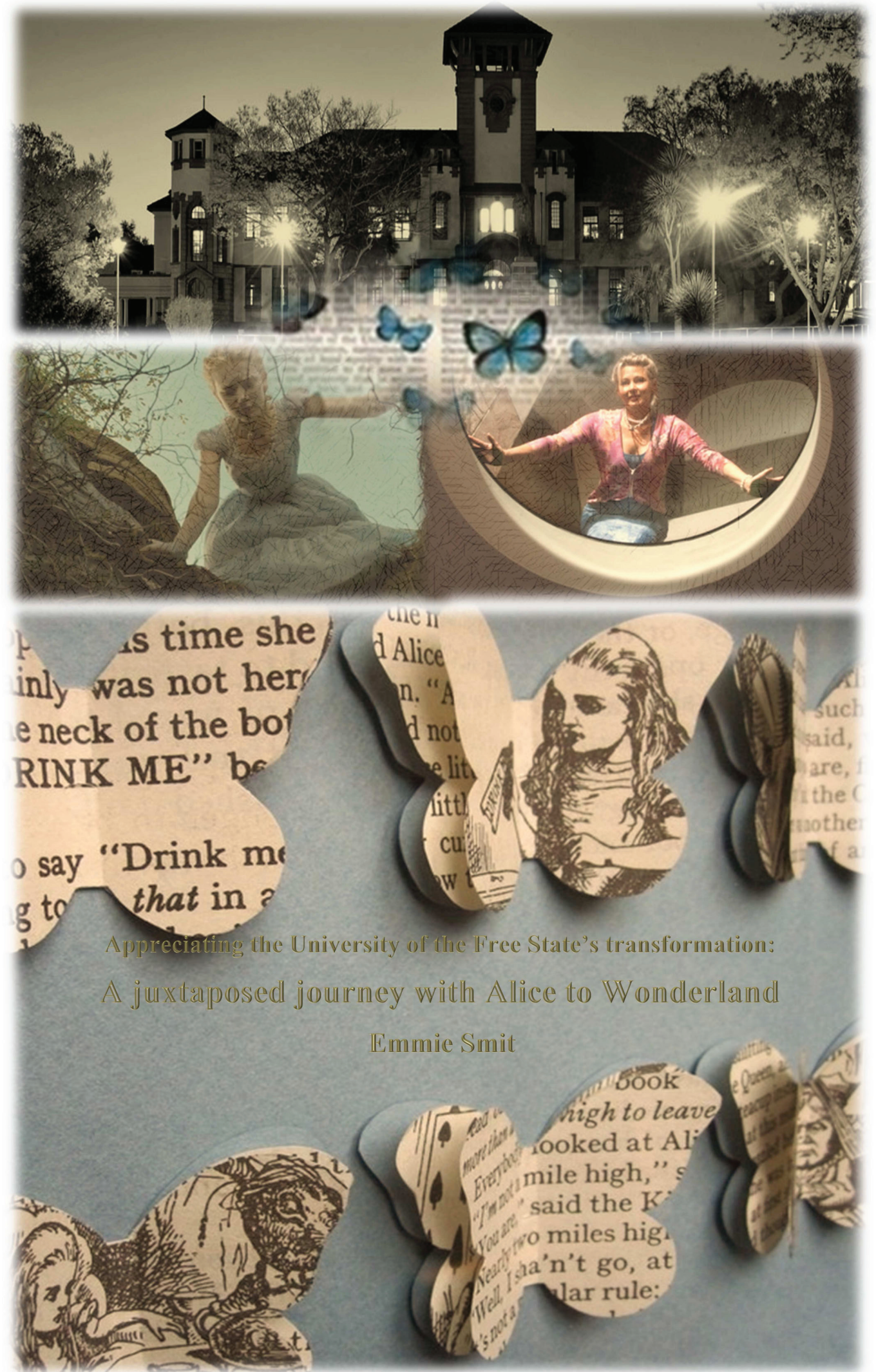


*Metaphors from Alice in Wonderland illustrate firstly the ridiculous adaptations some individuals will burden themselves with just to harmonize with their surroundings. In addition, the metaphors illustrate the exuberant freedom that follows authentic identity formation*



PhD Thesis - Faculty of Education  
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*Appreciating the University of the Free State's transformation: A juxtaposed journey with Alice to Wonderland*



Appreciating the University of the Free State's transformation:  
A juxtaposed journey with Alice to Wonderland  
Emmie Smit



Appreciating the University of the Free State's transformation:  
A juxtaposed journey with Alice to Wonderland

by

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# ***Appreciating the University of the Free State's transformation: A juxtaposed journey with Alice to Wonderland***

## **PREAMBLE**

### **Introduction and background to the study**

The dynamic higher education (HE) sector is continually adapting in order to enhance scholarship. The University of the Free State (UFS) experienced extreme pressure to stabilise the institution in the aftermath of the Reitz debacle in 2008. As a UFS staff member involved in marketing and publicity, I often experienced cognitive dissonance about the resulting changes in the institution.

Directly after the Reitz debacle, the Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, introduced a Ministerial Committee on Progress towards Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions. The ensuing briefing paper reported that the challenges of transformation should not be underestimated. Inherited legacies "produced at the structural level ... social and economic inequalities which was accompanied and underpinned by a complex skein of discriminatory political and cultural attributes, dispositions and orientations" (Soudien, 2010).

Blade Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education and Training, argued that "explicit bigotry, such as the videotaped incident at the University of the Free State, [is] met with public outrage. Meanwhile, covert forms of racism [discrimination] remain prevalent" (McEvoy, 2009).

The transformation debates led me to consider creating a post-critical living theory (Polanyi, 1958; McNiff, 2006) on the institutional identity consciousness (Corbey, 1991) of the UFS (Jansen, 2008). In addition, I considered the possibility of appreciating the Reitz debacle as a public catalyst to a wonderland of transformed identity (Cooperrider, 2010). I also reflected on the outcomes of Higher Education Institutions' (HEIs) leadership styles and their contribution towards supporting and developing authentic institutional identity at both rural and urban HEIs (Cameron, Dutton & Quinn, 2003; Bushe, 2005; Whitney, Trosten-Bloom & Rader, 2010).

By breaking down the disciplinary boundaries, I unpacked the changes in terms of consciousness development, leadership, vision and identity at the UFS and then reflected on my own identity transformation within the context of the broader institution. In doing so, I juxtaposed a journey with Alice in Wonderland, using the Wonderland characters, sites and experiences to reflect on the transformation at the UFS. I called it my Metaphor Positioning System (MPS), in contrast to a Global Positioning System (GPS).

*I met Alice at our agreed point-of-departure. Instead of using a GPS (Global Positioning System) to make sense of our journey, I used a MPS (Metaphor Positioning System) and BBM, using the browser option on our mobile phones to record Alice's route. Science differs in Wonderland, where the different branches of Arithmetic are Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision, and where the future is beforehand documented on the Oraculum – a calendar of all the days of Underland, each having its own title and illustration.*

*We had no predetermined "route" or "course" and, therefore, had no ETA [estimated time of arrival] or ETE [estimated time [en route] or [geo-fencing] boundaries] for our journey. My "position" was the present "epoch" and Alice's 150 years ago. Our position was somewhere between the beginning and the end of the journey. The UFS campus was our "control point" and I could locate Alice's actual position on the "moving map" screen. Adapted from screenwriter Linda Woolverton's *Alice in Wonderland* (2010)*

### **Theoretical framework**

For the purpose of this study, a qualitative, post-critical and postmodern Appreciative approach (Bushe, 2005; Cooperrider, 2010; Whitney, Trosten-Bloom & Rader, 2010) is applied to the processes of institutional identity transformation at the UFS. The study is primarily located within the field of Higher Education Studies, but borrows notions from industrial and social psychology, visual culture and management studies.

### **Research problem, aim and objectives**

The apparent devastating Reitz debacle in February 2008, when four White students humiliated four Black service workers while capturing the incident on video (CNN, 2008), introduced major changes to the UFS. These actions of transformation must have been so radical that it resulted in the *World Universities Forum's 2011 Award for Best Practice in Higher Education*. I had to make sense of these processes of change at the UFS and, as a staff member at the institution, observed the numerous changes, which urged me to engage with it on various conscious levels. However, as I engaged on my journey towards coming to terms with the changes, I realised that in my subconscious mind I had also changed, resulting in my final article.

This study, as a juxtaposed journey with Alice, was driven by the following questions: What is the authentic identity of the UFS when it needs to identify and brand itself? Is the institution aware of that identity which lies at its heart?



The purpose of this study is, first, to apply an Appreciative approach to what appears as an enormous disaster in the existence of the UFS and, secondly, to lead the UFS to a consciousness and appreciation where the institution can declare

*I am Me. In the entire world, there is no one else exactly like me. Everything that comes out of me is authentically mine, because I chose to be authentic – I own everything about me: my being, my feelings, my voice, all my actions, whether they be to others or myself. I own my fantasies, my dreams, my hopes, my fears. I own my triumphs and successes, all my failures and mistakes ... I have the tools to survive, to be close to others, to be productive, and to make sense and order out of the world of people and things outside of me. I own me, and therefore, I can engineer me. I am me, and I am Okay.* Virginia Satir's Declaration of Self-Esteem.

## **Article landscape**

This study consists of 5 articles.

### **Article 1**

#### ***Travelling with Alice towards institutional transformation: Discovering my methodological vehicle and my starting point***

**Orientation:** The dynamic HE sector is continually adapting in order to enhance scholarship. The UFS experienced extreme pressure to 'normalise' all aspects of the institution in the aftermath of the Reitz debacle in 2008.

**Research purpose:** I undertook a journey juxtaposed with Alice from Wonderland. Characters, sites and experiences served as Metaphor Positioning System (MPS), and not Global Positioning System or GPS, coordinates that assisted me in my journey towards identity consciousness.

**Motivation for the study:** As a UFS staff member involved in marketing and publicity, I often experienced cognitive dissonance about the resulting changes in the leadership structure and its strategic plans.

**Research design, approach and method:** Through observations, literature and discussion, and by breaking down the disciplinary boundaries, I unpacked consciousness in the fields of psychology, philosophy and visual arts in this auto-ethnographic work in Higher Education Studies.

**Main findings:** My personal consciousness contributed to the collective consciousness, and enabled me to share the unifying awareness that operates within my community. I appreciate the creative functions of consciousness: through mental and physical actions, my consciousness facilitates meta-cognitive processes, auto-programming, decision-making, goal-setting and organising.

**Practical/managerial implications:** This study provides insights that might add value to other institutions' processes of being conscious of their identities, and supplies beacons that will illuminate their journey.

**Contribution/value-adding:** Since learning changes learners, education is an identity-formation process. Visual representations shape the individual's self-concept and self-awareness, as I experienced during my journey. Visual culture facilitated my and the HEI's educational processes of identity formation, for both the participant and the observer (Freedman, 2003).

## **Article 2**

### ***Developing an authentic identity at rural Higher Education Institutions by using an appreciative catalyst: An analogy with Alice in Wonderland***

**Orientation:** Geographical setting contributes greatly to the unique identity of the institution. The urban campus is perceived as superior, because of the access to technological, educational and recreational resources. The opposite is perceived of the rural campus and, therefore, the rural campus often desires to copy the institutional identity of the urban campus.

**Research purpose:** The purpose of this study is to determine the catalyst for changing perceptions on institutional identity of rural HE settings?

**Motivation for the study:** Directive documents and developmental programmes urge governments, urban HEIs, HE practitioners, and the global community to change their perception about rural campus. However, self-images, self-esteems and individuality are internal processes of strategic self-appreciation and are applicable to the authentic institutional identity development of rural HE settings.

**Research design, approach and method:** This conceptual article – in the postmodernist paradigm – applies a combination of psychology, developmental psychology, industrial psychology, branding theories and the visionary leadership principle – as developed by Bernard M. Bass – as a catalyst to reframe the HEI identity-formation concept of rural or remote campuses.

**Main findings:** Metaphors from *Alice in Wonderland* illustrate the pointlessness of an unauthentic identity. By synergising theories from the disciplines of social and developmental psychology and internal branding, and applying Appreciative Inquiry (AI) principles, the researcher re-conceptualises strategic authentic institutional identity formation.

**Practical/managerial implications:** Strategic identification and appreciation of an authentic self-identity will reposition rural HE settings; not the presentation of a superficially developed brand image.

**Contribution/value-adding:** The article might empower the population of the rural campus to change their insider's perception, and thereby change the outsider's perspective.

### Article 3

#### ***Appreciating visionary leadership: Dreaming the Underland-to-Wonderland dream for leading a Higher Education Institution***

**Orientation:** A vision is considered a valued and strategic tool for a leader, but a dreaming leader might be frowned upon. However, (AI) and Appreciative Leadership (AL) employ 'dream' as one of the crucial elements in this qualitative research method. Metaphors from *Alice in Wonderland* are juxtaposed with the UFS – where an internationally awarded transformation took place after a debacle that was covered by various major international news agencies.

**Research purpose:** This conceptual article differentiates between predominantly conscious-mind or preconceived dreaming (where the vision is restrained and directed by components of strategy formation) and predominantly subconscious-mind or free-range dreaming (where the vision unveils a future unlimited by conscious constraints).

**Motivation for the study:** This journey is about sense-making of the defining factors that accomplished the transformation on the UFS campus.

**Research design, approach and method:** The article forms part of a larger research project within a post-critical paradigm, whereby the reflective and theoretical epistemology of leadership includes metaphors from *Alice in Wonderland*. The seven properties of sense-making (Weick, 1995) guide the journey through the uncertain and ambiguous process.

**Main findings:** An alternative concept of vision is conceptualised. Theoretical support is supplied by both the *Alice in Wonderland* chronicle (Woolverton, 2010) and research conducted by Harvard's Medical and Business Schools.

**Practical/managerial implications:** This alternative concept of vision might assist leaders to drive creative transformation, instead of merely adjusting and upgrading existing strategies and practices.

**Contribution/value-adding:** A unique combination of theories from three British sources (Harvard's Medical and Business Schools and Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*) provides unique and universal transformational insights.

### Article 4

#### ***A look at University of the (Free) State: My dream of appreciating the Reitz video as a public catalyst to the Wonderland of transformed identity***

**Orientation:** This study documents the apparently devastating Reitz debacle – where four White students humiliated four Black service workers while capturing the incident on video – from one week before the incident occurred in February 2008 up to only 30 months later when the UFS received the *World Universities Forum's 2011 Award for Best Practice in Higher Education*.

**Research purpose:** The purpose was to apply the Appreciative approach to what seems to be an enormous disaster in the existence of the UFS.

**Motivation for the study:** This journey is about sense-making of the defining factors that accomplished the transformation on the UFS campus.

**Research design, approach and method:** The Appreciative approach is applied within action research's Living Theory method, by an insider-author. The dynamics and opportunities that resulted from the Reitz debacle and the application of an Appreciative approach to leadership facilitated transformation on the campus and within its community. Data was collected by means of interviews, personal observations, photographs and documentation. The international media documented this uncontrolled case study extensively. To illuminate this study, traditional problem-based and appreciative strength-based leadership styles are juxtaposed with leadership styles depicted in logician Lewis Carroll's fantasy novel *Alice in Wonderland* (1865).

**Main findings:** By applying an Appreciative approach, a life-giving transformation may develop from a seemingly disparaging debacle.

**Practical/managerial implications:** Extensive international exposure not only contributes to the relevance, reality and validity of this case study on the Reitz debacle, but also illustrates the possibilities of alternative approaches to a global audience of leaders.

**Contribution/value-adding:** The extraordinary success of the Appreciative approach may challenge other institutions to employ this approach in order to heal, unite, and invigorate troubled and diverse communities.

## Article 5

### ***My auto-ethnographic journey of discovery of personal identity consciousness: Who am I? Am I the real me?***

**Orientation:** Institutional transformation often leads to confusion of personal identity. The discovery of my personal identity consciousness and how it influences my ability to understand the transformed HEI identity created an opportunity for change and development. However, these processes were not facilitated on the UFS campus; therefore, I embarked on a sense-making journey, juxtaposed with *Alice in Wonderland*. The metaphors of Lewis Carroll's novel exposed relationships or similarities between distinct conceptual domains of my and Alice's experiences and, therefore, contributed greatly to my sense-making process.

**Research purpose:** The purpose of this research is to make sense in a time when, and space where I experienced cognitive dissonance, and to create a way that would allow me to continue on my conceptual journey to a new and conscious identity.

**Motivation for the study:** I encountered a yearning for sense-making, when I experienced a gap between my understanding and my experience amid the transformation in my professional and personal life. I perceived that information and knowledge – "the making and unmaking of sense" (Dervin, 1998:147) – would move me from time to time, from space to space, from interpretation to interpretation, from culture to culture, and from condition to condition.

**Research design, approach and method:** By applying Bill George's authentic leadership, David Cooperrider's Appreciative Inquiry, Karl E. Weick's sense-making properties and metaphor



juxtaposing, I became conscious of a transformed personal identity. The postmodern paradigm allows for a socially constructed authentic reality to be identified and documented.

**Main findings:** Through a Living Theory narrative, this article offers insights into the construction and transformation of identities by blending institutions' inner and outer experiences. It also reflects on my own meaning-making processes and my own transformed identity at the end of the journey.

**Practical/managerial implications:** Notions of sense-making and appreciating – as developed in organisational studies – will be applied to discover the consciousness of personal identity of a single individual within an institution. This will enforce the need for strategic leadership attention to individual experiences during transformations.

**Contribution/value-adding:** Re-communicating the value of sense-making, as a process of creating situational awareness and understanding in highly complex and uncertain situations, might add to the strategic and transformational management tactics of HEIs.

### **Value of the research**

The metaphors illustrate and simplify the complex institutional identity issues. In addition, this study reflects on documentations of the aftermath of the Reitz debacle and provides an appreciative overview of a series of transformational events at the UFS.

### **Ethical considerations**

The UFS's Faculty of Education Ethics Office approved this study. In addition, written consents were obtained from both the Director: Strategic Communication and the Dean: Student Affairs.

## ARTICLE 1

### ***Travelling with Alice towards institutional transformation: Discovering my methodological vehicle and my starting point***

#### **Abstract**

The University of the Free State (UFS) experienced extreme pressure to 'normalise' all aspects of the institution in the aftermath of the Reitz debacle in 2008. This urged me to undertake a journey juxtaposed with *Alice in Wonderland* as a UFS staff member experiencing some dissonance about the changes in leadership. Being involved in marketing and publicity, I realised how my personal consciousness contributed to the collective consciousness, enabling me to share the unifying identity of my institutional environment. During this period of turmoil and change, the UFS had to revisit its identity and, like Alice, my institution and I had to embark on a journey in search of an authentic identity and to develop a consciousness of what that identity might be.

Characters, sites and experiences served as Metaphor Positioning System (MPS), and not Global Positioning System (GPS), coordinates that assisted me in my journey towards identity consciousness. I also used observations, visual culture, literature and auto-ethnographic work to break down disciplinary boundaries as I unpacked the development of an institutional identity consciousness with aspects of the narrative genre – characters, time, space, themes, intrigues and the narrator's perspective.

This study, therefore, provides insights that might add value to other institutions' processes of being conscious of their identities, and supplies beacons that will illuminate their journeys.

#### **Introduction**

CATERPILLAR: Explain yourself!

ALICE: I'm afraid I can't explain myself, you see, because I'm not myself, you know.

CATERPILLAR: I do not know.

ALICE: I can't put it any more clearly, sir, because it isn't clear to me.

The wise and flamboyant caterpillar, Absolem, a master of transformation, tested whether Alice was conscious of her identity (Carroll, 1865). As I watched Tim Burton's movie version of *Alice in Wonderland* (2010), I made connections between Alice's sense-making of her identity and alternativeness and my own sense-making experiences regarding the institutional identity of the UFS.



### **Who am I and what was my concern?**

My earliest memories are of myself as a toddler collecting artefacts. Nothing special or specific, just whatever I felt like keeping or having: a button, a china fragment, a doll's hand or an empty compressed powder compact. I would ponder over who the owner might have been, the possible use of the item and the circumstances in which it might have been used. Then I would store it with vaguely related items in one of my containers – treasures in their own right. I felt compelled to share my treasures with others and to explain their significance to them. In conflict with my personal experience, they seldom shared my passion for my treasures. These randomly selected items became part of my frequent daydreams.

Nearly five decades later, I am still collecting random artefacts and pondering over them. I still store and show them to others, who still often do not see the value as I do. And still these items become useful during my frequent daydreams. Only now my artefacts are often electronic; my pondering is research; my daydreaming is reflecting, and my sharing is auto-ethnography. In both my professional and vocational day-to-day activities as a visual artist, visual facilitator, visual learner and visual publicist, I collect visuals: mostly photographs and sketches that interest me. I store them in one of my electronic devices. When I need to communicate by creating a painting, a lecture, a press release or an article, I reflect on my treasures.

One day, as I compiled yet another press release, I realised that this type of communication made me feel uneasy. I still had my randomly selected and carefully stored artefacts, of which others often still fail to see the value that I see, and I still reflected upon them. I realised that it was the act of communication that created the uneasy feeling. Eventually, I could label my feelings as cognitive dissonance (Buchanan & Huczynski, 1985; Locke, 2010), as I experienced the discrepancy or inconsistency between my duties and desire to contribute visually to the identity-building of my institution and its mandated message (Festinger, 1957; Cote & Levine, 2002), because I was no longer sure of what identity to portray. This reminded me of Jung who suggested that the consciousness and unconsciousness collaborate to create a harmonious wholeness; however, in contrast to this wholeness, I experienced friction and disturbance, as the consciousness or the unconsciousness deviated too far from its core. I experienced this feeling of dissonance just prior to and after the Reitz video debacle in 2008.

My urge to collect and treasure curiosities during my life journey made me collect visual artefacts portraying what happened to the UFS; just in time, because the university authorities covered this up and/or removed it almost within 24 hours. I started to interrogate the meaning of the events and wondered about the artefacts that could have been a visual and palpable documentation of our identity and culture, and why they needed to be destroyed or denied? I had to ask questions such as: Who are we? Who are we not? What is our institutional culture? What is our institutional identity?

These questions made me realise that a clear institutional identity consciousness (Brockmeier, 1997; Thagard & Beam, 2004) would provide answers to my questions and possibly solve my communication uneasiness and my dissonance, but I could not trace any guidelines, except through the vague vision and mission statement of the institution.

In exploring the transformation of the UFS, this article focused on

The methodological vehicle I used to do so, and

What formed the starting point of this journey by viewing identity consciousness.

### **My methodological vehicle and my modes of travel**

During this study, Alice and I travelled by tumbling, hiking, dreaming and daydreaming. In addition, I travelled far from home, but not without a star, not without and hanging on to a dream. I fell head over heels, travelled on bikes, buses, trams, trains, planes and boats. I travelled through the air and under the ground, over hills and through valleys, on gated gravel roads, on inviting pastures, on barricaded roads and on forced open roads.

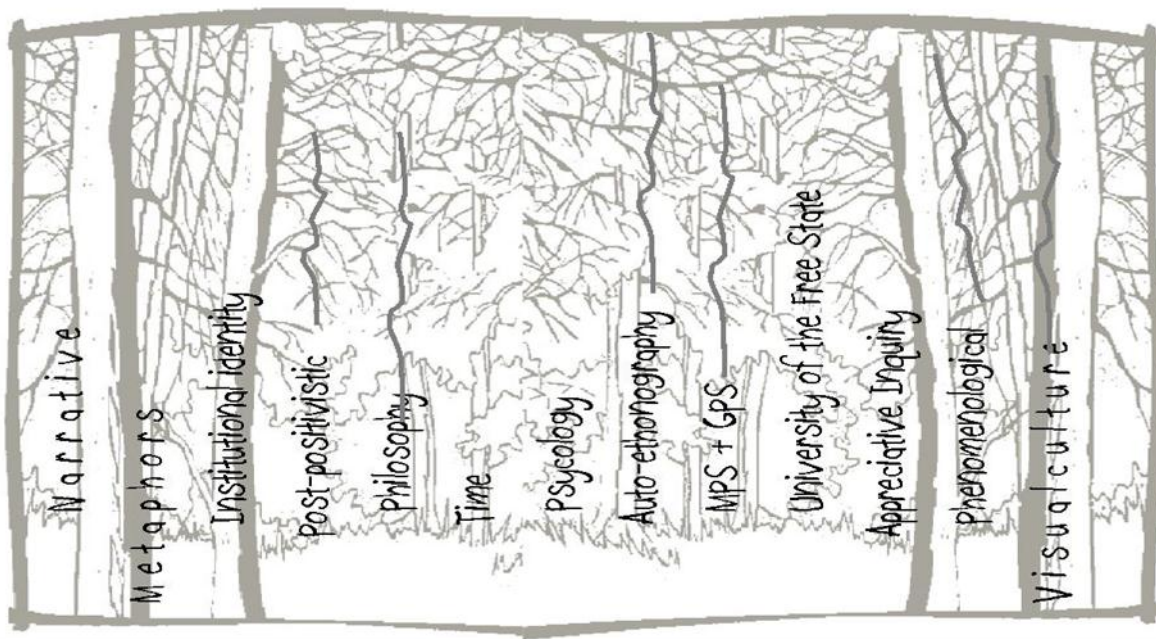
### **Selecting an approach that would flexibly reflect my experiences and meaning-making processes**

As a postmodern predominantly lateral thinker who takes enormous pleasure in provocative, imaginative and flexible least travelled journeys, I realised that I needed to select less conventional research designs and methods to connect and construct all the concepts that I intuitively collect. I have a story of my authentic self within a story of my institution's authenticity. I wanted to tell my story with the support of theory in order to give others and myself a coherent account of my journey and to do so against a trustworthy and credible referenced backdrop of an important era in the history of the UFS and probably higher education (HE) in South Africa, if one considers the Soudien Report of 2008 (Department of Education).

I also realised that I needed methods and designs in which I could accommodate limitless and open-ended concepts in a logical manner and allow for a poststructuralist approach and process within a phenomenological frame (De Bono, 1970) to enable me to interpret events and experiences, construct meaning and make sense of our ever-changing institutional identity. Auto-ethnography (AE) offered me a fluid research reporting method that accommodated my own experiences within a multidimensional and multicultural institution, by allowing me to link theory to lived experiences. As a visual artist and marketing officer, I used visual tools (Baars, 1997), documented media reports and public speeches to guide my journey with the UFS towards a transformed institution.

The Visual Teaching Alliance's homepage confirms my experience: by being a visual/tactile learner, artist and facilitator, I knew that the brain processes visual information 60 000 faster than text; that

90% of information coming to the brain is visual; that 40% of all nerve fibres connected to the brain are linked to the retina, and that visual teaching aids advance learning by up to 400% (Rzadko-Henry & Gangwer, n.d.). So I provided a diagram and other visuals to lead my readers through my processes of thinking and reasoning and what approaches and paradigms influenced my journey. The diagram is anything but linear; rather a dense forest of knowledge trees (Figure 1.1), providing me with opportunities to gaze back and forth, focus outward on the social and cultural aspects of my personal experiences, while in the end looking inward to expose my vulnerable self (Ellis, 2004:37).



**Figure 1.1: Dense forest of knowledge trees through which our journey leads us.**

According to Chang (2008), AE offers an easy-to-read narrative style and has a sense-making potential through self-reflection on a personal journey. Although often perceived as self-indulgency, creative approaches in the critical reflection processes, such as with AE, create depth of knowledge and meaning, as well as an innovative synergy between research endeavours and robust theory interaction (McIntosh, 2010).

The narrative format of AE enabled me to make sense of my environment and my experiences as I travelled with Alice (Abolafia, 2010; Bruner, 1990; Currie & Brown, 2003) and of the UFS's changing identity during transformation. The concept of inter-narrative identity, which refers to how my own identity is shaped by my personal experiences, observations and feelings as I relate them in this article, is close to AE and its timelessness (Maan, 1999), substantiating my choice of reporting on my research. However, this journey in quest of a transformed authentic identity is also not linear, but multi-levelled as I used *Alice in Wonderland* as metaphor for my own observations, experiences,



feelings and identity formation and transformation. Similarly, the goal of the fantasy genre was to lead a reader/participant towards a better understanding of his/her own identity and of the world (Timmerman, 1983). A wonderland under the earth's surface was a popular alternative world in the 1800s when Lewis Carroll wrote *Alice's Adventures under Ground* (1864). In later editions, the title was changed to *Alice in Wonderland*. Underland and Wonderland are, therefore, synonymous, but I used Underland as the space and time when the UFS had not yet become the Wonderland of becoming an identity-conscious institution. A seeker often becomes a traveller, and after an adventurous journey through Underland, s/he might enjoy the Wonderland of being identity conscious.

My connection with Alice only became apparent in March 2010 after I watched Tim Burton's movie with lecturers from the Faculty of Accountancy and Management at the Mahasarakham University (MSU) in Thailand. One of the lecturers commented, "This movie is all about discovering identity!" Only then did I discover the universal language of metaphors: my dear English- and Afrikaans-speaking Alice is also a Thai-speaking Alice. There I started to use *Alice in Wonderland's* spaces, events and characters as metaphors that formed the "map" of this study (Cook, 2004; Hunt, 2006; Livingstone & Harrison, 1981; Perry & Cooper, 2001). The use of metaphors, therefore, supports "reasoning and imagination and how we think and conceptualise our experiences" (McIntosh, 2010). The metaphorical elements in *Alice and Wonderland* (as the primary subject) interact with transformation processes of the UFS (as the object of study). The use of the fantasy narrative may lead the reader to identify comparable properties at the UFS and invite the reader to construct a parallel between the two subjects, thus creating a "system of relationships" (Au, 2007:279). Foucault, after all, suggested that connective and transformative effects are created by interaction with metaphorical narratives (McIntosh, 2010), forming parallel changes at the UFS. According to Perry and Cooper (2001:55), metaphors are also a medium of searching, reflecting and meaning-making, which is what this journey is about. I chose to travel in juxtaposition with Alice in Wonderland, or rather through Underland, not to escape into an unreal world, but to make sense of my world by looking at it from a different perspective. Using metaphors by means of journal entries deepened my insights and, as the traveller, I had the opportunity to understand myself in someone else's environment, subculture and everyday life.

### **Selecting my methods of inquiry**

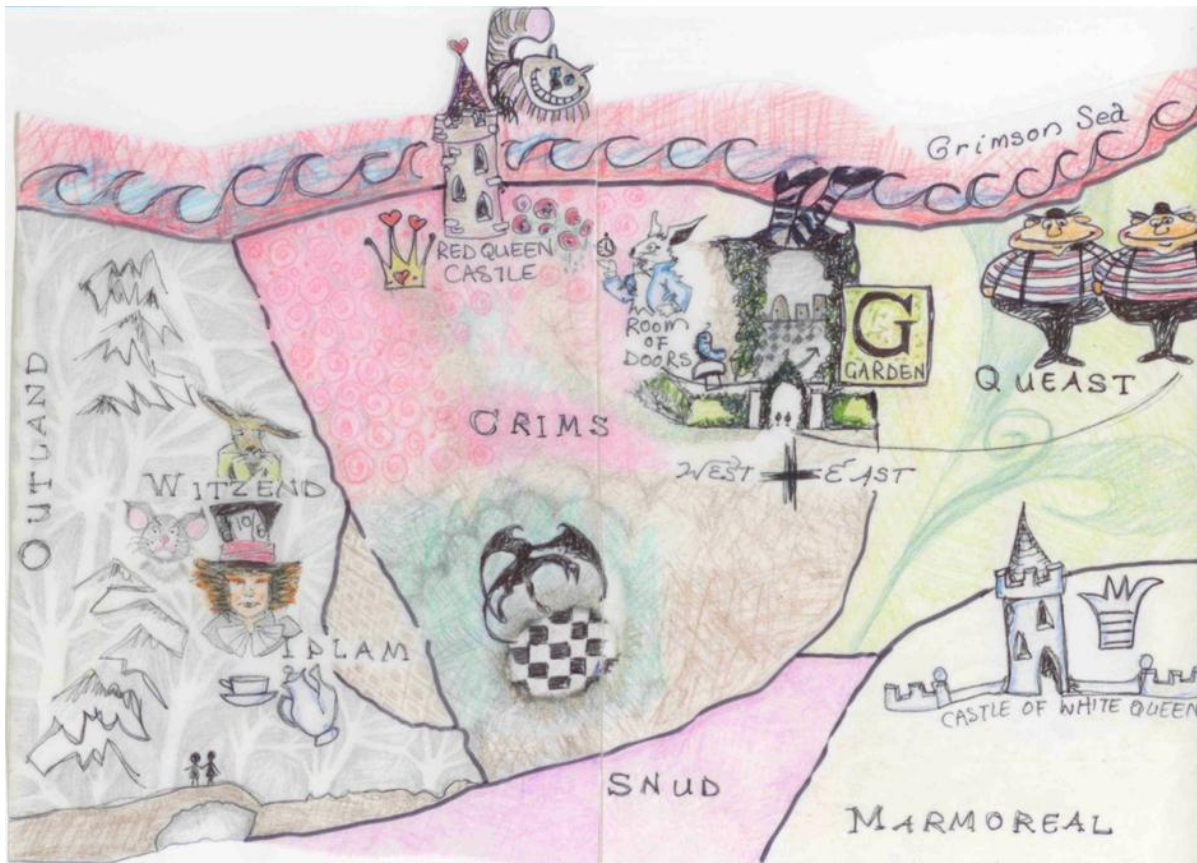
As components of metaphors, rhetoric scripts and poetics contribute to learning, memory, interpretation, impact, visualisation and knowledge. Therefore, I will include quotes from *Alice in Wonderland* to illustrate the metaphorical connections with the UFS's transformation. The immediate visual text (Mitchell, 2008) formed the basis of this study. Although I used existing text, I created, re-created or re-imagined most of the text I used. I collected data by watching Tim Burton's 2010 version of *Alice in Wonderland* film. Thereafter, I compiled a map of Wonderland from cartographic

clues in the text. I took pictures of objects and events that resemble Wonderland images. I painted and glued collages on canvas (cf. Figure 1.2).

As I mapped out my journey, I literally embarked on my journey with Alice. I created digital posters as part of conference presentations. I visited sites in the county of Chester which somehow represent or are related to Alice in Wonderland or Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, alias Lewis Carroll. I wore my Lewis Carroll Research Centre-Daresbury pin on my jacket. I posted a crooked Mad Hatter cake on my study promoter's Facebook timeline to celebrate her and Charles Lutwidge Dodgson's unbirthday – they share a birthday on 27 January. I had a morning tea party at the Cheshire Cat Hotel in a 17<sup>th</sup>-century building and took and looked at pictures with Cheshire locals such as my nieces Anja and Nua. I explored Lewis Carroll's birthplace exactly 300 years after the author impromptu told the Alice in Wonderland story to his picnic companions. I painted DweedleDee and TweedleDum as pillars in my lounge and as academic bureaucrat visitors in my office. I drew diagrams. I used nonsense literature – quotes and poems – as computer and mobile phone backgrounds. I stencilled "Où est ma chatte" (Where is my cat?) on my kitchen wall. I paged through *Alice in Wonderland* illustrations on the internet and in picture books. Then I considered the interpretation and application of the visual text or primary text (see Addenda).

The visual clues within the visual documents facilitated and invited participation (subjective discussion, reflection and interpretation) of individuals from my personal and professional 'communities'. I juxtaposed the interdisciplinary visual research method's text to make sense of the meanings of the similarities and differences between the visuals, reminding me of Harper's words:

*In all examples of photo-elicitation research, the photography loses its claim to objectivity. Indeed the power of the photo lies in its ability to unlock the subjectivity of those who see the image differently from the reader (Harper, 2003:238).*



**Figure 1.2: Map of Underland or Wonderland. I compiled this map with cartographic clues throughout Lewis Carroll's book. Crims, the central area, is surrounded by Queast in the east, Witzend and Iplam in the west, Snud in the south, and the Crimson Sea in the north. Marmoreal is situated in south-eastern Wonderland.**

### **Selecting ways of organising, analysing and interpreting my data**

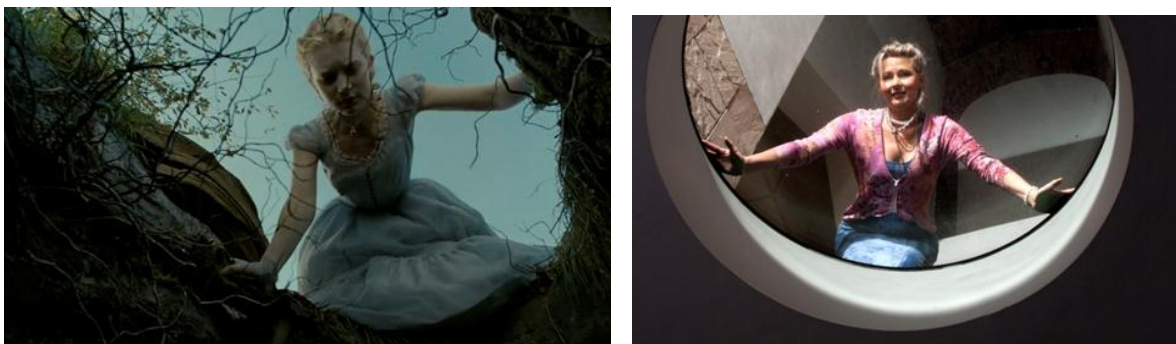
Using my map (Figure 1.2) as guide, I organised and analysed the data by juxtaposing my lived experiences with those of Alice. In addition, I drew on electronic communication applications to analyse, interpret and apply primary text. By working with the data, I drew attention from various people: one invited me to co-author an article on ugliness in education (with reference to Uglification in Wonderland mathematics); another invited me to share my research with master's and doctoral students from another university, and one invited me to discuss academic *photo voice* in a series of articles on a photographic blog. In addition, I applied for funding at the National Arts Council for an exhibition of the visual text that I collected as data for this study.

I kept a travel journal to capture my feelings of being lost similar to those when Alice became lost. As I became emerged in my journey with Alice, I could identify with Alice's inquisitiveness, despite (or as a result of?) her feelings of being lost. My regular coping skills were reduced to those of a child: my

lack of understanding of direction, culture and lifestyles in this foreign environment of a transforming University both intimidated and liberated me. I sometimes became foreign, even to myself, as I travelled on the heretofore untravelled roads of my mind. I compared the similes that take and make place in order to locate a familiar department. Through juxtaposition, I became aware of the events and characters we come across in real life. Eventually, I made sense of my own experiences on the UFS campus, which may serve as an example for many other HEIs.

Wonderland's well-known metaphors served as valuable travel MPS coordinates that directed Alice and me towards our destination. These coordinates connected Alice's geographical position and my metaphorical position, enabling me to determine exact locations and understand my reality through Alice's reality. The first MPS reading connected Alice's position at the rabbit hole with my position at the glass-covered eye in the UFS Main Building: both physical and visual points of connecting to another storey and story (Figure 1.3). MPS readings were a fundamental method of inquiry, in addition to numerous interviews and discussions.

In an interview with Barney Britz, esteemed retired Professor of Architecture, who conceptualised the transformation of the UFS Main Building to become the offices of the Rectorate and Strategic Communication, I learned that the inclusion of a seemingly floating stairway and the glass-covered floor panel (or "eye", according to Professor Barney) were to transform visual and physical communication in the building. Vertical movement and connection between the upstairs and the downstairs room-of-doors was thereby made more accessible. This was the vertical tunnel between the rabbit hole and the room-of-doors. The chief media officer at UFS's Division for Strategic Communication took a picture of me gazing through the glass-covered eye between the ground and first floors of the UFS Main Building. In juxtaposition, Alice inspects the rabbit-hole entrance into Underland. Each of us had our blond hair plaited backwards and wore blue dresses in unplanned synchronicity (Figure 1.3).



**Figure 1.3: Alice and Emmie looking forward into their rabbit holes.**

Consultation with an engineer on selecting the most appropriate electronic devices in order to stay connected with Alice and to record and map our connections during our juxtaposed journey led me to

decide that my Blackberry with a built-in MPS would be sufficient to follow Alice electronically. My insights developed further through several discussions on dissonance and other psychological aspects with psychology students; on narrative writing and metaphors with an academic, and on identity and other philosophical aspects with UFS's Dean of the Faculty of Education. Simultaneously, as a staff member, student, parent and alumnus of the UFS, I started to indulge in my insider's view, and valued my own observations and experiences as opportunities to make meaning of the artefacts and data I collected for this study and to ponder over them.

### **Selecting Appreciative Inquiry to guide the presentation of my data**

During this journey, I never questioned the correctness or appropriateness of the UFS's assumed institutional identity, but inquired about the existence or the awareness thereof. My quest was about making sense and being aware of this authentic institutional identity without inhibitions or preconceptions about the limitations of existing practices and policies, or the lack thereof. The rationale for my quest is to connect the value-adding functions of consciousness (Baars, 1997, 1998) with the metaphors (characters, images, similes, events, spaces and descriptions) that could influence and benefit the UFS, and that is precisely how I came to write this part of my study. As an insider, I wanted to make sense of my connection with my institutional community and reflected on the visuals that interested me personally and that formed part of my institution's authentic identity – a term effectively used by Chang (2008). I discovered a positive core when Jonathan Jansen (Vice Chancellor of the UFS) echoed "Kovsies, you don't know how wonderful you are", eighteen months after the Reitz debacle at the opening of a student art exhibition on 11 November 2010 at the Oliewenhuis Art Museum.

To enable me to have sufficient tools to convey my story appropriately, I selected Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as a supporting method. AI's 4D Cycle (discovery, dreaming, designing and destiny) offers me a structure to narrate my sense-making process – my journey – in a value-adding manner, as it would enable me to reflect on how the values embodied in the UFS's transformational process are steered towards the desired direction (or dream). While constituting cohesion and a unique identity, AI provides the scope to "study what gives life to human systems when they function at their best" (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010:1).

Cooperrider, Whitney and Stravos (2003) regard AI as an inquiry to uncover profound knowledge entities of human systems in order to "co-construct the best and highest future of that system" (Watkins & Mohr, 2001:14-15). In this instance, the work of McKenzie (2003) and Berrisford (2005) substantiate the effectiveness of AI in organisations. This made me realise that outcomes of such a study could provide insight into the shifts in values, actions, behaviours and dreams as precursors of the envisaged transformation at the UFS. AI's 4D Cycle has been integrated into this study to encourage myself and others to *discover* the best things in the institution, to envisage or *dream*



transformational success, to reflect on the strategies for *designing* or shifting towards new values and identities in realising the dreams, and then to reflect on and celebrate what has been learned and how the movement towards the institution's goal has taken place in shaping the UFS's *destiny* (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010).

I discovered that the positive core of the UFS is a century of achievements that are often emphasised by the current Vice Chancellor. Then I dreamed of what could be if I and the institution realised this stance and were conscious of its authentic institutional identity. After watching Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* (2010), I ventured on a sense-making process that included a journey with Alice from the Underland to the Wonderland of the UFS's institutional identity. Finally, I expected that I would arrive safely at a destination where I, as marketing officer, had the authority and comfort to communicate and contribute visually to the identity-building of my institution and its mandated message.

### **My starting point: Discovering identity consciousness**

#### **My travel journal** (as recorded via BBM and MPS)

*I met Alice at our agreed point-of-departure. Instead of using a GPS (Global Positioning System) to make sense of our journey, I used a MPS (Metaphor Positioning System) and BBM, using the browser option on our mobile phones to record Alice's route. Science differs in Wonderland, where the different branches of Arithmetic are Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision, and where the future is documented beforehand on the Oraculum – a calendar of all the days of Underland, each having its own title and illustration.*

*We had no predetermined "route" or "course" and, therefore, no ETA [estimated time of arrival] or ETE [estimated time en route] or GFB [geo-fencing boundaries] for our journey. My "position" was the present "epoch" and Alice's, 147 years ago. Our position was somewhere between the beginning and the end of the journey. The UFS campus was our "control point" and I could locate Alice's actual position on the "moving map" screen.*

*My MPS coordinates indicated that this time-of-departure was our time-of-no-return, just as the moment the Reitz video appeared in the public domain in February 2008 – just as Alice followed a nervous clock-watching white rabbit who introduced himself in his hurry as Nivens McTwisp. As they tumbled down the rabbit tunnel, I heard him repeating: "I'm late, I'm late for a very important date!"*



My concern in terms of experiencing insecurity of what the identity of the UFS was and how it should be portrayed made me realise that I was, just like Alice, somewhere between the beginning and the

end of the journey, neither knowing who I am in my institution, nor knowing what values my institution was representing. It actually came as a shock when it dawned on me that the UFS was, at that stage, rather unconscious of its identity and where it was going. I experienced friction and disturbance as the consciousness or the unconsciousness deviated too far from its authentic self (Zweig, 1991).

The concept 'identity' has increasingly led to numerous scholarly and professional works across a range of fields, such as the work of Tajfel (1979), and that of Turner and Oakes (1986). The term *identity*, from the French word *identité*, meaning "the same" (Leary & Tangney, 2003:2), emphasised the sharing or oneness with others in a particular area or at a given point in time. In this context, the identity of an institution should reflect the core values shared by that entity at a particular time. An institution that is conscious of its identity would reflect a uniqueness which differentiates it from other institutions (Tajfel, 1986). The UFS would thus be different from other HEIs, giving publicists a mandate to deliver the University's message clearly, confirm its credibility, connect emotionally with its target audience, motivate its stakeholders, and cement its user loyalty (Wheeler, 2006).

An institutional identity or brand statement is a promise to stakeholders of what to expect (Wheeler, 2006). In terms of institutional identity, UFS's public stance on, and discussions about *the alignment of strategic vision, institutional culture and stakeholder images* (Hatch & Schultz, 2006:xviii) struck me as vague and unstated. Even the UFS' alterity (Voestermans, 1991), or what we are not – the separation of *us* and *they (other HEIs)*, in the format of a declaration that distances the institution from opposing and unacceptable images, was not clear, official and/or fully discussed and published in the institution.

Wenger (1998:163) theorised that identity is lived, negotiated and social in nature, whereby an identity is dynamic, yet pervasive. To Wenger (1998:146), this means that identity is formed through a dialogical process, whereby experiences and their social interpretation inform each other. So did the handling of the Reitz debacle change my feelings of uneasiness to emotions of fear? In my capacity as one of the institution's marketing officers, I was confronted by questions such as: "Would my head roll if I made a public blunder?" The institution's identity should be clearly integrated throughout the institution at every point of public contact. I was one of those contacts, but I only had the vague vision and mission statements to direct me. Another concern was how the University was missing opportunities to build a strong institutional identity due to its lack of institutional identity consciousness, because multidimensional changes are an integrated part of the dynamic nature of HEIs (UNESCO, 1998).

As Alice and I tumbled down the rabbit hole, I knew that maintaining a reasonable level of identity consciousness is challenging under normal circumstances. Yet, in times of change and instant

transformation, maintaining consciousness of “who we are” and “who we are not” becomes even more difficult (Polanyi, 1958). Just like Alice “crash-landed on the chessboard floor of the Room of Doors. It seemed as if all the doors had been locked tightly since forever; it seemed that there was no way out. Alice jumped up and began searching for an exit”, the UFS leadership “crash-landed” in the public media being accused of racism after the 2008 Reitz debacle. Top management engaged in crisis-management endeavours to establish a new ‘normal’, which meant that the exploration of authenticity and consciousness was neglected and probably led to the creation of an inauthentic institutional identity.

In order to present the UFS in the public domain in my professional capacity, I needed a clear image of its institutional identity. The apparent lack of authentic branding documentation motivated me to travel (juxtaposed with Alice) from the Underland to the Wonderland of the renewed institutional identity consciousness of the UFS. The process facilitated sense-making by identifying aspects similar to GPS coordinates.

Since being a History of Art 101 student, I am intrigued by the 1800s Cabinet of Curiosities. They were also known by various names such as Cabinet of Wonder, and *Kunstkammer* (art room) or *Wunderkammer* (wonder room). Wealthy collectors boasted with wood and glass cabinets filled with amazing collections of specimens. These encyclopaedic collections in Renaissance Europe contained all types of cultural or natural wonder or even bizarre objects – from a monkey claw to an exotic plant; from a statue to a sketch of an armoured rhinoceros; these items were brought together to tell a story of an exotic place.

The chocolate tins and shoeboxes were my Cabinet of Curiosities. I would empty my dress pockets and categorise my artefacts into these tins and boxes at the end of a day of successful treasure hunting. Years later, my sister Magda and I would unearth parts of porcelain dolls and crockery from Victorian municipal dumping sites and display these artefacts in our vintage display racks.

In my mind, the travel journal is the text version of the curiosity cabinet. As early as 1800, travel journals were being published, outlining and preserving all the magnificent features of a new frontier or the memories of a trip. These journals intrigued and engaged the readers with illustrations and pictures, bus tickets bought with foreign currency and printed with unfamiliar letters. The main purpose of a travel journal is the archiver’s desire to document or catalogue the present, so that I, the future, can remember the past (Bredenkamp, 1995).

Therefore, by means of my travel journal in narrative format, I followed Alice and the UFS as site and used analogies of characters in the epic to explore the unconsciousness of the shared and authentic

institutional identity of the UFS as the context since the exposure of the Reitz video for approximately the ensuing thirty months. Via observations, literature studies and discussion, I narrated the unfolding of the University's institutional identity consciousness during a number of stages of transformation. The latter encapsulate the authentic leadership approaches of contemporary leaders.

At the 2009 World Business Forum, Professor Bill George from the Harvard Business School presented his expertise as a world-renowned transformational leader (George, 2009). In his *Action Steps to Turn Crisis into Opportunity*, he identified vital stages in an authentic transformation process. First, the transformation leader needs to face reality and admit that a mistake has been made, that undesired consequences followed and that only acts of responsibility might salvage the situation. Secondly, the leader needs to relieve him-/herself of the burden by applying his/her support mechanisms (people and practices). This often includes physical exercise, resonating feelings, emotions or beliefs, and meditation. Thirdly, the leader should dig deep for the root cause and not settle for diagnoses of a symptom only. Fourthly, in order to endure the short-term crisis with confidence, short-term reserves are necessary on the journey towards the long-term destination. Fifthly, never waste a good crisis. The Chinese symbol for crisis consists of two symbols: danger and opportunity, something like a perilous situation at an incipient moment. A crisis can be turned into an opportunity. Moving out underperformers (people and practices) provides the opportunity to invest in innovation today. In addition, superior dividends will follow, investing in authenticity and honesty, especially with the added value of the increased velocity of information. Finally, crisis situations often necessitate unconventional and transformative tactics that are proactive, even to the point of causing displeasure or discomfort or transgressing a social code.

As I followed Alice and the UFS, I needed a GPS, not a MPS, to guide me and to provide precise positional and velocity data and epoch/time synchronisation for all my travel. The point-of-departure operational and language concept originated in the same decade in which Lewis Carroll originally documented Alice's journey (Prucher, 2007). In counterfactual history, a departure point or divergence point is a historical event with two possible outcomes for the future. Likewise, the Reitz debacle was a good crisis that could be wasted or treasured by the UFS (George, 2009).

Going down the philosophical rabbit hole is my metaphor for adventuring into the unknown. Place is powerful (James Cook University, 2012). As in the case of Alice's journey, time and space were crucial in the transformation of the UFS. Not only was the UFS typified as an 'untransformed' space, but also, as the Reitz video hit that space and went public at that point in time, the UFS was pushed into the rabbit hole after 7 million Google hits (Google, 2012). This HEI was in another world and epoch. In the 1865 fantasy novel, I was confronted with two worlds and a great deal of dynamics that not only contrast, but also complement the two 'realities'.

TweedleDee and TweedleDum, as my metaphor of academic bureaucracy and rhetoric, change to audible and determined supporters of the transformation in which they came to believe. Now, as socially responsible citizens, they even bravely offer to slay the Jabberwocky – the monster of voluble but nonsensical talk and the creator of consonant dissonance. Dissonance is constantly challenging the UFS to interrogate its identity and to take a stand in what they represent and by their vision, mission and strategic statements in terms of their identity (Wheeler, 2006).

*Then, just before we saw the twins, we heard them first, "Contrariwise, if it was so, it might be; and if it were so, it would be: but as it isn't, it ain't. That's logic." Our stunned muteness invited TweedleDee and TweedleDum to explain their statement: "This is Underland, not Wonderland; you have misheard the name!" Alice pondered, "How queer it seems! That is very curious!"*

*Then a low voice loaded with wisdom spoke from out of sight, "Who are you?"*

I viewed the Red Queen as the leader who managed by manipulation through the misuse of emotions. Shame-management tactics were an example of this (Ahmed, 2001), as are create-a-crisis-to-create-a-change tactics (Stanleigh, n.d.). My experience was that, even though these tactics might produce desired short-term outcomes, their lasting damage (such as to morale and relationships) was evident only in the long term. The UFS had to react to the damage that had been done to the institution's image. Although the leadership at that stage tried to put the situation right and made promises to address the issues at stake, they could not keep up the pace, resulting in the breakdown and resignation of the Vice Chancellor in 2009.

*A GPS or **Global Positioning System** is a global electronic system of 24 navigational satellites orbiting the earth every 12 hours, 12,000 miles above the earth's surface, to provide precise positional and velocity data and global time synchronization for air, sea, and land travel.*

<http://www.webopedia.com>

*A MPS or **Metaphor Positioning System** is a cultural electronic system specially conceptualised for this research project, to provide precise positional and velocity data and epoch/time synchronisation for all types of travel.*



*Suddenly, a queen with a very large head and a red gown came running. Alice tried to keep up with her; at least it seemed as if she was going somewhere. Alice and the Red Queen ran in the forest for a long time, but when they stopped, they were still under the same tree as when they started. "It takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!" The Red Queen was obviously irritated as she explained how things work in her kingdom. "And if you don't conform to tone in with my likes and dislikes, it will be 'Off with your head!'"*

*Alice sat down at the table full of crockery, but without cutlery. On my mobile phone screen, I noticed that a Wonderland tea party is like Wonderland's science – different. The cups did not have bottoms and nobody cared for polite tea party conversation.*

*Alice was delighted by the expectation of some refreshment, but left without any when the Hatter said to her, "You used to be much more ... muchier. You've lost your muchness."*

Just as the crockery gave Alice a promise of some reward (refreshments), she soon realised that the cups were bottomless and full of empty promises; the fixing promises of the damaged image did not bear the intended fruit. *If a brand fails to deliver on the promises made, the bottom of the branded entity falls out. An authentic brand consistently delivers on promises, and provides evidence, a measurable track record, the facilities and infrastructures, the practices and policies and the commitment to customers who support the promises* (Davies-Janes, 2009).

*Maybe the inauthentic brand messages created and maintained an inconsistent institutional image as authentic branding could have contributed to the HEI's credibility, because it would have contained elements of passion and value* (George, 2009).

Alice's and the UFS's "muchness" was lost, because she and the institution doubted her/its identity and authenticity and, therefore, also its purpose (Cooperrider, 2003).

When Alice realised what her authentic leadership position and purpose was, she got her "muchness" back, and slayed the Jabberwocky. Critics might think that the researcher has gone mad, but then outcomes of the transformation process became clear. The Jabberwocky motif is implying the leviathan of power and politics in HEIs that try to manipulate internal and authentic transformation through external and apparent transformation.

## **My findings**

I kindled consciousness by revisiting the location through reflection processes (Grossman, 2009). Through content-based reflection, I explored the evidence of what existed, the point-to-point comparisons, the sensory details, the definitions, the terminology and the theories. Metacognitive reflection gave me a process whereby I could intentionally become aware and know my own thoughts and feelings throughout the disruptive and catalytic epoch in the UFS's existence (Cornoldi, 1998). The fluidity of my methodological vehicle made an explorative and unpredictable adventure possible. My methodological vehicle enabled me to arrive at original concepts and interpretations, which rely on metaphor and analogy. In addition, it enabled and is still enabling me to combine different ways of processing knowledge and perception to create a new normal, or a "new order of consciousness" (cf. Perry, 1970) where I could reflect upon the dynamic interrelationships of my thoughts and feelings through self-authorship reflection. I could make sense of the cognitive dissonance that contributed greatly to the initiation of this journey. AE made multiple layers of consciousness evident (Ling & Mackenzie, 2009), and connected my personal to my cultural experience as I used my methodological vehicle. In addition, cognitive fluidity is a key element of attentive and self-reflective consciousness (Mithen, 1996).

My objective and subjective consciousness no longer stood in opposition; through reflection, I found that both my subjective and objective consciousness completed my consciousness. In addition, the new Vice Chancellor (following the resignation of the previous one) established various communication channels on campus. As a result, the new Vice Chancellor was seen, heard and read around the clock on Blackberry, communicating via Monday Bulletin, Facebook, Twitter, national newspaper columns, TV programmes and colloquiums with students and staff.

Like Arthur Bochner and Carolyn Ellis (2006), I realised that identity consciousness is a continuous journey, often a lifetime journey and a process of living life, and not a continuous series of journeys. Consciousness contains an awareness of extrinsic objects and subjects and the processes of knowing and reasoning. Consciousness purposefully selects and re-selects, focuses and re-focuses on chosen parts of the whole (Ellis, 2004).

Only after the journey with Alice could I venture on to transformative and intensive renewal and reflect upon the authentic feelings of knowing, belonging and trusting that developed within me through this process. I took ownership of this awareness and became comfortable within my marketing, branding and public relations ventures. I could locate my activities and motivations by appreciating the awareness that I continually treasure, just like the artefacts that I continue to treasure.

It was impossible to comprehend the dynamics and creativity involved in each individual process of becoming more conscious, but as my awareness of the transformed identity evolved – more “muchness” – it created an opportunity for personal consciousness and perspective. The essence is that as “I experienced”, I increasingly knew who “I am”. I experience consciousness through the interpretation of my five sensory organs, as well as mental activities. Although I could use language to express what I experienced, I had an “inner knowing” that precedes concepts or words (Luo, 2009).

In addition, I realised that consciousness includes the conscious experience of self-awareness, preference, emotion, remembering, conceptual thought, inner speech, mental imagery and exteroception as well as interoception and sensory perception (Farthing, 1992). My subjective and personal perceptions, discernment and apparitions, whether inside or outside my body, contributed to my experience of consciousness. My personal consciousness contributed to the collective consciousness, enabling me to share the unifying awareness that operates within my community.

By identifying the characteristics of consciousness as subjectivity, changeability, intentionality and selectivity (Farthing, 1992), I recognised its various functions. I experienced that consciousness defines; it sets the context and adapts by eliminating vagueness, and it assimilates and edits conscious content to form analogies. I appreciate the creative functions of consciousness.

## **Conclusion**

By my using a variety of visual texts as data and supportive theories to confirm my reasons for juxtaposing the specific data, the data became saturated and reliable. I stayed connected to the data and applied juxtaposing to use and guide me towards literature and theories that I otherwise would not have used to triangulate my experiences and observations for validating my data.

My subjective philosophy is that there is not only one road that will lead to the inner life of the individual I – the self or the other; therefore, I combined a wide range of interconnected data-collection and interpretive methods (Ellingson & Ellis, 2008) to discover and explore and to give a detailed account of my auto-ethnographic journey with Alice from the Underland to the Wonderland of the UFS’s renewed institutional Identity.

I was constantly aware of the critiques of AE (Delamont, 2007; Manning, 2007) and questioned the validity of their claims of egocentric self-indulgence, unethical familiarity, experiential and non-analytic personal knowledge. I found these claims to bear value, but prefer to substantiate my labels with scientific theories and findings (Gobo, 2008; Hoffman, 2000; Polanyi, 1958).

The value of institutional identity awareness or consciousness lies in its richness, as well as in what the characteristics and functions can contribute to the institution's processes and practices. It encompasses the complete *persona* as it reflects the essence of the institutional identity, which adds value to all the management functions, decisions and processes – a powerful leadership tool.

## ARTICLE 2

### ***Developing an authentic identity at rural Higher Education Institutions by using an appreciative catalyst: An analogy with Alice in Wonderland***

#### **Abstract**

Geographical settings contribute greatly to the unique identity of the institution. The urban campus is perceived as superior because of the access to technological, educational and recreational resources. The opposite is perceived of the rural campus, which often desires to copy the institutional identity of the urban campus. Directive documents and developmental programmes urge governments, urban HEIs, HE practitioners, and the global community to change their perception of rural campuses. However, self-image, self-esteem and individuality are internal processes of strategic self-appreciation and are applicable to the authentic institutional identity development of rural HE settings, as well as the conscious and unconscious branding of the HEI, as presented in this psycho-social perspective.

Metaphors from *Alice in Wonderland* illustrate the pointlessness of an unauthentic identity. By synergising theories from the disciplines of social and developmental psychology and internal branding, and applying AI principles, the researcher re-conceptualises strategic authentic institutional identity formation.

#### **Introduction**

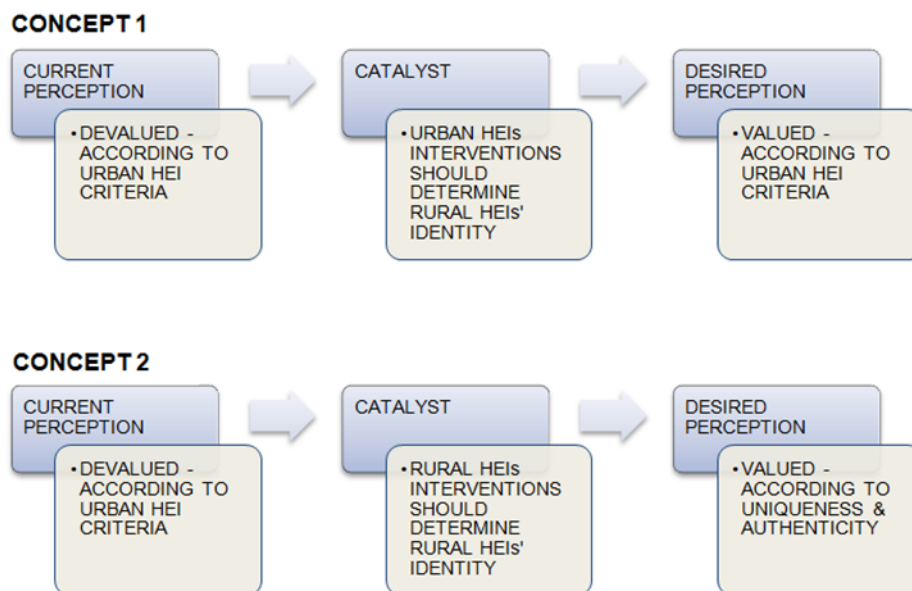
Geographical settings contribute greatly to the unique identity of an institution. Urban campuses tend to be perceived as superior because of the access to, and eminence of human, technological, educational and recreational resources (Larsen, 2004). The opposite is mostly perceived of rural campuses, which often desire to fit into the mould of urban HE settings. What if the rural HE campus could appreciatively declare:

*I am Me. In the entire world, there is no one else exactly like me. Everything that comes out of me is authentically mine, because I chose to be authentic – I own everything about me: my being, my feelings, my voice, all my actions, whether they be to others or myself. I own my fantasies, my dreams, my hopes, my fears. I own my triumphs and successes, all my failures and mistakes ... I have the tools to survive, to be close to others, to be productive, and to make sense and order out of the world of people and things outside of me. I own me and, therefore, I can engineer me. I am me, and I am Okay (Virginia Satir's Declaration of Self-Esteem).*

Being part of a University that also has a rural campus – the picturesque Qwaqwa campus nestled in the Maluti sandstone mountains in Phuthaditjaba – I have often been confronted by the phenomenon that the staff and students on that campus feel inferior to those on the main campus. Having

undertaken this identity-seeking journey, I felt the urge to include a rural campus on my travel map. I was upset to find that, according to Larimore (1969), Donnelly (2005) and Mulkeen (2005), rural campuses are mostly devalued internationally by the perceptions of both internal and external stakeholders. This trend influences the identity of both the individuals and the institution. Directive documents and developmental programmes urge governments, urban HEIs, HE practitioners, and the global community to change their perceptions of rural campuses (Donnelly, 2005; UNESCO, 2002).

After my research on the value of a catalyst in changing identity, I started pondering whether the change of perceptions could start with internal processes forming an authentic institutional identity in those rural settings, to move from the current perceptions to the desired perceptions (Figure 2.1).



**Figure 2.1: Two opposing concepts for authentic identity formation. I use the term 'catalyst' as an influence that increases the rate of action or reaction, instead of a force that imposes a premature action or reaction.**

### **My travel mode through rural campuses**

In this theoretical article on institutional identity formation, I employ a postmodern, post-positivistic approach within the disciplines of social and developmental psychology and internal branding to re-conceptualise rural campus identity formation.

Philosopher John Deely (1992:314-315) supports my postmodern stance – the semiotics of knowledge and experience in (authentic) existence – in the research:

*The postmodern era is positioned to synthesize at a higher level – the level of experience, where the being of things and the activity of the finite knower co-*

*penetrate one another and provide the materials whence can be derived knowledge of nature and knowledge of culture in their full symbiosis – the achievements of the ancients and the moderns in a way that gives full credit to the preoccupations of both.*

In this post-positivistic writing, I take a metatheoretical stance and trust that the theories, background, knowledge and values of myself as researcher will influence the observed, perceived and deconstructed. I also recognise the possible effects of biases. I believe that different realities and cultural tendencies exist and, therefore, that my reality exists, even though it is impossible to verify that this is true. However, ontology, the possibility and desirability of objective truth and my use of experimental methodology support my practical and conceptual reasons. In addition, the principles of AI (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003) serve as the catalyst to further an Appreciative approach to rural HEI identity formation.

In addition, I use some metaphors from the *Alice in Wonderland* movie (Burton, 2010), as distinct from the book, in order to illustrate the pointlessness of an unauthentic identity (Livingstone & Harrison, 1981).

### **Making sense of the concepts underpinning identity**

#### **An insider-outsider perspective, joined by Alice in Wonderland**

Self-image, self-esteem, individuality, identity within psychology, identity within branding, identity development, authentic identity and internal branding are the key concepts that form the foundation of the theory that relates identity to the individual and the institution.

Psychologists explain *self-image* as “what I think others think about me” (McIntyre, 2008:43). If this theory is applied to an institution, this make-believe image is a construct of the institution’s perception of itself, of others’ perception of itself, and of its perception of others’ perceptions of itself. It is, therefore, an accurate or inaccurate representation of the institution that influences the institution holistically, in both its intrinsic and extrinsic functioning (Rogers, Kuiper, & Kirker, 1977).

An unappreciative self-image can be damaging to both the individual and the institution and might entrap the self-perceived victim in stereotyping, prejudice and an inability to reach his/her/its destiny (Adler, Rosenfeld, & Proctor, 2004).

The psychological term *self-esteem* refers to the individual’s description and evaluation of his/her all-encompassing personal worth or worthiness (Baumeister, 2003). A healthy self-esteem, as a construct of self-confidence or personal capacity and self-respect or personal worth, elicits the belief



that the individual or institution is competent to skilfully deal with the basic challenges of life and is able to realise happiness (Branden, 1997).

Like individuals, institutions with a healthy self-esteem develop certain beliefs and values through life experiences and have the courage to act accordingly, but are sufficiently wise to consult others when needed. They value themselves and others and are, therefore, not threatened or manipulated towards a less rewarding and unauthentic destiny (Hamachek, 1971). The opposite of validating oneself is not to validate but to reject oneself; by contrast, a healthy self-esteem enhances creativity which is essential in teaching practice (Miranda, 2005).

Two different types of esteem, constituting a basic need and a motivator to realise self-actualisation, are suggested: the need for respect from others and the need for respect from oneself (Maslow, 1987). Self-esteem might be one of the most vital *core self-evaluation dimensions* of job satisfaction and job evaluations. Esteem that is firmly based on real capacity, achievement as well as respect and appreciation from others (Maslow, 1943:382) implies the intrinsic validation of the individual and the institution (Judge, Locke, & Kluger, 1998). If Maslow's (1987) theory is used as a foundation, I can understand that both the individual and the institution have to draw on the basic need and the motivator levels of the hierarchy in order to realise self-actualisation. The realisation of self-actualisation is necessary in order to gain respect from others and to respect oneself, resulting in the building of self-esteem. A sound self-esteem can contribute to the intrinsic validation of the individual and the institution; this, in turn, can contribute to the enhancement of job satisfaction.

Judge, Locke and Kluger (1998) regard self-esteem as a core dimension of *self-evaluation*. The fact that the followers of the Red Queen in *Alice in Wonderland* were prepared to wear ridiculous prostheses to blend in with the identity of their queen was probably due to their need to build their self-esteem, as they wanted to be like their leader. Just as unity with the identity of the driving force (in this case, the Red Queen) was necessary to keep the followers satisfied, so will an institution's members of staff feed their self-esteem by being respected and admired by others (Figure 2.2).

Individuality is the state of an individual or an institution separate from others and able to be self-expressive, independent and inter-dependant, according to Abbs (Klein, 2005). Existentialism rejected the belief that the past entraps the individual or the institution and propagated the ability to choose one's destiny. Both Sartre and Nietzsche emphasised the responsibility of the individual or the institution to take control of his/her/its individual authenticity, responsibility, free will and values instead of accepting the externally imposed limitations and principles (Gu, 2003).

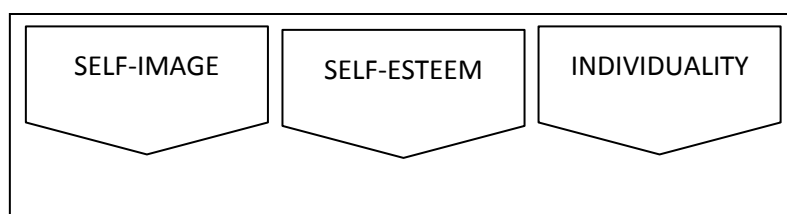


**Figure 2.2: The Red Queen’s followers with their ridiculous prostheses have to blend in with the Queen's big head. The explanatory power of this metaphor of unnecessarily wearing prostheses as a metaphor of unauthentic behaviour halts the observer and adamantly suggests reflection and discourse.**

Individualism can thus also be considered vital for the development of the “original genius”, a term used by socialist James Elishama Smith (1801-1857) for an authentic individual, and necessary for fulfilment (Claeys, 1986). Like self-image and self-esteem, self-realisation or self-fulfilment is a crucial issue, acknowledging the value of individuality in such a process. Esteem needs the intra-desires for strength, achievement, adequacy, confidence, independence and freedom as well as the inter-desires for attention, recognition, appreciation, as is sadly illustrated in the desperation of the Red Queen’s followers (Figure 2.3).

Individuality brings this underlying framework to *identity*. In developmental psychology, *identity* relates to self-image, self-esteem and individuality – the mental model of the value and the uniqueness which characterises and differentiates the person. Social Identity Theory refers to the individual’s self-concept as influenced by association with a relevant community (Turner & Oakes, 1986).

The following concept map (Figure 2.4) illustrates the relationship between self-image, self-esteem, individuality and identity discussed earlier:



## AUTHENTIC IDENTITY FORMATION

### **Figure 2.3: Relationship between self-image, self-esteem, individuality and authentic identity formation.**

The *formation* of *identity*, the process whereby an individual or institution develops a distinct personality with individual characteristics, depends on self-image, self-esteem and individuality and, therefore, the insider perspective and experience. This process significantly defines an individual or an institution and creates the confidence to be unique and distinct. Identity formation is based on practical issues about things that matter most in people's lives (Cote & Levine, 2002), as illustrated by the picture of the Red Queen and her followers. Therefore, what if the perception of the internal stakeholder of rural HEIs could be the agent that changes these rural identities into extraordinary dynamos so that "others" would like to follow?

### **Identity development and the role of branding**

#### **An insider-outsider perspective, joined by Alice in Wonderland**

In branding, *persona* refers to the projected image or mask that is the selected public identity within the social environment (Grant, 2006). According to Carl Jung, the real self is never exposed to the world, because it is always masked by the *persona* (Jung, 1935). In this study, the real self is the *persona*; I am simultaneously both the insider and the outsider. Other individuals may experience the insider/outside perspectives at different stages throughout their lives: from being the child of a Kovsie graduate, a Kovsie student, a Kovsie alumni, the parent of a Kovsie, a Kovsie board member, a Kovsie staff member to finally being a Kovsie sponsor as a result of a contribution from an estate. Like other rural satellite campuses, the QwaQwa campus may experience the insider and outsider perspectives simultaneously, seeing that the campus is both an insider and an outsider.

A brand is the promise to deliver specific and identified benefits – both rational and emotional – with considerable financial investment and bigger financial outcomes (Aaker, 2000). Authentic brand identity becomes vital, especially in the HE sector, to communicate the HEI's identity unmistakably and truthfully to the internal stakeholders (or insiders) as well as to the external stakeholders (or outsiders). HEI stakeholders are often sophisticated patrons that are directed by branding statements (Herr, 2001). The work of Melewar, Professor of Marketing and Strategy at the University of Brunel's Business School in London and director of a MSc Applied Corporate Brand Management, indicates that a corporate (or institutional) identity is determined by communication and visual identity, behaviour,

corporate culture and market conditions (Melewar & Akel, 2005). He specialises in the context of the HE sector. These components include intrinsic behaviour and choices as well as a drive to be holistic.

Because of the interrelatedness of the components of identity formation, each component such as the promise made by the HEI to the student, parent and community, can have far-reaching strategic consequences. The choice of HEI – often informed by branding material – will significantly influence the individual's self-actualisation and self-esteem.

According to Maslow (Newell, 1995), realising one's full potential is only possible when one has obtained self-actualisation. The latter depends on an authentic self-esteem that includes self-worth, self-regard, self-respect and self-integrity as well as the ability to develop and survive adversaries (Newell, 1995). Value-adding properties of self-esteem include the confidence to carry oneself in the public domain and to own one's uniqueness. The synergy of an individual's choices, actions, thoughts and feelings forms and is formed by self-esteem (Branden, 1997). This intertwined internal/external cycle echoes the insider/outsider perspective of identity development and the role of branding in HEI.

According to Branden (2001), a positive stimulus, incentive or recognition can have a positive, but temporal, comforting effect on the individual. Like a human being, an institution also goes through developmental stages and processes throughout its existence, forming a unique and authentic identity.

Authentic identity is characterised by value-based living, as is evident in the individual's commitment to, and passion about the identified purpose and values, like-minded relationships, transparent associations, and self-discipline to realise one's drive for personal growth and development (George, 2009). In addition, in mainstream counselling psychology, authenticity is viewed as the most vital aspect of well-being (Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis, & Joseph, 2008).

Aristotle distinguished between true self-love and vulgar self-love and, since then, true self-love is often considered to be the primary basis for realising and adding value to one's potential, as well as authentic identity development. By contrast, vulgar self-love is perceived as the cause of self-centredness (Greenberg, 2008).

In this study, authenticity is juxtaposed by the character of the detached, cynical and manipulative Red Queen in *Alice in Wonderland*. She is efficient, ruthless, driven by ambition and self-love, willing to trample over others, and destroys diversity and authenticity as she commands "Off with his head!"

This attitude and attribute of individuals is often found at institutional level, as formulated in the following quotation:

*The ideals of human perfectibility and of achievement are authentic antidotes to the existential anxiety of guilt. What is true for an individual is also true for our institutions. This understanding of existential guilt will ultimately lead us to measure all institutions – such as a business, the family, education, the law, commerce and politics – by the degree to which they support the development of human potential (Ind, 2003:1).*

Coupled with authenticity, the rural campus needs its own brand image and brand personality.... "Products [services], like people, have personalities. Every advertisement should be thought of as a contribution to the complex symbol which is the brand image" according to David Ogilvy's conceptualisation of brand image and brand personality in 1955 (Grant, 2006:18).

The art and science of internal branding is closely related to employer branding. These fields are concerned with the attraction, loyalty and initiatives required to further the institution's image as a great place in which to work (Minchington, 2010).

Internal branding is all about valuing the experience of being an integral part of an authentic institution: even though the urban or rural setting contributes greatly to the specific experience, it has nothing to do with the value of the experience.

In addition to the conventional concepts of branding, the rural HEI needs to embrace the concept of 'beyond branding', which is a collaborative effort to discuss ways of using brands to shape a better future for society, by operating with transparency and integrity. This initiative argues for a long-term, people-centric vision to restore credibility and trust for brands. It will re-affirm the mutual commitment of the employee-employer relationship. By adopting values such as authenticity, transparency and integrity that promote a human focus, all stakeholders will be empowered (Ind, 2003). Currently, the rural HE campus follows the strategies of the main campus. This needs to be done in a way in which the rural campus does not sacrifice its own identity. Marketing and branding are typically externally directed, whereas internal branding takes a more 'inside-out' approach by appreciating the authentic values and characteristics of the institution. Research demonstrated that companies and institutions with consistent, distinctive and deeply held values, or institutions with a soul, often outperform those companies with less identified values and externally directed approaches (Porrás & Jerry, 1994).

Internal branding creates the opportunity to negotiate and communicate a unified identity-development strategy for the HEI. The sustainability of the internal branding endeavour is determined by its authenticity. An authentic internal branding approach will go beyond traditional, short-term 'outside-in' approaches, such as quick-fix logos and catchy slogans, to an integrated approach that

guides all operations – communications, fund-raising, marketing, policies, enrolment, management, and programme development. The authentic institutional identity should form the basis of the branding strategy (Whisman, 2007).

The re-conceptualisation of the institutional identity of a rural campus – through the synergised theories of psychology and branding – may serve as an agent of change to increased self-appreciation; from the self-perception of *a powerless minor controlled by a powerful major* to the self-perception of being valuable and unique.

In Psychology and Sociology, identity is a person's conception, perception and expression of his/her individuality or group identity (Rummen, 1993). The concept is prominent in Social Psychology and is important in place identity – a constellation of ideas about place/space and identity in the fields of Geography, as well as Urban and Rural Sociology. Consequently, for the purpose of this article, developmental theories that apply to individuals are applied to groups of individuals, particularly to campus communities. How an intervention or catalyst will enable and invigorate development and survival and address the identity and self-esteem crisis in rural HE settings forms the focus.

Erik Erikson (1902-1994) developed eight consecutive stages of a human being's psychosocial development – from infancy to adulthood (Greenberg, 2008). Each stage is characterised by a core challenge which an individual needs to resolve in order to recognise and accept the next challenge (Meeus, 1992). By juxtaposing these stages to the perceived approach of, and towards the average rural HEI, current challenges can be illuminated. Table 2.1 illustrates these stages and their implications for human and institutional identity branding.

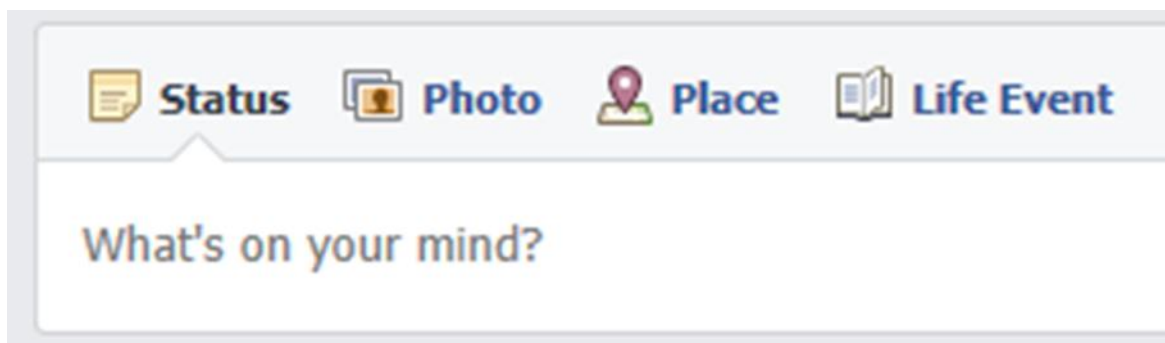
**Table 2.1: The Erik Erikson's and Emmie Smit's human life-stage virtues.**

STAGE	DEVELOPMENTAL PHASE	RURAL INSTITUTIONAL EQUIVALENT PHASES	AI PRINCIPLE
1. HOPE	Moratorium	Rural HEI basic needs are met by guardian institution/s.	Wholeness
2. WILL	Foreclosure	Rural HEI autonomously explores environment and assists in basic self-care: participation in development and management of own strategies.	Enactment
3. PURPOSE	Achievement	Rural HEI's initiative adds to the autonomy of experiences and accomplishments.	Awareness
4. COMPETENCE	Diffusion	The institution is still self-centred; completes tasks successfully according to external standards and recognition. Rural institutions strive towards 'outer sameness' with urban institutions.	Free choice Well-developed and authentic Self-image, self-esteem, individuality
5. FIDELITY		The institution develops awareness that it has a role/position/responsibility in the community.	and identity
6. LOVE		A HEI in the young adult stage of its development yearns for interaction, but will isolate itself if collaboration becomes too painful. Policies that enforce urban HEIs to cooperate, support and encourage rural HEIs will, therefore, be polite and comforting, but may lead to self-isolation by the rural HEI.	
7. CARE	Be the change you want to see	A mature HEI desires to leave a legacy of lasting value. A self-centred HEI will experience stagnation and become irrelevant.	Enactment
8. WISDOM	Recognition	Well-matured HEIs reflect on the purpose of their existence. Their integrity will be recognised, or their lack of fulfilment will be despised.	Poetic

The eight stages from Erik Erikson's human life-stage virtues (in the first column) correspond with Erikson's developmental phases (in the second column), equivalent developmental phases of rural institutions (in the third column) and AI Principles (in the fourth column). By paralleling human and institutional development, the similarities are more noticeable.

The current challenges and approaches that are illuminated in the developmental stages (from the inception to the maturity phase) of the average rural HEI include consecutive phases which begin where the rural HEI's basic needs are met by a guardian institution. Thereafter, the rural HEI will autonomously explore, assist, initiate and succeed in basic self-care. The institution's self-centredness develops into an awareness of its unique role, position and responsibility in the community and leads to exploring and establishing interaction. Overprotection by authorities (e.g. the guardian or policies) might support self-isolation and self-doubt. As the rural HEI matures, it desires to leave a legacy and become active and relevant in a variety of communities (from local to international; from physical to cyber; and so on). The well-matured rural HEIs are distinguished by their integrity and fulfilment.

Along the same lines, I decided – with acknowledgement to Facebook (Figure 2.5) – to indicate my status ("what's on my mind"), my location, my life event and – where possible – a picture thereof on the map of Wonderland (Figure 2.6). I invited Alice to share in this endeavour.



**Figure 2.4: Facebook status, photo, location and life event.**

The first two statuses, HOPE and WILL, were located in London in 1855. Although this happened in Alice's life more than a century before my birth, I had memories of similar experiences that dealt with trusting and/or distrusting, as well as accepting autonomy and/or doubt, in relating with others and/or me. I argue that whether these decisions were based on experience or intuition does not influence their credibility.

The third status was located one step after my own status quo and one step before a new beginning. The emotional turmoil of free-falling through the unknown, changing size and being beyond the point of no return – the choice between initiative versus guilt – was only bearable, because I believed that this experience had PURPOSE.



COMPETENCE, the fourth status, was located in the garden of Wonderland. Both Alice and I held on to our dreams, because we knew that we would be able to live our dreams, because they were our dreams after all. We realised that the outcome would be somewhat unexpected and unpredictable.

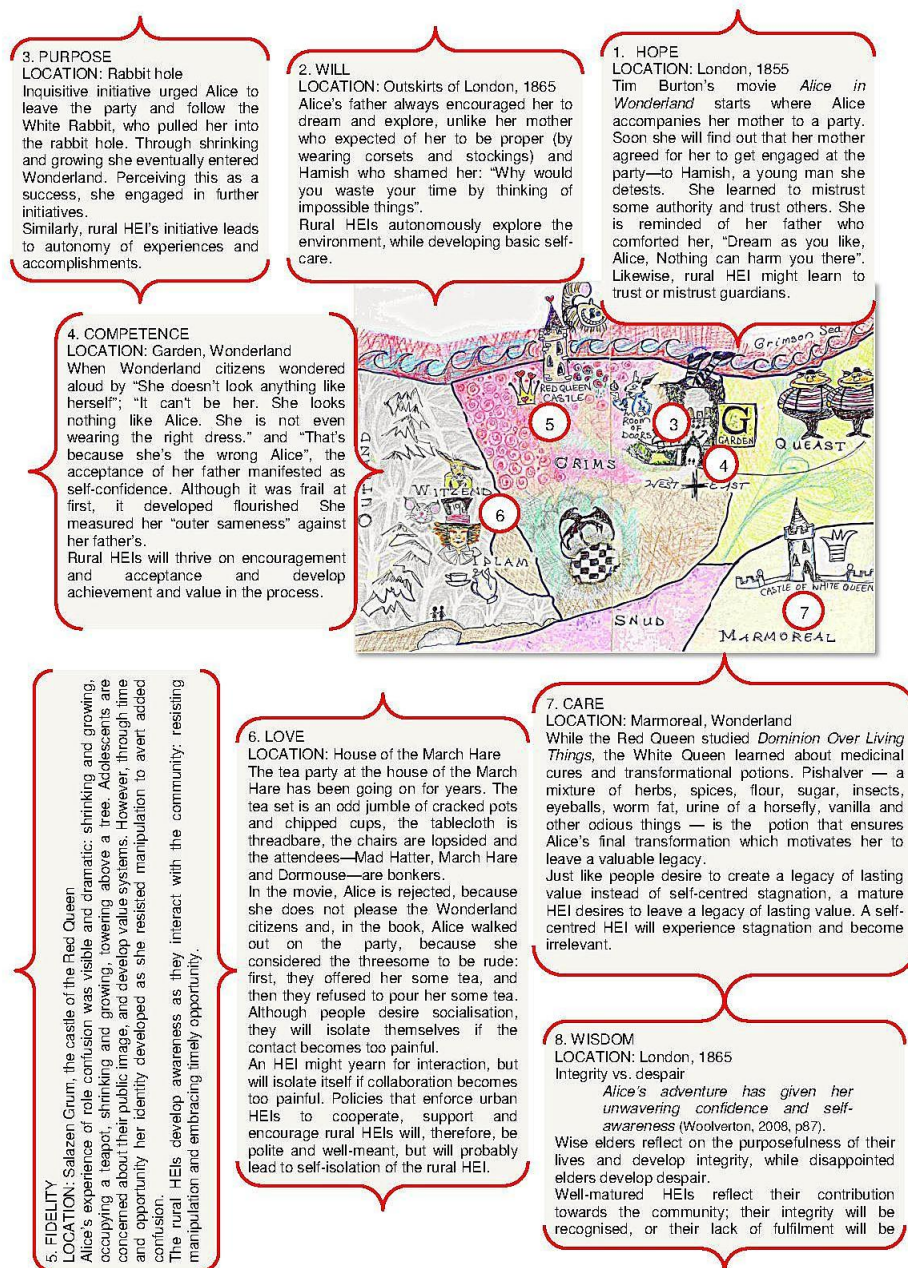
Salazen Grum, the castle of the Red Queen and the location of the fifth status, challenged our authentic identity; however, by overcoming the fear of the "Off with her head!" threats every time we dared to be our authentic selves, we developed an awareness of trust and FIDELITY in ourselves.

When arriving at the sixth location, the House of the March Hare, our desire for interaction and socialisation were met with ignorance and self-centredness. We resisted the temptation to yield to feelings of, and reactions to rejection. We remembered our status and posted a hashtag #LOVEmyowndream instead of a status.

To CARE enough to value individuals and institutions is the opposite of domination over individuals and institutions. The seventh status is located in Marmoreal, the castle of the White Queen, where contributing towards a value-adding legacy is a vital attribute of citizens. A legacy of value is closely linked to WISDOM. Back in London, Alice realised how her self-awareness and community awareness developed. In my own, but new, comfort zone, I realised how my self-awareness and community-awareness developed.

James Marcia (1966) further developed Erik Erikson's theory of identity formation and focused on exploration and commitment; a continuous process of reflection and transformation. Marcia believes that identity is, first, self-constructed and formed by the *Zeitgeist* – the general cultural, intellectual, ethical, spiritual, and/or political climate, general ambiance, morals, and sociocultural influence surrounding a nation or community. In addition, Meeus (1996) is of the view that ethnic/geographic background, aspirations, skills, beliefs, and individual history contribute greatly to identity formation.

I developed my institutional identity-formation conceptual framework from Meeus's adaptation of James Marcia's individual identity phases (Meeus, 1996), using achievement, moratorium, foreclosure and diffusion as the four identity-crisis states. These states are in no fixed sequence, and a successful identity-formation process does not necessarily include every state. Each state is determined by the HEI's commitment to, and quest towards an authentic identity.



**Figure 2.5: Rural HEI development juxtaposed with my journey with Alice through Wonderland.**

Institutions that have explored alternatives and have deliberately chosen an authentic institutional identity are in the achievement state. Institutions that are still examining different alternatives and have yet to find an authentic institutional identity are in the moratorium state. An institution whose identity is determined, to a large extent, by authoritative role players rather than an exploration of alternatives is in the foreclosure state. Institutions that are confused or often overwhelmed by the task of achieving an authentic identity and are doing little to achieve an authentic institutional identity are in the diffusion state. Although these states are very distinct and clear, an insider's perspective might challenge the identification of the rural HEI's present state.

**Making sense of rural identity formation**

People inhabit different parts of the world and lead different types of lives with different values and approaches. Available resources are characteristic to the area of habitation and have a direct impact on lifestyles. The two distinct classifications are urban living and rural living. Urban areas are often better equipped with varied and advanced recreational, educational, commercial and social alternatives as well as over-crowding, excessive industrialisation, pollution, crime, a self-centred society and a fast lifestyle. On the contrary, rural areas are often more in equilibrium with nature, although they are often deprived of the luxury of opportunities, mobility and technology (Gelan, Scott, & Gilbert, 2007). Rural areas are, therefore, often viewed as a destination where the urbanites can break away from an advanced and fast lifestyle; again the opposite of the ideal location.

The decision to live in either a rural or an urban setting is an expression of priorities and not of personal values; rural entities are not more valuable than urban ones and vice versa. The traditionally perceived opposite positions of rural and urban are found in various deficit-based terminology and phenomena. For example, one of the perceptions is that counter-urbanisation means rural renaissance, not taking into account vital factors such as the effect on job creation and quality of education. A renaissance is not a given when a growth in population figures is experienced (Gelan, Scott, & Gilbert, 2007).

United Kingdom policy research has identified the perception that "rural people have a different culture and set of beliefs" (Gelan, Scott, & Gilbert, 2007) about urban areas than urban people have: urban people often view rural areas as 'the idyllic countryside' and the food production and recreational playground of the urbanites. Rural people realistically acknowledge their locations as multifunctional rural economies (Gelan, Scott, & Gilbert, 2007). Although stereotyping only obfuscates the perceptions of rural and urban, and rural is not the opposite of urban, rural areas have geographically determined challenges. In this context, rurality is often approached from a deficit perspective.

A value-based entity and a deficit-based entity inhabit opposite spaces in the practice of marketing and branding (Kaputa, 2006). I suggest that both these entities might be an individual, a NPO, a mega-company or, as far as this study is concerned, an institution. Basic branding principles confirm that a deficit-based institution also has to be sold and marketed; creates no attachment; operates in isolation; has a low visibility or profile; is a commodity; becomes outdated; has a low or bargained price; is static, reacting and forgettable, and is unsustainable (see Aaker, 2000). To counteract a deficit approach, rural campuses need to move from this kind of institution to a value-based institution which is sought after; creates emotional attachment, relationships, and networks; has high visibility; celebrates its uniqueness; endures and repositions; has premium value; creates a buzz and stays visible; is relevant and strategic, and is memorable and sustainable.

*Traditionally, rural and urban have been seen as opposites. Both terms are also used with multiple meanings. However, we question whether this conceptual approach that positions urban and rural at opposite ends of a spectrum actually hides more than it reveals about the nature and relationship between rural and urban areas (Gelan, Scott, & Gilbert, 2007).*

In addition to the collective perceptions of the community, individual perceptions contribute to the complexity of rural identity. Awareness of the existence of the diversity of challenges and the important role of rural HEIs led to the establishment of UNESCO's International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education with the goal of researching and addressing these challenges strategically ([www.UNESCO.com/INRULED](http://www.UNESCO.com/INRULED)).

The national and international concern for rural educational challenges is reflected in research documents. During a UNESCO Ministerial Seminar (2005), rural education challenges were divided between demand and supply factors. On the demand side, research found that rural learners are more difficult to educate because of the limited encouragement from parents, irrelevant curriculum content (often developed in a different context), lack of support from their home environment (e.g. electricity, electronic resources, and personal space), and alternative demands on their time (e.g. agricultural duties). On the supply side, the deployment of teachers and inspectors, the equipping of teachers with in-service courses, and the supporting of staff with applicable resources are typical challenges in rural areas (Mulkeen, 2005).

Another research project in rural Africa found that learner participation increases learning (Phaswana, 2010). However, rural teachers do not have the confidence to invite and encourage meaningful participation, preferring traditional teacher-centred methods (Taylor & Mulkeen, 2001). In addition, parents' and educators' low expectations of the potential of rural children contribute to poorer quality of teaching and learning in rural Africa (Nleya & Thompson, 1999). Directive documents and developmental programmes urge governments, urban HEIs, HE practitioners, and the global community to change their perceptions of the rural campus (Donnelly, 2005; UNESCO, 2002). These external processes support the perception that the urban campuses are in a stronger position and, therefore, more equipped to support and encourage the vulnerable, meaningless and incomprehensive rural campuses. The unintentional outcome of these policies, marketing/branding strategies and well-intended interventions support the view of inferior rural campuses.

## **Changing the insider-outsider perspective**

### **Applying an appreciative dimension as catalyst**

Using Erik Erikson's *stages of psychosocial development*, I positioned the average rural HEI at the adolescent stage: HEIs are concerned about their public image, and are aware that they have a role, position and responsibility in the community. The rural HEI is asking: Where am I going in life? Authorities should allow the child to explore in order to conclude its own identity.

The appreciative philosophy, as constructed by David Cooperrider (2003), argues for a positive, strength- or value-based approach to change. After identifying the strength or value in an individual or institution, an inspiring future is co-created by the individual or the institution, strategically designed and aligned. The final phase is reaching the envisioned destiny of what we want more of.

Applying the principles of AI (Cooperrider, 2003) as guidelines to explore its identity, the rural HEI should have the capacity to develop to the "young adult stage" and beyond. Cooperrider's original AI principles include the constructionist and the poetic principles in the discovery phase; the simultaneity and the anticipatory principles in the anticipatory phase, and the positive principle in the design phase. The eminent AI principles (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003) are: the wholeness principle, an extension of the constructionist principle; the enactment principle, an extension of the poetic principle; the free choice principle, an extension of the simultaneity principle; the awareness principle, an extension of the anticipatory principle, and the narrative principle, an extension of the positive principle.

In applying AI, the value-adding approach and problem-solving are opposites, as indicated in Table 2.1.

The constructionist principle incorporates that reality and identity are co-created because of unique individual experiences and interconnectedness. Therefore, each rural HEI will be able to construct a unique identity based on its multispherular experiences and positioning.

The wholeness principle incorporates lateral thinking, allowing the HEI to free itself from borders and perceived limitations. The "what if?" question becomes "what if I become entirely me?". Rural HEIs will then continuously become dynamic forces within the community.

The poetic principle incorporates that by appreciating the experiences of which the HEI wants more, its identity will become rich in the areas that matter to it.

The enactment principle incorporates the rural HEI's needs to move and act into the position it envisioned to birth it into reality. If part of the vision is to plan and deliver more research outputs, making that a reality should be the first step into the envisioned ideal.

The first four principles uncover the positive core of the rural HEI.

The simultaneity principle incorporates the moment the HEI explores and envisions the impossible; the impossible will exist and the institution's vision will be a conceived reality.

The free-choice principle incorporates the rural HEI's need to be freed from the perceptions and expectations, from external and internal forces alike.

The anticipatory principle incorporates "what we believe, we conceive"; positive anticipation is vital for an ideal outcome.

The awareness principle incorporates the awareness of the AI principles and processes as well as the continuous reflection and re-effectuating of the AI cycle into every aspect of the HEI's existence. Simultaneity, anticipation and awareness will become the first steps towards the ideal.

The positive principle incorporates the increasing and expanding of the rural HEI's positive core through self-affirmation and self-appreciation. It sets a positive spiral into motion that will inevitably become visible to outsiders.

The narrative principle incorporates the recognition that each rural HEI has a unique and valuable story; a story that will transform the institution. Through deconstructing and meaning-making, the rural institution will generate experientially vivid descriptions of the existence of the institution.

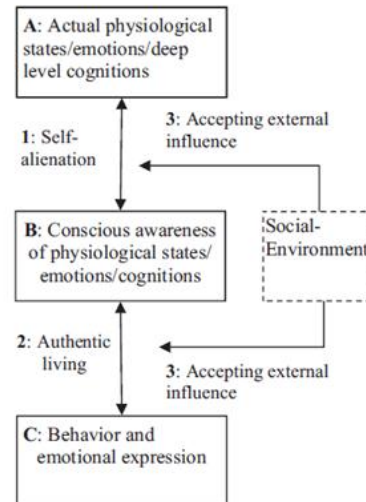
Awareness of the AI principles and processes will provide the rural HEI with an opportunity to reflect on and verbalise its unique and valuable narrative in the deconstructing, sense-making and transforming of every aspect of its existence. Unique experiences and interconnectedness will lead to the co-creation of reality and identity, and will re-position the enriched rural institution. Delivery from expectations and perceptions will free the institution to anticipate and realise its ideal. Continuous self-affirmation and self-appreciation will increase and expand the initial positive core that will attract the affirmation and appreciation of others. The rural HEI will then have the attributes to develop to the 'young adults' developmental stage, as well as the mature stages beyond.

## Towards an authentic identity

As soon as an institution moves beyond the young adult phase towards becoming a mature institution, it starts to develop. A mature individual or institution enjoys an authentic identity awareness that leads to interconnectedness, the exploration and creation of a legacy of lasting value and benefit for social environment, and reflects on the realisation of purposefulness in his/her/its commitment to self-transformation (Greenberg, 2008).

Authenticity, according to the person-centred conception

(Figure 2.7), is a synergy between the individual's primary existence; the symbolised/cultural awareness, and interaction and communication (Wood *et al.*, 2008). This confirms the constructs of Erikson's developmental stages, internal branding and the principles of AI.



**Figure 2.6: Person-centred conception of authenticity (Wood *et al.*, 2008).**

"Connectedness, compassion, empathy, integrity, humility, reasonableness, and a determination to be effective are the keys to attuned leadership", according to Reuel Khoza (2011). After reflecting on Thabo Mbeki's and other African leaders' "*coup d'état*", Khoza concluded that instability and poor governance made Africa the *biggest exporter of human capital*. The term *attuned leadership* refers to the state of harmony and reciprocity between leaders and their followers. Khoza validates Peter Senge's five principles of learning organisations (Senge, 1990). These principles indicate areas which should be the focus of an institution when revamping its identity and include *systems thinking* to motivate refocusing; *personal mastery* to continually clarify and deepen personal vision; *mental models, perceptions, assumptions and generalisations* to reflect and act on; *shared vision-building* on what truly matters to the individuals, and *team-building* to enhance team dialogue and to synergise intelligence and, eventually, macro-creativity. Like an institution reflects and agrees on a shared focus and vision, the individual needs to reflect and consciously agree with him-/herself on a focus and vision.

David Cooperider's Appreciative approach incorporates most of the values of Peter Senge's principles of learning organisations, specifically the strategic planning of aspects of long-term outcomes; the valuing of authenticity and the appreciation of what really matters to participating individuals, as well as team-building and sense-making through creative dialogue (Senge, 1999). From an appreciative paradigm, Diana Whitney and James Ludema add the importance of deepening shared participation, activating transformation, and encouraging positive social innovation (Whitney & Ludema, 2006).



*When universities define internal branding as a formal program of engaging internal constituents in a dialogue about the brand-development process, when they are willing to apply the "corporate" practice of identity-building, then the opportunity exists for universities to agree that internal branding can become their most valuable intangible asset (Whisman, 2007:8).*

The rural HEI that would emerge after the formation of a mature and authentic institutional identity would provide a mirror to reflect its uniqueness and appreciate it. That rural institution would be respected and valued in the HE sector because of its investment in the development of its internally constructed self-esteem and authentic identity, and take responsibility for serving rural communities (Schafft & Jackson, 2010). It will no longer be considered the opposite of the urban HEI; the rural HEI will be known according to its identity and not its alterity.

Metaphors from *Alice in Wonderland* illustrate, first, the ridiculous adaptations some individuals will burden themselves with just to harmonise with their surroundings. In addition, the metaphors illustrate the exuberant freedom that follows authentic identity formation. During the morning execution at Salazen Grum – a port city of Wonderland – the ridiculous prostheses of the Red Queen's followers fell off (Figure 2.8): the long nose of a nosey-looking face fell off to expose an intelligent face; the old wife's triple chin fell off to reveal a feminine chin, and out-of-proportion breasts became proportionate breasts. These followers experienced this freedom after the citizens realised that the Red Queen could only manipulate them as long as they do not value themselves as authentic individuals.



**Figure 2.7: Transformation of Red Queen followers.**

I developed a theory that includes two possible assumptions:

*First*, that institutions often expect that identity development can only be realised when the rural HEI accepts its identity as a diminutive version of the urban HEI and, therefore, the exact opposite of authentic individual identity development takes place.



I can apply the metaphor of wearing prosthesis in order to copy the identity of people in seemingly more desirable positions, but in effect losing the ability to be the unique and authentic individual they are. This metaphor is illustrated in Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) in the morning execution scene where the Red Queen's followers lose their prostheses and become free to be their unique selves.

*Secondly*, that because an institution is made up of a collection of individuals, it is expected that authentic identity development and the related theories for the development of individuals can be applied to institutional authentic identity development. This last assumption might be useful as it provides a logical starting point backed by scientific theories and principles of authentic identity development.

In my theoretical predictions, based on concepts that underpin identity and authentic identity development (including self-actualisation, self-image, self-esteem, individuality, identity within psychology, identity within branding and internal branding), I need to explore whether the development state and/or phase of an institution can be juxtaposed with that of an individual, as explained by Abraham Maslow, Erik Erikson, James Marcia, Wim Meeus, David Cooperrider, Diana Whitney and Amanda Trosten-Bloom.

My factual explanation of the development of the rural HEI's authentic identity is that the HEI's first step on the journey will be to identify its unique positive core and then apply a unification of the above concepts, principles, processes, and theories. Only then will the rural HEI be known according to its identity and not alterity – the opposite of the urban HEI.

In the formulation of my theory on the development of an authentic institutional identity within a rural HEI, I agree with Michael Polanyi's analogy between a theory and a map:

*A theory is something other than myself. It may be set out on paper as a system of rules, and it is the more truly a theory the more completely it can be put down in such terms. Mathematical theory reaches the highest perfection in this respect. But even a geographical map fully embodies in itself a set of strict rules for finding one's way through a region of otherwise uncharted experience. Indeed, all theory may be regarded as a kind of map extended over space and time* (Polanyi, 1958:4).

Although my theory is not tested, I believe that it is supported by sufficiently strong evidence provided by theories and contributions that were consistently built on top of each other. Implementation and testing of this theory will accumulate additional and refined evidence, and raise more questions than it can currently answer.

The prohibition of this theory is that the rural HEI should desire to only be satisfied with an authentic identity, even though it might be an alternative and extremely unique identity. The observational consequence of this theory is that the rural HEI should have indicators of its unique identity – which might be at any stage of development, as illustrated in Figure 2.7.

## **Conclusion**

A rural campus can only be intimidated as long as it allows itself to be. Excellence, intellect, passion and creativity cannot be limited, not even by all the deficit-based perceptions in the world. An 'outside-in' approach to identity development and internal branding deprives the rural institution of the space and opportunity to develop into a mature and authentic institution.

The rural campus has no reason not to boast superior access to technological, educational and recreational resources. In addition, rural campuses have strongly developed *social connectedness* and *cohesiveness* with the community to a much larger extent than their urban peers. *A sense of community, camaraderie* and exponential learning inevitably contributes to the rural students' experiences (Mihalynuk & Seifer, 2007).

This theoretical article on institutional identity formation developed a postmodern, post-positivistic and appreciative concept; one that will enable the rural HEI to declare:

*I am Me. In the entire world, there is no one else exactly like me. Everything that comes out of me is authentically mine, because I chose to be authentic ... I have the tools to survive, to be close to others, to be productive, and to make sense and order out of the world of people and things outside of me* (Virginia Satir's Declaration of Self-Esteem).

## **ARTICLE 3**

### ***Appreciating visionary leadership: Dreaming the Underland-to-Wonderland dream for leading a Higher Education Institution***

#### **Abstract**

A vision is perceived as a valued and strategic tool for a leader, but a dreaming leader might be frowned upon. However, Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and Appreciative Leadership (AL) employ “dreams” as one of the crucial elements of this qualitative research method. This conceptual article differentiates between a predominantly conscious-mind or preconceived dreaming (where the vision is restrained and directed by components of strategy formation) and a predominantly subconscious-mind or free-range dreaming (where the vision unveils a future unlimited by conscious constraints). An alternative concept of vision that might assist leaders drive creative transformation, instead of merely adjusting and upgrading existing strategies and practices, is conceptualised. Theoretical support is supplied by the *Alice in Wonderland* chronicle (Carroll, 1969) as well as by research conducted by Harvard’s Medical and Business Schools.

The article forms part of a larger research project within a post-critical paradigm, whereby the reflective and theoretical epistemology of leadership includes metaphors from *Alice in Wonderland*. These metaphors are juxtaposed with the UFS – where an internationally awarded transformation took place after a debacle that was covered by various major international news agencies.

#### **Introduction**

Visions and dreams are often perceived as mere metaphors, ideas, emotions, and insights that are part of spiritual guidance, but in the management and leadership domain, dreams are regarded as a self-determined destination, a consciously developed vision of long-term goals or a preconceived future that is determined by the available recourses. Some dreams are constructs originating from predominantly the conscious mind and others from predominantly the unconscious mind. To me, these differences might be two opposing concepts or two halves of the same concept. I also note the connection between AI and the dream, an aspect that will be dealt with later in more detail.

#### **My concern**

In contemplating the value of visionary leadership in transforming a HEI and its connectedness to dreaming, I was first concerned about my understanding of the terminology and, secondly, how the dynamics of leadership played out at the UFS after the Reitz debacle.

In making sense of dreaming, I first had to ask myself: Whose message is a dream? Ancient cultures distinguished between three types of dreams: divine messages or revelations; dreams that reflect the

physical and psychological state, and visionary dreams that subconsciously perceive forthcoming events. A semantic study on the origins of *dreaming* in various early languages indicates that the word *dream* originated from the first and third types of dream or tesha-/zashai; therefore, *dream* means divine guidance (Byrd, 2011). According to this perception, dreams are interior realities, subjective to the divine creators thereof and objective to the receivers thereof. They reminded me of the visions of leaders.

### **Conceptualising the theories underpinning visionary leadership**

The literature on leadership dynamically defines a vision as a dream that is consciously conceptualised and, to some extent, as "a clearly stated verbal picture of what you will be like when you are living, functioning, and performing at your best – the more concrete and specific, the better. To be powerful, vision statements should run well ahead of what you can now do, as they describe what you are stretching to become. They are more powerful if written in the present tense: 'I am being/doing that remarkable thing!' (Schwahn & Spady, 2010). This perception of a dream as an exterior reality, subjective to the team/committee that created it and objective to its receiver/s echoes the widespread paradigm of the management sector (Lehrer, 2009). Even Peter Drucker's *planned abandonment* practice echoed the need to abandon or reject the continuation of existing tactics, strategies, or techniques. Even though consciously known practices contributed to past successes, continually establishing innovative and previously non-existent means to arrive at the destiny will prevent stagnation (Drucker, 2008).

The fundamental components of basic strategic leadership concepts include an understanding of the individual or institutional vision, mission, values and strategies. The vision sketches the dream of "what the future might be", "what if?" or "what is the ultimate long-term ideal?" The mission defines the fundamental purpose of the individual/institution, while the values are the shared beliefs (culture and priorities) of the stakeholders. The strategy is the detailed description of the direction and of how the individual or institution will reach the envisioned destination. The available resources – expertise, time, finances – form the basis of the strategy, although it should not exclude *ad hoc* resources, and definitely not influence the vision. Strategy bridges the gap between the current – where we are – and the future in terms of where we want to be (Nickols, 2011).

The components of strategy formation in the strategic leadership process include aspects such as objectives, goals, position, status strengths, potential, limitations, opportunities and economic trends (Niemann & Kotze, 2006). Unfortunately, the vision is often limited by the above components of the strategy-formation process. Strategic planning components first appear in the fourth phase of the strategy-formation process (Figure 3.1).



**Figure 3.1: Vision dictated by components of strategy formation.**

*The Seven Pillars of Visionary Leadership* (Rock & Cox, 1997) identified seven foundations on which creative dreaming leaders rely, namely:

- Visioning: I envision where I am going;
- Mapping: I know how to get there; I have mapped indicators;
- Journeying: I am willing to leave my old points of view behind and start on a shared future;
- Learning: I am open to change: to move from design to destiny;
- Mentoring: I am open to share with others: to direct them to a future;
- Leading: I will set a visible example of venturing with experience, and
- Valuing: I will act with honour and transparency.

A vision and a map assist the traveller to know where to go and how to get there, to leave the familiar and journey to a newly designed destiny. Mentoring and leading direct, through sharing and visible examples, towards transformation that is based on honour and transparency.

These foundations incorporate the belief that visionary leadership is transformative. The components – all including aspects of dreams/visions – that we need in order to transform our hearts and minds, all connected to spiritually seeing forthcoming events, are: *vision* to have perspective to see; *insight* to inspire leadership; *images* to *visualise* change, and *spirit* to guide the transformation.

I have experienced that, although dreams or visions are considered a must-have for good leadership, large amounts of money and time are invested in its development. The general culture of mediocrity makes it difficult to detect the dynamic, extraordinary and creative character of divinity in corporate and institutional dreams. Painstakingly developed visions and dreams, however, nearly always have a passive role in corporate and institutional leadership realities (Richter, n.d.), not being involved in visible reaction or active participation in leadership processes, even though visions are considered one of the most important tools of successful leaders.

**Efficacy variance of institutional dreams and visions**

Countless dreams and visions of institutional leaders lack efficacy that guide towards results with divinely inspired quality, sustainability and dynamics. However, some dreams are viewed as powerful assistance that guide towards innovative and vibrant ideas that materialise into transformative authenticities. Even though scholars and researchers of dreams often admit that human beings know

very little about dreams, new knowledge supports ancient beliefs of divine intervention into the human subconscious. In this regard, Carl Jung (1945) was convinced that dreams reflected the richness and complexity of the unconscious or subconscious, but that conscious issues are only a small part of the unconscious. He suggested that the dreamer imagine the image as vividly as possible and make connections in order to explain the logic of the dream. He believed that dreams convey ineluctable truths, philosophical prophecies, daydreams, memories, plans, irrational experiences and even spiritual visions. Jung argued that the un-/subconscious experience is as important as the conscious one.

Deirdre Barrett (2001), clinical psychologist at the Harvard Medical School, documented in her dream incubation study that prominent artists and scientists drew inspiration from their dreams. Her students came up with novel solutions in dreams when they focused on a challenging issue before going to sleep. On the IASD webpage (<http://www.dreamtalk.hypermart.net>), Deirdre Barrett explains her alternative philosophy on dreams:

*My emphasis has been on its relation to creativity and objective problem solving, dream incubation, and the role of dream in PTSD [Post-traumatic stress disorder]. Theoretically, I'm an evolutionary psychologist; I believe that dreams are essentially thinking in a different biochemical state and that they can be extremely helpful because of focusing on our life issues from a very different perspective.*

A study by Hartmann (1995) also confirms the innovative and directive properties of subconscious dreaming: "Dreams are the royal road to the unconscious." Researchers established that trauma sufferers find that dreaming contextualises, guides and organises emotion. In addition, dreams make more connections more widely, more broadly – more laterally – than the conscious mind. Dreams are often, but not always, a metaphoric explanation of challenges in the dreamer's life. Although the basic nature of individuals differs – from vivid to trancelike, from emotional to aloof, dreams assist in developing the nervous system. Hartmann suggests that the connection-making ability of dreams is one of the means human beings use to devise and develop new inventions – from equipment to approaches. He refers to the example of how the idea of a sewing machine needle with the hole at the tip came in a dream to Elias Howe.

It appears that the connection-making ability of dreams makes human beings smarter, boosts memory and creativity, and enhances the ability to be strategic. Recent psychiatric research conducted by the Universities of California and Harvard proved that people's ability to combine ideas in new ways increased after REM [rapid eye movement] sleep, the sleeping phase in which dreaming happens. The ability to connect seemingly unrelated concepts – or imagining – originates with past experiences, but continues with predictions or expectations of future experiences. The same areas in

the brain that are responsible for memory seem to be responsible for imagining future events, like long-term visions in visionary leadership (Kaufman, 2010).

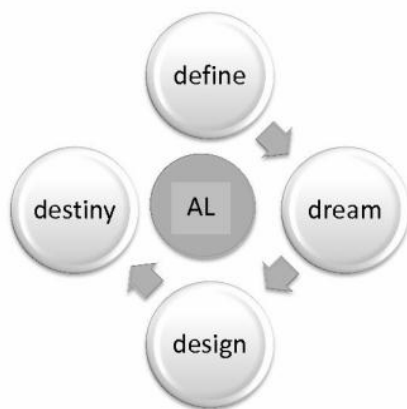
The connection-making capability of the unconscious, as within dreams, is a handy tool that empowers institutional leaders towards more intelligent, creative, visionary and strategic leadership. An example of this is the annual Leadership for Change Programme – one of Jonathan Jansen’s dreams or visions. In this programme, 150 first-year students travelled abroad to engage with students from different cultures. The goal of the programme is to build a new class of UFS students who become leaders during their years of study and commit to building a non-racial community during and beyond their years at university.

### Being visionary or dreaming the future

#### Following an Appreciative approach

Bill George (2009), former Chairman and CEO of Medtronic and Professor of Management Practice at Harvard Business School, encourages leaders to freely dream about “what if?” and “what might be” in the second phase of AI’s 4D Cycle, and not to consider the components of strategic planning.

He urges leaders to dream dreams of unexplored destinies: “Let’s find a better way to do things! We have to have a vision about what it could be, not what it is.” As an AI practitioner, Bill George values the *dream* as part of AI’s 4D Cycle (George, 2009).



**Figure 3.2: Cooperrider’s Appreciative Inquiry 4D Cycle.**

In 1980, as a doctoral student under the academic guidance of Suresh Srivastava (Deschamps, 2008), David Cooperrider conceptualised the transformative dynamics of endorsing and focusing on envisioning “what works” rather than on “what does not work” (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2008). Cooperrider then developed AI – a value-adding research approach – instead of the traditional deficit-based approach (Cooperrider, 2003). AI encourages “what if?” dreaming as the core of the developmental process of the vision (Figure 3.2).

AI and problem-solving are opposites, as strategic leaders focus on good practices instead of trying to solve problems, as indicated in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Deficit thinking versus possibility thinking.**

<b>Problem solving</b>	<b>Appreciative Inquiry</b>
“Felt need” & identification of problem Analysis of causes Analysis of possible solutions Action planning Assumes: <i>Organisation is a problem to be solved</i> <i>What’s in the way of what we want?</i>	Appreciate & value the best of <i>What Is</i> Imagine: <i>What Might Be</i> Dialogue: <i>What Should Be</i> Create: <i>What Will Be</i> Assumes: <i>Organisation is mystery to be discovered</i> <i>Front Door – what is it we ultimately want?</i>
<b>Deficit Thinking</b>	<b>Possibility Thinking</b>

To dream is to envision “what might be”. Together, people build a vision of the future they want. They respond to their sense of what the world is calling them to become. They imagine that the best of what is forms the foundation for the way things will be in the future. Questions in this phase include: “What does our positive core indicate that we could be?”; “What are our most exciting possibilities?”; “What is the world calling us to become?” (Whitney & Ludema, 2006). These are questions that confront HEIs in the ever-changing global environment. Futuristic dreams and visions are the first step in strategic planning.

### **Dreaming the *Alice in Wonderland* dream**

In connecting the subconscious mind, Alice Kingsley and leadership, I had to compare Alice’s dream with her father’s dream. The difference in the vibrancy and extraordinary is obvious. Charles Kingsley’s dream contains aspects that are known but not experienced. The introductory scenes in Tim Burton’s *Alice in Wonderland* contain two types of visionary dreams of the future. Charles Kingsley, successful entrepreneur, dreamed a conscious-mind dream, while his daughter, Alice, dreamed a subconscious-mind dream. However, both were taken seriously by those who experienced them and belittled by those who did not.

Both of these dreams – interior or subconscious realities – unified with their exterior or conscious realities. Charles’s dreams to expand commercial ventures during a time of transformation in the East were, in retrospect, not only realistic but also quite logical – to the extent that Queen Victoria was declared Empress of India fifteen years later – even though Lord Ascot describes the idea as mad, impossible and financially suicidal. Charles’s dream to develop trading posts in Rangoon, Bangkok and Jakarta could have been accepted as long as it remained an interior reality, but to turn the dream into exterior reality was not even considered. On the contrary, Alice Kingsley’s dream contained characters, spaces and events from the subconscious, the impossible that definitely did not or could not exist, not even as an interior reality: an extinct bird; a clothed and talking rabbit; a smiling cat that could appear and disappear, and a hookah-smoking caterpillar, all living in Underland – which you enter through a rabbit hole (Carroll, 1969).



Hence, I reveal the dreams of Charles and Alice by introducing the next part:

*Alice*

(Script of movie directed by Tim Burton, 2010)

by

Linda Woolverton

Based on

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

*Through The Looking Glass*

by Lewis Carroll

SCENE FADING IN:

1 EXTERIOR. LONDON – 1855 – NIGHT

Warm light shines from the study of the gracious Kingsley home. A man, silhouetted in the window, speaks with ardour.

2 INTERIOR. THE STUDY – NIGHT – CONT.

CHARLES KINGSLEY has just described his new venture to his friends, including LORD ASCOT.

LORD ASCOT: Charles, you have finally lost your senses.

A COLLEAGUE: This venture is impossible.

CHARLES KINGSLEY: For some. Gentlemen, the only way to achieve the impossible is to believe it is possible.

A COLLEAGUE: That kind of thinking could ruin you.

CHARLES KINGSLEY: I'm willing to take that chance. Imagine trading posts in Rangoon, Bangkok, Jakarta ...

(He stops. His nine-year-old daughter ALICE stands at the door in her nightgown, clearly frightened. He goes to her.)

CHARLES KINGSLEY: The nightmare again?

(She nods. He takes her hand and turns to his guests.)

CHARLES KINGSLEY: I won't be long.

❧

3 INTERIOR. YOUNG ALICE'S BEDROOM – LATER

(He sits on her bed, listening with utmost seriousness.)

ALICE: I'm falling down a dark hole, and then I see strange creatures ...

CHARLES KINGSLEY: What kind of creatures?

ALICE: Well, there's a dodo bird, a rabbit in a waistcoat, a smiling cat ...

CHARLES KINGSLEY: I didn't know cats could smile.

ALICE: Neither did I. Oh, and there's a blue caterpillar.

CHARLES KINGSLEY: Blue caterpillar. Hmm.

ALICE: Do you think I've gone round the bend?

(He feels her forehead as if for a fever.)

CHARLES KINGSLEY: I'm afraid so. You're mad. Bonkers. Off your head. But I'll tell you a secret .... all the best people are.

(She smiles and leans against him.)

CHARLES KINGSLEY: It's only a dream, Alice. Nothing can harm you there. But if you get too frightened, you can always wake up. Like this.

(He pinches her. She screams and pinches him back.)

The unification of Alice's interior and exterior realities resulted in countless books, research papers, movies, live performances and other cultural experiences and one of the biggest moneymakers ever with accumulative sustainability (Breton, 1971). In this instance, realism confronts the unification of interior and exterior realities, because they are considered the exact opposites of each other. Surrealism, however, views interior and exterior realities as two parts that form a complete reality after unification. A distinguished Professor of Mathematics and specialist in logic at Oxford, and creator of the *Alice in Wonderland* legacy, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (alias Lewis Carroll) can be regarded as a surrealist precursor. This honorary acknowledgement is remarkable as he told the *literary nonsense* of the unification of Alice's interior and exterior realities half a century prior to the surrealist movement (Breton, 1971).

Another dream was that of Charles Blackman. In December 2012, purely accidentally, I met *The Blue Alice* in the Brisbane Art Gallery in Australia's Queensland (Addendum PLACE). Charles Blackman's *The Blue Alice* (1956-1957) is one in a series of paintings inspired by Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865). Blackman's sight-impaired wife, the writer Barbara Blackman, introduced him to Alice. Neither Barbara nor her husband saw any visuals of Alice, not even a visual text. Barbara got to know Alice through audio tapes from the Talking Book Library for the Blind and Charles through Barbara's conversations: "I hadn't read it, so I didn't see any illustrations of it, I came to it cold", Charles told a BBC reporter. "The White Rabbit came into the kitchen and helped me cook the dinners [when he worked as a cook in a French restaurant]. Then I would go home to my loft and paint *The Rabbit and Alice*" (Wilmoth, 2006).

Charles, a romantic painter of dreams and emotions, modelled Alice on Barbara and the rest of the characters were all created from his imagination. Even though Charles's Wonderland visuals were developed in isolation, in a different cultural setting and on the opposite side of the world, the scenes were immediately recognisable. Charles saw the surrealist story as a metaphorical depiction of his wife's journey into a new, darker world as her blindness progressed.

My identity-seeking journey also shows a number of comparisons with the critically acclaimed documentary *Charles Blackman – Dreams and Shadows* (Moore, 1993). In the form of a chronological voyage, from Charles's childhood memories until the present and through a journey to the United Kingdom, where Alice lived, the film examines how Charles's humanist approach contributed to the development of a unique sense of Australian identity. Ironically, the "shadows" in the title do not refer to Barbara's blindness, but to Charles's experiences of rejection as a child, alcoholism and serious health problems. Barbara's blindness gave him the opportunity to visualise and dream as her explainer of the visual world (Wilmoth, 2006) – in this case, too, Blackwell's subconscious (seemingly impossible) dream of Alice led to a tangible painting. The dream also initiates strategic leadership blueprints.

When HE leaders dare to dream the impossible dream, even if it seems to be nonsense, or impossible after a major debacle, it might be an accepted and important movement or principle for directing the future of HE, as in my play script on transformation which follows. As an analogy to the above movie script by Linda Woolverton, I also dreamt a dream for the UFS that transformation could become tangible.



**Figure 3.3: Meeting Charles Blackman's *The Blue Alice* in the Brisbane Art Gallery in December 2012. Blackman never saw any previous illustrations; even so, Alice will always be Alice and was instantly recognisable.**

*University of the Free State*

(Script of transformation directed by the current UFS Rector, Jonathan Jansen, 2009/10)

by

Emmie Smit

Based on

*Kovsies Adventures in Underland*

Through the eyes of *Social Justice*

by the *International Media*

FADE IN:

1 EXT. BLOEMFONTEIN, SOUTH AFRICA – 22 February 2008 – EARLY MORNING

The sun rises over a calm Kovsie campus. All signs of vandalism – the red graffiti messages, burned car tyres, wrecked streetlamps and ruined traffic booms – that bore witness to extreme student frustration were removed within hours and the campus looked like before the acts of frustration. The “Hush, little baby, don’t say a word” tune plays softly.



2 INTERIOR. A TELEVISION SCREEN – 28 February 2008 – NIGHT

A CNN news report shows footage of white students at the UFS tricking Black residence workers into eating stew containing urine.

The scene changes to an interview with Helen Zille, the leader of South Africa’s main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance, who asked the South African Human Rights Commission to conduct an investigation into racial tensions at the University.

HELLEN ZILLE (the Premier of the Western Cape, leader of South Africa’s opposition Democratic Alliance political party, and former mayor of Cape Town):

*The abhorrent footage of students abusing University workers is a fundamental infringement on the victims’ constitutional right to have their dignity respected and protected. This incident is symptomatic of racial tensions that have been simmering at the campus for some time over the issue of residence integration.*

The scene changes to an interview with Frederick Fourie, former Rector of the UFS, in front of the UFS Main Building.

FREDERICK FOURIE:

*The fact that it is openly linked to the integration process in UFS residences is also most disturbing. The University is going through a difficult time with its efforts to racially integrate its residences and to create a new residence culture based on diversity, respect, human dignity and human rights.*



3 CNN WEBSITE – 27 May 2008 – 12:47 GMT

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (CNN) – A South African university said Tuesday it will close the dormitory where White students tricked Black workers into tasting stew laced with urine, an incident that sparked protests when revealed earlier this year.

*The decision by the executive board of the University of the Free State to close the Reitz Residence was unanimous. The Reitz video reopened racial wounds, and is deeply regretted. It was an isolated manifestation of resistance to the impact of ongoing transformation initiatives at the university”, the school's acting administrator, Teuns Verschoor, said in a written statement.*

*The video and other acts of public violence and vandalism on the campus have undermined the efforts of the university to foster diversity in student and staff life and create an inclusive institutional culture on the campus”, the statement said. “The university will transform itself over time into a beacon of hope, combating racism and other forms of discrimination in South Africa and elsewhere in the world.*



4 UFS PRESS RELEASE – 08 SEPTEMBER 2008 – 21:24:47

Bloemfontein - Prof. F. C.v.N. Fourie stepping down.

*It is with sadness that I hereby announce my intention to step down as rector and vice-chancellor of the University of the Free State (UFS) in the 4th quarter of this year ... this flows primarily from the exhausting times that I have experienced during the past nine years, first as vice-rector (since 1999) and then as rector (since 2003), in managing and implementing several complex strategic projects.*

*The challenges and complexities of continuous change management at a higher education institution, and specifically the demands of further dynamic development and transformation at the UFS, demand enormous amounts of emotional energy and drive ... especially, the political divisions and tensions in the UFS Council and the broader university community during the past year have been extremely draining.*

*I think it is time for new and fresh leadership, especially in the light of the transformation challenges of the UFS. I have thus decided to step down in the interest of transformation and the further dynamic development of the UFS.*



5 WIKIPEDIA WEBPAGE

[HTTP://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/UNIVERSITY\\_OF\\_THE\\_FREE\\_STATE](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_the_Free_State)

The then new Vice Chancellor, Jonathan Jansen, was appointed and he has subsequently initiated a process for campus-wide racial integration among students which included inviting the four students to continue with their studies at the university.

In the midst of extreme racial and/or cultural tensions, the University of the Free State featured daily in international news reports and footage. International television crews and squads of police officers in action gear became a regular sight on this almost rural campus. The integration process in UFS residences failed and the executive board of the University of the Free State closed the Reitz residence. The reactions of the students on the creation of "an inclusive institutional culture on the campus" were condemned by the management. The rector, F. C.v.N. Fourie, stepped down and a new Vice Chancellor, Jonathan Jansen, was appointed.

END OF SCRIPT



**Figure 3.4: First-year Kavsies at the Vrije University in Amsterdam. The Leadership for Change Programme – one of the dreams of Jonathan Jansen – is aimed at exposing 150 first-year students annually to diverse cultures and to enable them to learn leadership skills.**

### **The University of the Free State living its dream through visionary leadership**

In 2010, the UFS was awarded the *World Universities Forum Award for Best Practice in Higher Education*, which praised, among other things, the racial integration and harmonisation of the student community. On receiving her honorary doctorate from the university, Oprah Winfrey called the transformation of the university as “nothing short of a miracle” when referring to the incident and subsequent racial integration.

During the graduation ceremony, Oprah offered these words of advice: “Focus on what you can give, how you can serve, then you will be the best that you can be. And you will live the glory of the dream that that-which-I-know-to-be-God holds for all of us.” Oprah ended her address with the words, “God bless South Africa.”

I agree with the *World Universities Forum Award* and Oprah Winfrey that the UFS reinvention of itself was nothing short of a miracle, and that the UFS will live the glory of the God-given – or authentic – dream. I witnessed how this HEI went through the shame and humiliation in the eyes of social justice and the international media, not as a result of what four students did, but as a result of the identity in which the institution operated.

The lack-of-ownership and distancing comment by former rectors that “it is openly linked to the integration process in UFS residences is also most disturbing” is the direct opposite – and indicates then already the ownership approach of the new leadership approach – in the “we will transform ourselves” statement of Teuns Vershoor.

The dream of Jonathan Jansen and the new leadership seemed as impossible as the dreams of Charles Kingsley and his daughter Alice. I have experienced discussions that confirm the disbelief of the bystanders and can imagine the following discussion in the UFS Main Building:

1<sup>st</sup> COLLEAGUE: Jonathan, you have finally lost your senses.

2<sup>nd</sup> COLLEAGUE: This venture is impossible.

JONATHAN JANSEN: For some. Gentlemen, the only way to achieve the impossible is to believe it is possible.

1<sup>st</sup> COLLEAGUE: That kind of thinking could ruin you.

JONATHAN JANSEN: I’m willing to take that chance. Imagine sending 150 first years abroad every year ...

(He stops. One of his students stands at the door, clearly distressed. He goes to him.)

JONATHAN JANSEN: The same problem again?

(He nods. He puts his arm around the student’s shoulder and turns to his colleagues.)

JONATHAN JANSEN: I won’t be long.

## **Conclusion**

This article discussed different levels and types of dreaming – the interior or subconscious and the exterior or conscious – and, therefore, dreams have various multidimensional impacts. Although dreams/visions are a basic concept in leadership and strategic planning, not all individuals and/or institutions are expecting and, therefore, not experiencing the extreme creative and far-reaching directive value of dreams equally.

Most often, dreams or visions are allowed no further than to exist in a vision statement and these visions are only allowed to enter the vision statement once they fit into measureable and/or comprehensible strategies. Very rarely do leaders dare to give visions the freedom to lead towards unexplored possibilities.

In the traditional concept, the dream or vision is influenced and limited by components of the strategy-formation process and forms, therefore, in reality, the first basis of the strategic-planning process. In the new concept, the dream forms the basis of the planning process (in the diagram that follows).





Concept 1: Preconceived dreaming is restrained and directed by components of the strategy.



Concept 2: Free-range dreaming unveils the unimpeded vision of the future.

**Figure 3.5: Vision guided by free-range dreaming**

This research explored the scientific value of subconscious dreaming and found that medical research proved the benefits thereof to the conscious state: novel solutions to challenges; contextualising, guiding and organising emotions; connecting concept laterally; explaining challenges and opportunities more clearly; developing the nervous system, and enhancing memory, intelligence, and the ability to be strategic. This article encourages leaders to pursue free-range dreaming; and then, only after the fully completed dreaming process, should goals and measurability be welcomed into the long-term planning process. This research does not include short- and medium-term planning, because it is ultimately developed from within the long-term planning. Additional further research is necessary before the concept 2-type of free-range dreaming can be appropriated with AI as a research method and the AL implemented within HE.

One of the world’s most influential and communication-smart women refers to the term “an authentic institutional dream” on international networks, where every word counts. I experienced Oprah’s choice of confirmation of the non-insiders recognising what I recognised happening over a few months.

Jonathan Jansen’s visionary leadership was a real-life example for me as an insider/outsider observer, while it served as a valued and strategic tool for making the realisation of far-sighted dreams possible.

I benefitted personally and professionally from auto-ethnography as a process that facilitates reflection, thus increasing insight and self-awareness. I learned to view reflection as a continuous

process of advancing spirals, instead of rethinking, which I learned to view as a repetitive process of thinking in a closed circle.

Through this reflection on free-range dreaming, I have become more aware of the various ways in which marginalisation and oppression can occur in the process of creating a vision. This can go beyond my experience to have meaning for the wider social structure and, it is hoped, lead to social change and transformation of individuals, as well as institutions.

## **ARTICLE 4**

### ***A look at the University of the (Free) State: My dream of appreciating the Reitz video as a public catalyst to the Wonderland of transformed identity***

#### **Abstract**

This study documents the apparently devastating Reitz debacle – where four White students humiliated four Black service workers while capturing the incident on video – from one week prior to the incident which occurred in February 2008 to only 30 months later when the UFS received the *World Universities Forum's 2011 Award for Best Practice in Higher Education*.

The purpose of the research was to apply the Appreciative approach to what seems to be an enormous disaster in the existence of the UFS. Motivation for the study manifested in a journey about sense-making of the defining factors that accomplished the transformation on the UFS campus.

Intuitive as well as scholarly consideration determined the selection of the research design, approach and method. The Appreciative approach is applied within action research methods, especially participative and juxtaposed by an insider-author. The dynamics and opportunities that resulted from the Reitz debacle and the application of an Appreciative approach to leadership facilitated transformation on the campus and within its community. Data was collected by means of personal observations, interviews, photographs and documentation. The international media documented this uncontrolled case study extensively. To illuminate this study, traditional problem-based and appreciative strength-based leadership styles and images are juxtaposed with aspects in logician Lewis Carroll's fantasy novel *Alice in Wonderland* (1865).

By applying an Appreciative approach, a life-giving transformation may develop from a seemingly disparaging debacle. This finding suggests some practical and/or managerial implications. Extensive international exposure not only contributes to the relevance, reality and validity of this case study on the Reitz debacle, but also illustrates the possibilities of alternative approaches to a global audience of leaders.

The extraordinary success of the Appreciative approach may contribute and add value by challenging other institutions to employ this approach in order to heal, unite, and invigorate troubled and diverse communities.

## **Introductory statement**

*I would like to commend you more particularly for your methodology of Appreciative Inquiry, and to thank you [Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management] for introducing it [AI] to the United Nations. Without this, it would have been very difficult, perhaps even impossible, to constructively engage so many leaders of business, civil society, and government.*

**United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, 21 June 2004, UN Leaders Summit.**

Within full sight of the concerned and sensation-seeking world, the campus community of the UFS broke through cultural barriers to transform the institutional identity. I was intrigued by the process and the dynamics that led to the much sought after, but previously elusive change within the institution, following the Reitz debacle. In an effort to make sense of the transformational process, I aligned it to leadership styles and juxtaposed it with Alice's journey.

## **My concern**

### **A tale of two worlds**

I was self-urged to identify scientific grounding for the public outcomes of the Reitz debacle and to document a successful framework that might support transferability to other contexts. In my process of documenting the public outcomes, I embarked on a journey into the 'new world' of a changing environment on a university campus. Like Alice, the UFS also went on a journey, exploring the unknown, in order to find a new identity by changing the leadership. For the purpose of this article, I used the metaphors of the White and Red Queens to portray the difference in leadership: prior to and after the Reitz series of events.

I became perplexed and was constantly questioning the dynamics that contributed, to a large extent, to the breakthrough to transformation in the public domain within such a short time frame. If the experience of the Reitz debacle had such a powerful effect, we need to capture the essence of the Reitz video as a catalyst and document it for future application.

This took me back to the 1865 fantasy novel in which one is confronted with two worlds and a great deal of dynamics that contrast the two 'realities'. I then decided to juxtapose the UFS's search for a transformed identity with the novel. Although AI is a relative new approach, it is becoming increasingly acknowledged in the corporate sector (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2008; George, 2009). In this article, the Appreciative approach is applied to a HEI's transformational process. Seeing that the transformational nature of the HE environment, change leadership applications and appropriations is relevant and valuable.

## **My starting point**

### **The catalyst: World one**

One sunny morning in February 2008, the UFS woke up to a severely vandalised campus: profanities were graffitied on the UFS's prestigious Centenary Complex (Figures 4.1 and 4.5), street lamps and traffic beams were broken down (Figure 4.4), windows were smashed (Figure 4.5), red paint bombs had been thrown (Figure 4.1), and rubber and plastic items were burnt in front of the Main Building (Figure 4.2) where the Senior Management's offices are located. The students unified to demonstrate their disapproval of Management's residence integration processes and practices (UFS, 2008).

One week later, the Reitz debacle broke on CNN and YouTube and started appearing on more than 1,8 million internet sources. Within the next six months, the Rector and Vice Chancellor resigned; residence integration came to a standstill; the South African Government threatened the University Council with closing down the institution; vital funding was in jeopardy; White students were threatened with rape, and, 30 months later, the UFS received the *World Universities Forum Award for Best Practice in Higher Education* during 2010 as well as generous amounts of funding from the NRF and the Rockefeller Foundation. Although in-house surveys on various aspects of the phenomenon were conducted, hardly any academic studies have been carried out on the dramatic turnaround of the UFS achieved through profound leadership reform.

I was still pondering on what the messages: '3', 'W[h]at de fuck 3000' (Figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3) and other refers to; what the reasons were for the



**Figure 4.1: Centenary Complex and the Reitz hostel in the reflection.**



**Figure 4.2: UFS Main Building with evidence of destruction in foreground.**

manifestation of all this emotional energy, and why there was such an unexpectedly unified expression of dissatisfaction, when the evidence of the uproar was removed from campus. Within three days, the campus looked physically just as if nothing had happened. However, there was a visible unity among students from diverse groupings.



**Figure 4.3: Graffiti of the Scaena Theatre.**



**Figure 4.4: Damaged traffic control booms.**



**Figure 4.5: Centenary Complex window.**

One week later, the Reitz video was leaked to YouTube, CNN and the rest of the world media. Initial damage-control efforts were ineffective, as the police's riot squads (Figure 4.6), international reporters and camera teams became a regular presence on campus. Staff members and students were stunned by the extensive media coverage. A recent Google search (January 2013) produced 1 840 000 results on the incident. In addition, Wikipedia extensively covered the controversy under the UFS topic.



**Figure 4.6: Riot police and students in front of the Reitz hostel.**

The incident led, among other things, to the expulsion of four students from the Reitz residence (the producers of the famous video), the closing down of the Reitz hostel and the transfer of the remaining Reitz students to an independent off-campus hostel. Shortly afterwards, the University experienced the resignation of Vice Chancellor Professor Frederick Fourie, the appointment of the new Vice Chancellor, Prof. Jonathan Jansen, and an investigation into racism in education by the Department of Education (*Mail & Guardian*, 2008). The change of leadership introduced a new era – the UFS entered a new world. The catalyst for the change, the Reitz video incident, received so much

attention that five of the eleven Vodacom Journalist of the Year 2008 awards went to media coverage of the Reitz video (*Mail & Guardian*, 2008).

Ten months after the Reitz incident, I noted that even the toilets, artefacts of the video (Figure 4.6), were removed during the renovation of the former hostel building towards the end of 2008.



**Figures 4.7: Renovations at the Reitz hostel.**

Prior to the renovations, I was struck by the fact that the cut-out letter 'I' in the Reitz name went missing and was handpainted on the name post (Figure 4.8). During the restoration process, the cut-out letters were removed, and only the 'I' was left (Figure 4.9), which I found rather symbolic.

The 'I' was lost when individuals on campus lost their personal identity within the broader institutional identity of the University. As with George's (2007) *True North*, it was necessary to re-instate self-awareness, self-consciousness, intrinsic values and motivations, as well as solid relationships to bring back the 'I' to the campus. There was a need for the individual to seek the authentic 'I' and many started to make valuable contributions to co-design the institution "as if life matters" (Whitney, 2008:1).



**Figure 4.8: The Reitz hostel name early in 2008.**



**Figure 4.9: The Reitz hostel name late in 2008.**

The Reitz hostel was named after Francis William Reitz (1844-1934) who was a scholar of law, poet, agriculturalist, Chief Justice and fifth State President of the Orange Free State, State Secretary of the South African Republic during the

Second Boer War, and the first President of the Senate of the Union of South Africa. He was a prominent public figure and was involved in the development of the Afrikaner language and culture. Thus, the hostel that played a

prominent role in Afrikaner and South African cultural and political development on the UFS campus was named after a leader who also played a prominent role in the Afrikaner and South African cultural and political development a century earlier.

### **Situating myself in the literature in order to conceptualise the key elements in my study**

To gain an understanding of the concepts involved, I drew on the work of Corbey, Czarniawska, Birnbaum, Bill George, Claudia Mitchell, Norman Denzin, David Cooperrider, Diana Whitney and Perreira.

### **Visual methodologies**

As visual ethnographer and visual artist, I participated in this rich research. I used different forms of visual data (including photographs, digital presentations, film, paintings and maps) and material culture (including stickers, logos and flyers) as primary or secondary visual texts (Figure 4.10). I photographed nearly every photograph I used; I drew Wonderland's map from cartographic clues; I produced digital posters and presentations for three conferences/seminars at which I presented my research, and I made various paintings and collages on themes of my study. In addition, I reconstructed sets of the above items into new primary or secondary visual texts (Mitchell, 2008).



**Figure 4.10: Stickers used at the 2010 UFS Open Day to guide visitors towards the information centre. The transformation process is in progress: the cherry-red is part of the new branding and the logo is part of the old branding.**

By posting visual data, culture-related to my study, on my Facebook page, my home and office walls as well as my clothes (in the form of badges or pins), I engaged my family, friends and acquaintances who became participants in the research. I included aspects of both Photo-voice and Photo-elicitation to reflect on my views, perspectives and experiences. I always carry a small point-and-shoot camera with me. Nearly all my visual data started off as random pictures, taken without any preconceived ideas of "if" and "where" it might fit in with my study (Denzin, 2003).

I also used the cinematic text of Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* (2010). I spent many hours in textual analysing selected parts of the movie. My family, friends and acquaintances were often encouraged, invited and even bribed to participate in the analysis; practices true to the description of Denzin and Lincoln (1994:3-4) of a qualitative researcher:

*The many methodological practices of qualitative research may be viewed as soft science, journalism, ethnography, bricolage, quilt making, montage. The*



*researcher, in turn, may be seen as a bricoleur, as a maker of quilts, or, as in filmmaking, a person who assembles images into montages.*

### **Juxtaposing**

My quest calls for an additional and fully visual method of research in order to address the visual-centric approach. This research includes my desire to take the reader with me on my journey. As I had a UFS TRANSFORMATION PICS folder filled with photographs I took throughout the transformation process and my experience as Visual Culture undergraduate student, I knew that the juxtaposing of images would communicate my experiences (Warren, 2010). Juxtaposing, as an adopted visual method, accentuates the “visual but hidden” aspects and enables powerful reflection (Prosser, 2007:203). Visual research and the image-text refer to the used images, including the producing, organising and interpreting of imagery. Visual research’s essence is to allow the researcher and reader to ponder and linger over selected images and, therefore, to create time and space for deeper reflection on perception and meaning (Prosser, 2007).

### **Authentic and Appreciative approaches**

The Authentic approach – whether this refers to lifestyle, leadership or research – forms the basis of the AI and AL approaches.

*Authentic leaders and positive deviants are likely to tap the positive core of the organisation. One way to do this is to shift the collective investigative process from deficit inquiry (what is the problem?) to Appreciative Inquiry (what worked well?) (see Cameron, Dutton & Quinn, 2003:160).*

*Authentic interacting leads to appreciative understanding (Palmgren & Petrarca, 2002:15).*

A crisis can set necessary long-term changes in motion to reposition or restructure the individual, the community and/or the institution. The new generation of leaders that develop from the process will be more battle-tested and courageous than those who did not have to lead people through more crisis situations (George, 2009).

George (2007) defines Authentic Leadership (AL) as intrinsic qualities and values of character that are viable and effective in the world of work. Because AL is based on authentic virtues that lead to original and creative leadership, personal excellence and professional effectiveness (Havard, 2007), it is a powerful, but gentle tool.

The collaborative, co-creating and non-authoritarian characteristics of AL allow the UFS community to participate in the leadership processes. Therefore, I adapted the table, which Bill George designed for

the use of individual leaders, for the institution’s leader. The challenging, but innovative leading position taken by the UFS among national and international institutions confirms the dramatic transformational process that is occurring at the UFS (Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1: Adaptation of Appreciative Leadership’s three-part focus to the UFS institutional context.**

PART ONE	PART TWO	PART THREE
<b>Examine UFS’s leadership journey</b>	<b>Discover UFS’s AL</b>	<b>Implementing UFS’s AL</b>
What is the UFS’s life story?	Build institutional self-awareness	Lead with purpose
Why institutional leadership fails/suffers?	Live the UFS’s intrinsic institutional values	Empower other HEI’s to discover AL
Did the institutional leadership develop in the crucible?	Identify the UFS’s most powerful motivators and capabilities	Optimise the UFS’s leadership effectiveness
	Build the UFS’s support team	
	Integrate the UFS’s life	

AL’s three-part focus starts with the examination of the leadership journey; it then moves to the discovery of authentic leadership, and closes with implementing AL (George, 2007). In Table 4.1, I address individual AL to accommodate the AL of the UFS as an institution. I examine UFS’s leadership journey by asking: “What is the UFS’s life story?”; “Why does institutional leadership fail/suffer?” and “Did the institutional leadership develop in the crucible?”. Then I identify the five discoveries of the UFS’s AL about which I dreamed: the building of institutional self-awareness; the living of the UFS’s intrinsic institutional values; the identification of the UFS’s most powerful motivators and capabilities; the building of the UFS’s support team, and the integration of the UFS’s institutional life. Finally, I note three distinct implementations that should lead to an authentic destiny: leading with purpose; empowering other HEI’s to discover AL, and optimising the UFS’s leadership effectiveness.

### **Leadership**

The term ‘leadership’, from the Anglo-Saxon word *laedan*, meaning ‘to go’, is defined as guiding, conducting, proceeding, or being foremost. Although leadership and management are often used interchangeably, for the purpose of this study leadership is about leaders who lead people, and management is about managers who manage processes and policies.

The traditional range of perspectives is merely a slight diversion from the rigid and unimaginative basic problem-based approaches. A widespread quest exists for more appropriate paradigms of leadership approaches, where challenges are appreciated as opportunities to creatively and positively develop. One response is the development of narrativisation, where a narrative is creatively

constructed to describe a sequence of events (Czarniawska, 1997).

Leaders are skilful in making sense and meaning of the actuality, and then articulating, defining, and challenging the previously unidentified or existing wisdom. As a result, leaders mobilise followers through the "management of meaning" (Birnbaum, 1998:78). AL is based on social constructionist theory and thought. Birnbaum confirms the role of a leader as a social constructionist.

I view leaders as individuals or institutions that others freely and enthusiastically follow, because these leaders personify knowledge and practice valued by the followers. Therefore, I view leaders or the opposite of managers – or deficit-focused and problem-based leaders – whose authority is forced upon individuals or institutions that are appointed in subordinate positions. In Table 4.12, I appropriate the deficit-based and value-based leadership and juxtapose it with the leadership styles of Wonderland's Red and White Queens.

### **Authenticity**

Authenticity refers to the positive attempt of the conscious self to live and act according to intrinsic values, rather than external pressures, demands or manipulation (Cameron, Dutton & Quinn, 2003). A variety of different approaches exist among existentialist philosophers, but authenticity is often the ultimate criterion for a life worth living. It follows that this approach is also valid in the life of a community or an institution. Therefore, the UFS will only experience a worthwhile existence while truthfully committed to the institution's origins, attributions, enthusiasms, sincerity, devotion, and intentions. However, universities benchmark themselves against each other – a process which, in most instances, leads them to work against authenticity, because only similarities can be benchmarked. Although authenticity is a desired and sought-after trait, it is also the road less travelled.

I perceive authenticity as a state in which an individual or institution enjoys the satisfaction of performing in the sphere of his/her/its own values and geniuses with adequate developed skills to achieve their ultimate and unique purpose of existence.

### **Institutional identity**

In Psychology, Sociology, Social Psychology, and Marketing, identity refers to a person's consciousness and expression of which s/he is and is not (Corbey, 1991). This includes group affiliations such as national identity, cultural identity and institutional identity. In this study, I use institutional identity in terms of the communal self-image and self-individuality, as well as how the institution values its intrinsic character and cultural, academic and social-responsible development. The UFS's success in identifying its institutional identity is dependent on the successful sense-making and translating of its intrinsic identity-constructing core. Prior to the Reitz debacle, the UFS was

identified through perceptions of the achievement of success. During the Reitz debacle, it became identified through perceptions of the achievement of scandal. In other words, its identity changed overnight from regional hero to international villain. A solid institutional identity should be built on intrinsic character and values through continual self-reflection and awareness.

### **Potential value of the study**

The Reitz debacle was widely publicised, mainly in newspapers and on the internet, by journalists who were mostly external onlookers with a sensation-seeking or political angle. I wanted to place myself inside the incident and appreciate the unobtrusive insider's view that offered me a unique opportunity to experience the process, while observing the course of action.

I studied all the oral and written reports and articles on the intrinsic changes at the UFS of which I was aware. Although these reports all approached the change positively, not one of them studied the leadership style underpinning the authentic transformation process that had occurred since July 2009. The articles mainly ascribed the success to the newly appointed Rector/Vice Chancellor's charismatic personality, his people's skills and personal approach.

My epistemological approach was original in addressing the institutional identity of the UFS in relation to the dynamics at work after the Reitz debacle. I used visual research methodologies together with an auto-ethnographic approach on leadership. Throughout this research project I reflected on notions of my knowledge, understanding and study of institutional identity and how this relates to connected notions such as what I experienced as my personal truths, beliefs, and sense-making. I valued the simultaneity, poetic, anticipatory and constructionist, wholeness principles of the epistemological approach which emerged from the incident, as well as traits of the AL theory (George, 2007, 2009). In addition, I positioned my study within the post-critical philosophy (Polanyi, 1958), because of the distinctive personal observational characteristics of the study, which I have narrated in an auto-ethnographic report format. Juxtaposing the post-Reitz incident with *Alice in Wonderland* is original; I was influenced by a number of writings which contributed to my stance on leadership.

Carl Jung's individuation is an individual/institution personality developmental process, whereby individuals are psychologically shaped and differentiated from each other and finally advance to be harmonious, mature and responsible. This concept is embedded in this study. When the individual/institution is in the shadow stage of the transformation process, the unconscious mind consists of repression, where the individual unconsciously hides uncomfortable thoughts and/or weaknesses, shortcomings, and instincts. During the unfolding of the Reitz series of events, this repression was clearly visible. Only through transformation does the individual/institution heal and acquire the consciousness to move on to a more mature stage.

In addition to the above psychological setting, various philosophical discussions are embedded in the framework of, and support my reflections throughout my study. These include the post-critical philosophy of personal knowledge, the liberty philosophy of individualism, and the philosophy of self.

The post-critical philosophy of personal knowledge (Polanyi, 1958) constitutes the opposite of scientific and detached impersonal knowledge and aims to re-establish science's attachment to personal and human aspects of culture. Brennan (1988) states that identity without survival is possible, and that survival without identity is also possible, but only survival with identity and identity with survival is worth surviving. I agree that knowledge is personal. All knowledge concerns or affects a particular person or institution, and is, therefore, not generic. Knowledge is linked to a specific experience and/or a group of specific experiences, lives, memoirs, observations, narratives, pictures, and other knowledge-forming elements. Knowledge belongs to an individual or an institution and is, therefore, subjective and cannot be separated and made objective. The transformational experiences and knowledge of the UFS will always remain the personal knowledge of the UFS, although other institutions' knowledge and experience of the UFS's transformation might become (subjective) personal knowledge of other individuals and institutions.

The libertarian philosophic tradition promotes self-ownership (Ray, 1980). Individualism is defined as the exercise of intrinsic goals and authentic desires, as well as creativity, experimentation, independence and self-reliance, while it excludes external manipulation by extrinsic individuals, groups or forces in any form.

The philosophy of identity and the philosophy of self refer to the essential qualities that distinguishes a person/group/institution from all others. Despite even extreme development and change, the original intrinsic values remain the same. The self, as a unified being, is the source of conviction, actions, consciousness and unique cores that endure over time (Glover, 1988).

Tertiary campuses develop progressively more diverse populations of students and members of staff, thus achieving more diversity in their institutional identities. This trend requires diversity in leadership styles (Robinson-Neal, 2009). Alternative and brave leadership approaches became the determining factor in both survival with identity and identity with survival, as far as the UFS is concerned.

In addition to these philosophical views, Corbey (1991) addresses the dilemmas of alterity, or the *otherness of people*, as well as exclusion (who we are not) and inclusion (who we are). During the inaugural Bram Fischer Lecture on 16 October 2009, Jonathan Jansen proclaimed that the UFS's newly adopted academic exclusivity and not inclusivity pointed towards "a giant compensatory programme for students who crawled over the matric finishing line demanding to study for a degree".

The works on leadership style in crises by George (2007) and by George, Craig and Avergun (2009) form the basis of my appreciative and authentic theories. George's account (2007) contains interviews with over 125 exceptional leaders who speak transparently about their failures and personal crises which led them to discover their authentic leadership style and sustainable leadership achievements. The case studies are those of well-known international companies that excelled after severe crossroads experiences. Following on from this publication, came the development of the model that guides leadership through rapidly changing circumstances (George, 2009). George encourages the leader never to waste a good crisis, but to identify opportunities created by the crisis.

Bushe (1998, 2001, 2005, 2007) identifies five theories of '*generativity*' (to be a catalyst) as the key principle of the Appreciative approach. If *crisis* is defined as '*a decisive situation with the potential for dynamic change*' and if Appreciative approach as a generative principle, then the current UFS is the perfect case study of a HEI in crisis. Through observations and experiences, I came to value *institutional identity* as a tool for both internal and external communication; this is closely related to 21<sup>st</sup>-century 4-D branding. 4-D branding is a unique view on identity declaration that can be used in every aspect of an institution, including its services/products, employees, customers/clients and the community at large. Functionality is the first dimension and defines the institution. The social dimension is about experiences. The third dimension builds a mentality of value that touches the soul. The final dimension talks about the spiritual connections that need to be visible manifestations of the institutions' ethics; build and sustain relationships, drive values, and invest in long-term commitments (Gad, 2001).

The Brand Innovation Manifesto (Grant, 2006) explains a brand as a strategic cultural idea within the Periodic Table for Brand Ideas. This typology of 32 separate cultural groupings points to the importance of moving from 'targeting' an audience to 'adopting' an audience, from opposing to embracing, and from conducting warfare with to appreciating. The roots of war, strife and conflict are visible in traditional management strategies of opposing, dominating, competing and conquering: all fear-based actions (Sutherland & Stavros, 2003). AI provides a value-based alternative aimed at reciprocate partnering, rather than self-seeking opposition. An appreciative strategy (how?) will include partnering, creating, co-authoring, anticipating and enacting. The motivation (why?) will be derived from long-term values and ethics and the realisation that being the best/the winner is not comparable with being a fully explored and authentic unique self. Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) believe that an institution is 'a miracle to be embraced', and not 'a problem to be solved'. According to them, institutional identity should be appreciative, applicable, provocative and collaborative. Whitney (2008) affirms the life-giving application of the Appreciative approach in the process of designing an organisation.

Leadership Styles	
Deficit-focused	Strength-focused
Problem-based	Asset-based
Characteristics: authoritarian, autocratic, negative, individualistic, reactive	Characteristics: collaborative, sharing, co- creating, appreciative, positive
Motivation: External external pressure & expectations	Motivation: Internal intrinsic dreams & values
Alignment: schism-creating: WE vs. THEM WE strongly condemn THEM WE distance ourselves from THEM	Alignment: unity creating: I & US I apologize on behalf of the HEI I cannot deny MY students
Associated styles: Conflict Management Crisis Management Risk Management	Associated styles: Transformation Management Appreciative Management Authentic Management
↑	↑
The Red Queen	The White Queen
Characteristics: authoritarian, autocratic, negative, individualistic, reactive, pride	Characteristics: Co-creating, appreciative, positive, non-authoritarian, non- competitive
Motivation: External external pressure & expectations & emotional reactions	Motivation: Internal intrinsic dreams & values of subordinates & calm
Alignment: schism-creating: I vs. YOU	Alignment: unity creating: I & US
Most known saying: <i>Off with your head!</i>	Most known saying: <i>We can do it!</i>

**Table 4.2: Leadership styles: Appropriation of deficit-based and value-based leadership, juxtaposed with Wonderland’s Red and White Queens.**

### Research design

This article was driven by the quest to appreciate the catalysing effect of the Reitz video in the leadership towards transformation at the UFS. This quest compelled me to use AI as a method of investigation. AI is a change-focused research method. I desired to do more than merely report on a research study, but rather to engage the research environment in order to promote change (Reed, 2008). Therefore, this study is as much research-based as it is meant to initiate or sustain individual or institutional change. In order to interact with this dual purpose – research and change – I used

non-traditional approaches to accommodate and integrate the theory and practice that I experienced and observed on the UFS campus.

### **Research approach**

Dozens of articles on the *AI Commons-website* of the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, echo the successes of the simple phase process by making use of illustrative case studies. Corporate case studies dominate the AI research domain and, although the UFS leadership never consciously committed to the AI or the AL approach, the current strategies followed by Management are clearly appreciative-related.

### **Research strategy**

The AI process consists of four basic steps titled the 4-D Cycle (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). This entails the following consecutive stages (Figure 4.11):

1. *Discovery*: What is the energising or life-giving core? What do you appreciate and value?
2. *Dream*: What might be? What results do you envision? What is/are your dream/s?
3. *Design*: What ideal do you co-construct with others?
4. *Destiny*: How do you create, empower and/or sustain the positive aspect/s?

I followed an interpretive and interactive approach by combining ethnography and grounded theory. The limitation of my approach might have been that it may seem to be anecdotal, impressionistic and subjective, but it served the purpose of my study.

### **Research method**

AI is a growing “discipline of positive change” and “strengthens revolution in management” (Cooperrider, 2010) and it is not simply the latest feel-good fad. AI is a proven methodology that draws upon the past to create a new positive organisational culture (Gonzales, 2010). It appears that AI is the antithesis of problem-solving which, by means of appreciating people and processes that have worked. Revitalising the organisation guides it or the institution towards success.

### **Research setting**

The research is situated within change management and identity development at HEIs, specifically the UFS.

### **Entrée and establishing researcher roles**

The researcher is an insider and often a participating observer as an employee and student at the UFS.



## Sampling

Purposive, systematic and theoretical sampling of key role players and publications in the public domain were used.

## Data-collection methods

The collected data – interviews, personal observations, photographs, documentation, the international media – documented this uncontrolled case study extensively.

## Recording of data

The researcher recorded data by taking and collecting pictures and videos, taking notes at public speeches and lectures, and storing electronic media searches and communication.

## Data analysis

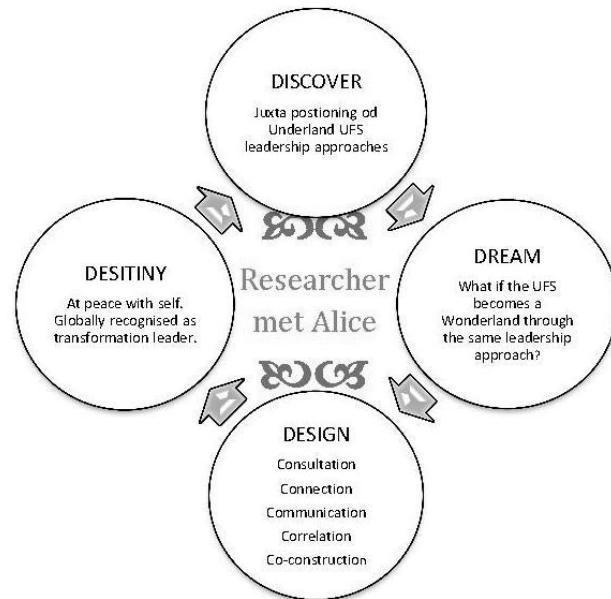
The researcher reflects with the purpose to make sense of the transformative events, actions and processes of the UFS campus by means of narrative reflection, metaphoric juxtaposing and description.

## Strategies employed to ensure data quality

The fact that the researcher uses data that already existed in the public domain contributed to the credibility and/or richness of the reflections and theories. True to the postmodern nature of the study, the researcher allows for different interpretations and believes that researchers cannot be separated from their subjectivity, history and sociocultural location.

## Reporting

The researcher believes that, by embracing the *past* and the *present*, the UFS was able to soar into the *future* in an unconditional positive (neither negative nor neutral) sense-making process, while exploring and appreciating the positive and permanent effects, and not the negative and temporary effects, that overshadowed the Reitz series of events. The data will be presented in terms of the second phase of AI: Dreaming about alternatives and what-ifs in terms of the UFS's destiny. I envisage writing up conclusive reflections on the UFS's transformed institutional identity at a later stage.



**Figure 4.11: Consecutive stages of Appreciative Inquiry.**

## **Reflecting on the data I gathered from literature and during my journey with Alice and the University of the Free State**

The data I gathered by analysing interviews, observations, discussions, letters, newspaper articles, and speeches on the Reitz debacle was processed and juxtaposed with the two worlds of *Alice in Wonderland's* two queens representing two leadership approaches.

The data must be placed within the wider context of HEIs as they progressively develop more diverse populations of students and members of staff, and therefore achieve more diversity in their institutional identities. This trend requires diversity in leadership styles, as emphasised by Robinson-Neal (2009). Alternative and brave leadership approaches became the determining factor in both survival with identity and identity with survival, when the UFS is researched.

While travelling with Alice (Burton, 2010) from the Underland to Wonderland, I dreamed that a life-giving solution-focused leadership approach replaced a life-draining problem-focused leadership approach. I discovered similarities between the life-drained community of Underland and the life-drained (post-Reitz-video) community of the UFS. In addition, I discovered similarities between Underland's and UFS's leadership styles.

### **Deficit-based, problem-focused paradigm of the *Red Queen***



The Red Queen's power lies in her rhetoric: "*Off with their heads!*" She practised a problem-based leadership style that is individualistic, deficit-based and authoritarian (Cunningham & Cordeira, 2005). Initially, the reign of Iracebeth of Crims, the Red Queen of Underland, seemed successful, but then the masks worn by her subordinates to hide their real identity fell off.

On 23 March 2008, the University World News published Reflections on the Reitz Incident Implications, written by the then Rector and Vice Chancellor of the UFS (Fourie, 2008). The characteristics of the traditional problem-based leadership paradigm and its short-term focus could be identified throughout the first part of the Reitz incident. A reactive tick-list compliance with external motivators (Malachowski, 1990), authoritarian council decisions, hierarchical groupings and dividing chasms were evident in the text: [the video was]

*strongly and publicly condemned by the council and the management of the university and assured the world that the UFS is dealing with the Reitz matter as quickly and fairly as possible [and that] the council and executive management have already adopted a programme of action to address this specific matter [and that the council and leadership will solve the UFS's problems of] intolerance, discrimination and bigotry by teaching them [the students] ... as soon as possible (Fourie, 2008).*

Reactive ethical policies and practices were “used to prevent or sanction disagreeable conduct, limit opportunities for creating positive visions of the future and create a schism between ‘we’ and ‘them’” (Van Vuuren & Crous, 2005). This reactionary approach also contained the characteristics of *risk or crisis management* to benchmark itself against stakeholders’ expectations as well as other institutions’ ethical (or risk) management programmes (Van Vuuren & Crous, 2005).

I continue dreaming *what if* dreams. *What if* the UFS’s journey to the destiny of transformation mirrors the Underland’s journey to the destiny of transformation? *What if* an AL approach could also act as a catalyst to transform our campus? *What if* the UFS could serve the global community with the extraordinary vision that Jonathan Jansen (2008) proclaimed in his inauguration speech – at this stage a mere dream for a transformed university?

*Firstly, the university will become a place that exemplifies the scholarship and the practice of reconciliation, forgiveness and social justice. Scholars and students from around the world will descend on the institution to study and understand the theory and practice of building community across the divides of race but also religion, gender, dis/ability, national origins and sexual identity. In this respect the University will soon launch what we hope to call The Reitz Institute for Studies in Race, Reconciliation and Social Justice.*

*Secondly, the university will move very quickly to become a national and indeed international centre for academic excellence. While the UFS has great programmes in fields like chemistry, agriculture and medicine, we are acutely aware of the need to dramatically scale up the academic standards of a promising institution.*

The traditional problem-focused approach was replaced in the following regime by an appreciative strength-focus approach.

### **Strength-based, solution-focused paradigm of the *White Queen***



Mirana of Marmoreal, the eccentric and dramatic White Queen of Underland (and soon to be Wonderland), is appreciative of people. She practises a non-authoritarian, non-competitive, positive and appreciative approach that inspires her supporters to realise their ultimate potential into positive performance by making use of their personal and collective values and strengths (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom & Rader, 2010).

In his inaugural speech, Jonathan Jansen, the UFS’s 13<sup>th</sup> Rector and Vice Chancellor, affirms a change from the traditional problem-solving paradigm to a creative and inclusive one. By refusing to *snuggle up to power*, the new leadership style proactively moved towards healing, forgiveness and social justice through shared ownership of the UFS’s institutional culture. Within the character of the appreciative approach, the Rector/Vice Chancellor acknowledged that “we as an institution failed”,

that “as the head of this institution, I apologise to you”, and that “those four students, who committed that heinous act, are my students. If I may borrow from another leader, I cannot deny them, any more than I cannot deny my own children”. The new leadership embraces every member of the UFS community and suggested that the focus in analysing the event should shift from that of individual pathology to one of institutional culture (Jansen, 2008). This implies that the act, not the individuals, should be condemned.

The crisis- and conflict-management nature of the traditional problem-focused leadership style inevitably tried to cover up both the vandalising incident and the Reitz debacle. The threat of its potentially inferior position, status, or competitive disadvantage suppressed transparency.

At the opening of *Ses van die Bestes*, an exhibition by the fourth-year Visual Art students, Jonathan Jansen urged the youth to “turn disability into possibility” (Jansen, 2010). This reminded me of Marlene le Roux’s book *Look at Me* – from there the name of this article! (Le Roux, 2008). This semi-erotic coffee-table book with 23 disabled or incomplete bodied women as models stunned me, because I can still hear my mother whispering that I should not look at disabled people! However, reading this book brings about a paradigm shift: labels of eccentricity, individualism, abnormality or even disability should not cause feelings of shame and/or inferiority. Focusing on the more distinctive aspects affords an individual as well as an institution the opportunity for self-confidence. The focus is, therefore, on excelling – and not on shaming – because of the uniqueness.

I juxtaposed the exposure of the not-acceptable (or disability) with the covering of the not-acceptable at the UFS. Appreciating authentic institutional identity inevitably means that attributes need to be showcased; this is the opposite of being ashamed of those attributes. In addition, I believe that the applied truth will set the captive free: “Changes never thought possible are suddenly and demographically mobilised when people constructively appropriate the power of the positive core and simply ‘let go’ of an account of the negative” (Van Vuuren & Crous, 2005). Hidden disfiguredness or incompleteness needs to be re-appraised in order to fully appreciate the authentic institutional identity. Wearing a superficial facade is similar to living a lie. Inferiority can only be created and maintained in fear-based environments where comparing and competing are integral activities. Feelings of inferiority deny us faith in our abilities and confidence in our beliefs. On the other hand, in a value-based environment (where partnering, creating, co-authoring, anticipating and enacting is important), individualisation processes can flourish (Jung, 1992). Jung (1992) calls the first half of life the natural phase, when the human being grounds extrinsic values, and the second half the cultural phase, when the human being grounds intrinsic values. The process of psychological maturity or individuation refers to the wisdom and wholeness that develop when an individual develops self-awareness and self-acceptance towards self-realisation. “Individualization is the psychological process that makes of a human being man” (Sagi, 2003).

I used the above discourse to apply to institutions, showing that the Reitz incident was an extraordinary catalyst that made the UFS *an 'individualized, unique, indivisible unit – a whole institution'*. All the reasons that had hindered transparency and deflected attention from the institutional imperfections came to an end when the UFS became accepted and appreciated for what it was. In fact, prudence is happily invited to celebrate the virtue that stems from uniqueness. From my own observations, I experienced that the institution is openly aware that maturity is a process and that no institution will ever be complete.

The UFS's current collaborative and participatory leadership approach has the visionary, inspiring and inspirational what-could-be of the AI approach, instead of the problem-centred non-participatory approach of reactive what-was (Van Vuuren & Crous, 2005).

## **Discussion**

In order to illustrate the extraordinary success of the Appreciative approach, other institutions may employ this approach in order to transform through a journey of making sense of the UFS's Reitz debacle. By using media articles and pictures, I juxtapose similar – yet different – concepts of institutional identity in order to identify parallels as well as contrasts, and to stimulate creativity in making sense of the dynamics that became evident after the Reitz incident on the UFS campus.

By replacing a deficit-based, problem-focused paradigm – as illustrated by the leadership style of the *Red Queen* – with a strength-based, solution-focused paradigm – as illustrated by the leadership style of the *White Queen* – and thereby practising a positive, non-authoritarian and non-competitive Appreciative approach, an environment conducive to optimising human potential is created, as argued by AL (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2008).

I firmly believe that the intrinsic and authentic value of every person, community and institution is complete and beneficial to others. My belief does not imply perfection, rather the realisation that *I am Me*. Virginia Satir, developer of the *Virginia Satir Change Process Model* (Banmen, 2002), psychologist and educator, describes the destiny of people and institutions when they are able to create, sustain, improve, and correct their value perspectives:

*In the entire world, there is no one else exactly like me. Everything that comes out of me is authentically mine, because I alone chose it – I own everything about me: I can discard that which is unfitting, keep the rest, and invent something new from that which I discarded. I have the tools to survive, to be close to others, to be productive, and to make sense and order out of the world of people and things outside of me. I own me, and therefore, I can engineer me. I am me, and I am Okay.*

To arrive at a place where a person, a community or an institution can declare the above, the importance of owning the whole identity and of being transparent about it is essential. Carl Jung's shadow theory addresses the dark side of identity. It may not be the most desired part, but it is authentically and essentially part of the identity. With transparency, I imply openness, communication, and accountability. I define *openness* as a philosophical and ethical position from which some individuals, communities and institutions that value real truths and connectedness operate. Authentic *communication* is committed to the making of meaning and the exchange of understanding, not merely a ritual process of transmitting strategic information. *Accountability* speaks of fully owning one's triumphs, successes, failures and mistakes. The Reitz video, like any other dark side or shadow, should have been addressed with a transparent approach. I realise that the thoughts evoked above might sound like mere sentiments, but clearly the opposite approach (denying, covering and distancing) did not succeed.

The lack of authentic communication, participation, synergy and ownership were the root cause of the students' aggression and frustrations. These were addressed in various ways. The Rector now schedules formal and informal discussions with all the other role players, including future, current and past students and parents; all levels of staff; local, national and international communities, leaders and the media, as well as service providers. Every policy, procedure and practice was considered for its investment value over the short, medium, but mainly long term: the ultimate destination.

In addition, I noticed a release of the authentic communal identity of Underland under the strength-based approach. The lack of a strongly realised intrinsic institutional identity at UFS and the reason why the identity was not distinguished and/or discussed intrigued me for some time. The realisation that the strengths-based leadership style led to the release of communal identity gave birth to this article: I marvelled at the possibility that a 145-year-old fantasy novel might have tested a management style that would transform a tarnished HEI into an award-winning HEI. Nonetheless, the UFS recently received the *World Universities Forum (WUF) Award for Best Practice in Higher Education* during 2010. Rudi Buys, Dean of Student Affairs at UFS, echoed the *Seven Lessons for Leading in Crisis* on 16 January 2011 in *Fokus* on SABC2, as he reflected on the success story of the past 30 months.

The Reitz video challenged the UFS to face reality, by starting with ourselves. Previously, integration was forced down, without inviting ownership and participation from (especially) the students. Now the new leadership approach of sharing responsibility for finding solutions through shared ownership and recognising unique strengths in every individual lead to a powerful synergy, without enforcing integration.

The Reitz crisis created a climate for something extraordinary to happen: either extraordinarily disastrous, or extraordinarily successful. By embracing the opportunity wholeheartedly and transparently, the UFS experienced extraordinary success.

### **Findings**

This case study proves that individuals who turn to authentic leadership when in the spotlight earn trust and respect that are valuable for confirming/exposing a real-life core that will be appreciated by outsiders. In addition, this authentic approach will earn valuable marketing and branding mileage.

Surviving and overcoming the crisis made the participants experts and, therefore, leaders in this field. This finding was illustrated when Jonathan Jansen's dreams became reality in January 2011: Archbishop Desmond Tutu opened the Institute for Studies in Race, Reconciliation and Social Justice, and the UFS was awarded the *WUF Award*.

### **Suggestions for future research**

I would like the UFS's destiny to introduce a new tradition of freedom of speech through debates, articles, colloquia, visual art exhibitions, poetry readings, short films and even developing heritage garden paths. Through my research, I would like to motivate the UFS to install a culture of celebrating life by embracing transparency, because truth will deliver the institution from suspicion of unspoken atrocities.

#### Possible limitations of the study

Negative or disapproving reactions towards the less traditional approaches and methods used in this study – which include a paradigm shift in leadership approach, as well as a fantasy case study – might have a major influence on how the study is received. In addition, the lack of AI and AL practitioners that might be needed in order to facilitate the process where necessary might limit the usefulness of the study.

## ARTICLE 5

### ***My auto-ethnographic journey of discovery of personal identity consciousness: Who am I? Am I the real me?***

#### **Abstract**

The University of the Free State (UFS) underwent a well-publicised transformation process following a well-publicised dilemma. Over the past few years, the author experienced an unpublicised transformation process after one of those everyone-knew-but-you dilemmas. Auto-ethnography (AE) was my travel vehicle on my journey from institutional awareness to personal transformation. Through self-reflection, qualitative research methods and observation, travel-related metaphors, theories on transformation, personal development, personal transformation and authentic leadership were used as a vehicle to connect Self, Others and Culture in institutional and personal identity consciousness. The author's travel companion, the unpretentious and individualistic Alice of Wonderland, provides insight into and understanding in complex circumstances. The readers are taken along a ten-phase journey to experience the practical and theoretical processes of transformation, during which they will be allowed to linger among the locals at various Wonderland stations.

#### **Introduction**

With the Reitz debacle moving towards the horizon and the widespread unknown consequences, large numbers of staff and students of the UFS experienced great excitement because of the treasures yet to be uncovered, and of the fear of the fantastic beasts that might await them. The unmapped *terra* or territory begs explorers to travel and to document the place and time.

*You are an explorer. Your mission is to document and observe the world around you as if you've never seen it before. Take notes. Collect things you find on your travels. Document your findings. Notice patterns. Copy. Trace. Focus on one thing at a time. Record what you are drawn to. We are all visitors to this time, this place – we are just passing through. Our purpose is to observe, learn, grow and love. And then, we return home. Virginia Satir's Declaration of Self-Esteem (Satir, 2001)*

#### **What was my concern?**

During the UFS's transformation process, I experienced the *terra* of the UFS *incognito*. At the same time, I experienced the *persona* of myself as *incognito*. My travel companion, the unpretentious and individualistic Alice of Wonderland, experienced the same loss or lack of identity consciousness. Alice and I both realised that we needed a map before we engaged on our journey of personal transformation. On the "Live Your Light" webpage (Rose, 2000), we came across professional coach Amara Rose's invitation:



*The quest to discover and live our truth is the Hero's Journey, a sacred pilgrimage home to ourselves. It's the high road – and a rigorous one. We may try to camouflage our fear of the unknown with bravado, workaholism, or apathy. There's another way: following the path of the heart. How do we find it? With a transformational road map, I invite you to join me on a mission to remember and reclaim your life purpose.*

### **My travel vehicle from institutional awareness to personal transformation**

As an evolving form of self-reflection, writing and a qualitative research method, AE explores the researcher's personal experience and observations and connects this autobiographical story to wider cultural, political, and social meanings and understandings (Ellingson & Ellis, 2008:448). It focuses on the primary participant/subject and, therefore, the writer's subjective experience rather than limiting it to interaction with the beliefs and practices of others, as in empirical research (Ellingson & Ellis, 2008:xix).

Contrary to the theory-driven, hypothesis-testing research methods based on positivist epistemology, the auto-ethnographer embraces and exposes personal thoughts, feelings, experiences and observations as part of a sense-making process of a specific social context (Ellingson & Ellis, 2008). By making every emotion and thought visible to the reader, the auto-ethnographer – as a subjective social and postmodern constructionist (Reed-Danahay, 1997) – rejects the deep-rooted binary oppositions between the researcher and the researched, objectivity and subjectivity, process and product, self and others, detached and passionate, alienated and personal, art and science, and the political. The main critique of AE is, therefore, the subjective, passionate and personal nature of the method (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Although AE is a reflexive account of one person's experiences, it is situated in a specific culture and/or subculture. Therefore, an understanding of the individual's experience/s might influence or change some of the perceptions concerning issues in that or related culture. AE might have an analytical function that focuses on developing theoretical explanations of social phenomena, or an evocative function that aims to provoke conversations and personal responses (Ellingson & Ellis, 2008:445).

The Higher Education (HE) sector is often the context for auto-ethnographic studies (Chang & Boyd, 2011:188). Auto-ethnographers – researchers, lecturers, administrators, managers and supervisors – probably select the context due to the convenience of researching a familiar context and the complexity and dynamic nature of the sector. I selected the HE context because of all these reasons. Criteria for evaluating auto-ethnographic projects include the extent to which the project made a substantive contribution towards understanding social life; the text is aesthetically presented and

satisfyingly complex; the reflectivity has depth and richness, and it expresses reality and lived experiences (Ellis, 2004:1). In addition to the discussion of the value AE adds to the HE sector, the relation, responsibility, ethics and validity, which inherently is the essence of ethnography (see Roth, 2008), is also examined.

To Carolyn Ellis, "validity means that our work seeks verisimilitude; it evokes in readers a feeling that the experience described is lifelike, believable, and possible. You also can judge validity by whether it helps readers communicate with others different from themselves or offers a way to improve the lives of participants and readers – or even your own" (Ellis & Bouchner, 2000:751). However, Arthur Bouchner believes that an auto-ethnographic text is all about the meaning and usefulness of the presentation of the events within the narrative and is not about the events themselves or the accuracy of the reporting of the actual event.

Chang (2008:2) agrees with both Ellis and Bouchner about the communicative and meaning-making values of AE, but adds that this user-friendly research method engages researchers and readers in a cross-cultural coalition process between self and others.

My desire was that the value-added genre that tempted and challenged me to include narratives, poems, artefacts, photographs, drawings, and lived experiences would invite readers to relive my journey. Throughout the process, I guarded against overindulgence: to perceive self as a journey, rather than self as a co-traveller on a journey within and, above all, a scientific challenge. AE provided me – as an insider individual – with a micro lens for capturing the detail within my personal travel experiences, from departure to destination. In addition, AE also provided me with a macro lens for changing my perspective within the broader social/cultural context in which I travelled and to which I came home.

Ethnographic decision-making (see Frank, 1999) introduced time and space as travel concepts and ever-present variables that structured the planning of this study. These travel concepts include object, activity, event, goals and feeling. Carolyn Frank (1999:3) experienced ethnography as an "accessibly and instructive observation tool" and utilised these concepts as questions to see beyond the obvious: How are objects used at different times in the space? How do activities vary at different times in the space? How do events occur over time in the space? Is there any sequencing? Which goals are scheduled for which times in the space? How are feelings related to various time periods in the space?

When I had to start my journey, I was confronted with the idea of leaving 'home', which is a static position in contrast with exploring new avenues. To use fantasy metaphors to journey makes sense. The word *metaphor* is developed from the Greek word *to transport* or *journey* (see Wolff, 2001).

Indeed, these metaphors transported me to new worlds and new realities and ultimately served as signposts towards an authentic identity. As a metaphor, *Journey* refers to the concepts of being home and of being away. I found that the root meanings of these concepts clarified my understanding of journey as metaphor.

In Hebrew and Greek, *to be at home* refers to a fixed position of rest in place, time or state; it is rarely used with verbs of motion, and it does not indicate direction. This position might include a dungeon, a palace, a prison, or a temple. From Old and Middle High German, Old English, Old Nordic, Irish and Russian roots, *at home* refers to a residential area, as well as a social area and the people living there. These roots also refer to the somewhat dreadful, but valuable characteristic of existing in a wilderness of the familiar (Alsop, 2002).

In Hebrew and Greek, *to be away* refers to a road to travel (figuratively, a course of life or mode of action); to walk (in a great variety of applications, literally and figuratively), and to flow freely (as water), figuratively to waste away, but also to overflow. It also points to activities such as to wander away, to lose oneself, to flee, to perish, to break, to be undone, to disappear to posterity, to pursue, to see, and to gather for any purpose (receive and take away; remove and restore; consume and gather; lose and recover).

From Old and Middle High German, Old English, Old Nordic, Irish and Russian, the opposite of *to be at home* refers to being foreign, not from home, not belonging, unknown, but also brave, strong and competent; however, no antagonism towards the foreign is to be found in these roots (Alsop, 2002).

Looking back at my starting point, I now realise that home is my passive position in place, time or state, where dwelling and rest are found. Home will always be our primary frame of reference and familiar safe haven, but it also has implications for finding myself in a *comfort zone* for too long, maybe because I feared the confrontation with the inner me – challenging my own identity and that of my environment. Contrariwise, *to be away* refers to an activity in place, time and state, where losing and gathering are pursued. A foreign place, time and space will always be exciting, unfamiliar, and challenging (Alsop, 2002), but often we become anxious to take on those challenges.

*The [March Hare's] house is part hare/part house.*

*The chimneys are ears.*

*The roof is thatched with fur.*

*The picket fence is rabbit feet, doorknob a bunny tail.*

*The windows are pink rabbit eyes that look round and blink.*

*The tea party has been going on for years.*

*The tea set is an odd mixture of cracked pots and chipped cups.*

*The tablecloth is stained and threadbare, the chairs lopsided.*

Paranoid and anxious, the MARCH HARE constantly wrings his paws and long ears.

The Hare/house taps the March Hare on his head.

(From the movie script *Alice* by Linda Woolverton, 2010:30)

The quoted text above illustrates how a home shares characteristics of the owner and how rituals and customs in and around the home become an interaction between the home-owner and home, and part of the owner's existence.

I am not what the Merriam-Webster and Oxford Dictionaries would describe as a housewife: a married woman whose main occupation is managing household affairs, and doing housework. A house is a structure, nothing more, nothing less. To manage a house requires a technical knowledge, materials and some money. A house serves as a place to keep our stuff and protect us from the elements.

But a home is different. You can live in a house that does not feel like home. To be a home, it needs to feel like a place where you belong. A place where you feel at peace. Comfortable. A home reflects your personality. So it stands to reason that people like you will also like being in your home. And even if you do not own the house, the home is yours (with compliments to Simon Sinek's from the Start with Why blog).

Therefore, I am not a housewife, but I am a homemaker. Whenever I move into a new house, I invade every inch thereof and turn it into a home where I belong. A place where I feel at peace. Comfortable. My home reflects my personality. So it stands to reason that people like me also like being in my home. And even if I do not own the house, the home is mine.

*My home is part home/part Emmie.*

*The picture frames are an odd mixture of size and colour,  
with familiar eyes looking from within.*

*The windows are dressed in fabric acquired during well-remembered travels.*

*The fragrance of herbs lingers from the garden right through to the kitchen.*

*From every doorknob dangles a memory-loaded tassel or chime.*

*The fellowship of loved ones has been going on for years.*

Likewise, 'away' shares characteristics of the others. Rituals and customs in and around the 'away' become an interaction between the other and its home, becoming part of the other. Sometimes 'away' might feel almost like 'home'. A home away from 'home'. But it is still 'away' from home, and only almost 'home'. I might even feel as if I almost belong. A place where I feel almost at peace. Almost comfortable. But 'away' will never be my home, because it will reflect the lives of others.

Alice and I are co-travellers through Wonderland and, therefore, co-absentees from home. Our common purpose – to lose our current selves and to find our authentic selves before we consider going home – made us ideal co-travellers. This juxtaposed companionship provides both travellers with process, resemblance, possession, instrumentality, addition and completeness. Histories of travel agree that women have never had the same opportunity to travel or the same access to the road as men. According to Dea Birkett, Victorian women often turned to travel in search of their authentic selves when their personal identity collapsed – mainly due to the death of parents or husbands. Women’s adaptability and fluid feminine identity is more agreeable to travel and transformation than the solidity of the masculine identity of men, even though society often frowns upon women travellers. However, research found that women who travelled “often learned to value the prospect of escape and freedom from their fathers” (Birkett, 1989:81). This was also the case with Alice and me.

Like Alice’s father, my father introduced and encouraged me to travel. Sometimes the medium was the spoken word, sometimes the written word, sometimes visuals and sometimes machines that took us through the air or over land and water.

Some of our societal beliefs and practices are cast in stone, but stones can be chiselled into whatever shape is desired or works best. Society’s beliefs and practices are like travel metaphors, billboards and signposts of locations through which we are travelling and not an indication of a destination, as explained by Lawrence Grossberg (Wolff, 2001). By illustration, a travel metaphor like *home* typically indicates a static and isolated place where routine activities such as cleaning and food preparation take place. Stay-at-home-moms are often stereotyped as less intellectual and less strategic than those who commute to their place of work. However, stay-at-home-moms often travel emotionally, socially, intellectually and physically much further on much tighter schedules than other members of society. The fact that they visit a variety of different locations and enjoy a variety of intra- and interactions during their daily activities seems oblivious. Society wrongly interprets this one signpost, home, as a destination.

Volumes of encyclopaedias, libraries of books, monthly deliveries of periodicals, documentary movies and, later, the television present spaces, places and characters to me that I would later have the privilege to experience. One of these experiences was to meet the 16th-century mummy-girl that I read about in an edition of my father’s *National Geographic Magazine*. It happened in 2006, when I was indulging in architectural photography at the Archaeological Museum of Carmo, housed in the ruins of the Carmo Convent in Lisbon, Portugal. As I entered one of the spaces, I unexpectedly came face to face with this girl who was sacrificed to an Inca god. Photos were illegal inside the museum, but how could I not take a picture of this girl whom I met so frequently during my childhood travels? I am not sure whether I experienced this as travel between different points in time, between different points in space, or between different points in character, and whether I travelled backward in time or

my Inca friend travelled forward in time. Even though I know that we encountered each other, others might find the possibility impossible.

This is the type of cast-in-stone perception that Charles Kingsley and Frikkie Smit challenged and, in the process, influenced their daughters to believe what Lewis Carroll called "imagining six impossible things before breakfast".

As discussed in my first article, AE is not a complete personal history, but rather a research method wherein I employ my autobiographical experiences to make sense of my experiences and to create an account whereby I can encourage and motivate others in my cultural grouping to follow an inner voice; a way of integrating the personal into academics. The self, others and culture are important concepts in AE. How this relates to my journey will be explained in the latter part of this article.

During Alice's journey, she met herself, as well as the individual characters – sometimes it is agreeable to identify them as creatures – of Wonderland, as well as the synergy of all of them as the citizenry of Wonderland. Likewise, during my journey, I met myself (Self), everybody that was not myself (Other) as well as the Culture in which we participate. My stance on the Self and Other is that both are essential driving forces and partakers in culture, as described by Chang (2008). However, these elements subtly but unambiguously reveal some clues about my personal and professional curiosities and priorities. My personal identity and values are connected to my professional fascination for HE, ethnography, institutional identity and transformation. Archaeological artefacts – as objects formed, created and used by human beings – give information about the culture of their creators and users, as well as of their social behaviour and the development, changes and transformation that occurred between different points in time and place as well as in society, culture, education and other aspects of their existence and behaviour.

Although I believe that every scholar has a personal but valid concept of culture, I appreciate the perspective that culture is "out there, in the public world" as well as "in here, in the private sphere of the self" (Šataitė, 2012). I experience *culture* as complex and fluid, and that it exists both as a passive – as in a set of ideas – and as an active agent. This corresponds with the travel metaphor concept of moving beyond the passive *home* to explore the active *away* in order to discover and develop.

Heewon Chang's *work-in-progress concept of culture* summarises seven premises, namely that *individuals are not prisoners of culture; despite inner-group diversity, a certain level of sharedness, common understanding, and/or repeated interactions is needed to bind people together as a group; individuals can become members of multiple social organizations concurrently; each membership contributes to the cultural makeup of individuals with varying degrees of influence; and individuals can discard a membership of a cultural group with or without 'shedding' their cultural traits* (Chang, 2008:20).

Culture is, therefore, a product of interactions between Self and Others in a community of practice; both the self and the other are vital for the existence of a culture (Chang, 2008).

I experienced these seven premises "out there" as well as "in here" in my existence and in the UFS's existence. Neither I – as an individual – nor the UFS – as an institution – are prisoners of culture; we have opportunities and options. Despite inner-group diversity, we established coherence through sharing commonalities, collective understanding, and repeated interactions. I – as an individual – and the UFS – as an institution – became members of multiple social organisations simultaneously, and contributed to the cultural make-up of other individuals/institutions. Through the process of transformation, we embraced and discarded associations without jeopardising our own identities.

In the Western tradition, the medieval view of self was mostly negative and presumed self-indulgence; the romantic view was idealistic, and the modernist focused on the relativistic and objective. The postmodern view accepts that the self is complex and constantly adjusting, interdependent on the very community to which it relates (Chang, 2008). Although the self may be viewed as a distinct and autonomous individual separate from the other but within a culture, the self and other may also be viewed as mutually inclusive. This collectivist view that self is an extension of the community contributes to the value of AE.

The others may be perceived as *others of similarity* (allies with the same values and standards) or *others of opposition* (rivals with different values and standards). Through authentic encounters, without preconceived experiences and with an awareness of differences and similarities between self and others, an "I-It" encounter may become an "I-Thou" encounter: the other may be viewed as a person instead of an object. Self is produced in participation of the primary others (personal community) and the secondary community (professional community) within the cultural group. The practice of cultural crossing or edge-walking, when values are discarded temporarily, "enables us to observe and consider differences between self and others, and accommodate the understanding of others" (Chang, 2008:27).

"Individuals have autonomy to interpret and alter cultural knowledge and skills acquired from others and to develop their own version of culture while staying [more or less] in touch with social expectations" [or trends] (Chang, 2008:16). The cultural group with which I associate myself is females, often un-/semi-attached, late-bloomers or midlife survivors of personal trauma. My data collection is mainly focused on personal memory data, self-observation, self-reflection, self-developed skills, introspection and value-adding conversations.

I reflect on the value of my learning processes and the development of my identity consciousness as a result of internal and external experiences and interactions at different settings during my journey. As an adult-learner of academic studies and life, I lived the case studies long before I knew that they had a name. Although my accumulated life experiences enabled me to relate new facts to past experiences during my journey, my established opinions, values and beliefs which have been built up over time were so severely shaken and some even destroyed that they made me doubt my resilience. Everyday challenges with my family and caring responsibilities, my career, my social commitments, my time management, my health and my finances sometimes seemed larger than life. Although I am intrinsically motivated, autonomous and self-directed, being an un-/semi-attached female, a late-bloomer and a midlife survivor of personal trauma does take a toll.

This journey on transformative learning is processed along the main themes and motifs of *Alice in Wonderland*: growing up (learning to understand the adult world), identity, curiosity and an alternative environment. Kolb's experiential learning theory (ELT), and Kolb's Learning Styles Inventory (LSI), as explained in *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Kolb, 1984) provide the learning theory and structure of this study.

The criteria of experience are based on John Dewey's view in *Experience and Education*. Jack Mezirow's *A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning* leads the reflection on transformative learning, which addresses motif of identity. Charles Taylor's chapter entitled *Sources of the Self: the Making of the Modern Identity* (Taylor, 1989) provides the expressivist philosophy. Personal experience, the resonance of experience on our feelings and the creation of understanding through expression have become integral aspects of the modern identity.

### **The map of my journey of personal transformation**

I decided to get into the AE vehicle, but instead of taking a detour around the rocky patches of road, I decided to give the reader a guided tour as we passed theoretical beacons of interest.

Therefore, dear reader, immediately in front of you is the *transformation theory*, as first explained by George Land, a description of the structure of change in natural systems. Land's research identifies change as a series of diachronic breaks or moments in time when the rules of survival change (Land,



1973). James Burns first introduced the concept of transforming leadership in 1978. Burns clarified the distinction between transforming leadership – an approach that redesigns perceptions and values and creates significant change in the life of people and organisations – and transactional leadership – an approach based on the leader’s personality, traits and ability to make a change through example, articulation of an energising vision and challenging goals (Bass & Bass, 2008).

Bernard Bass added to the initial concepts of James Burns (Bass & Bass, 2008) and replaced transforming with transformational in 1985. These idealised influential or charismatic leaders build trust, admiration, loyalty and respect because of the qualities of the transformational leader. These encouraging leaders provide stimulation and individual consideration with an inspiring mission and vision, and give identity.

Gary Yukl further developed transformational leadership in 1994, including the co-development of a challenging and attractive vision; the alignment of a detailed vision to a strategy and tactics; the expression of confidence, decisiveness and optimism about the strategic plan, and the identification of beacons as small successes on the journey (Yukl, 1999).

Diana Whitney adapted David Cooperrider’s Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2003) to Appreciative Leadership to focus on inquiry, inclusion, illumination, inspiration and integrity (Whitney, Rader, & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). These aspects of transformational and appreciative leadership will unfold in the next few pages.

Dear reader, appreciate the view on your right. *Personal development* includes activities aimed at improving self-awareness and self-knowledge; building or renewing identity; developing strengths or talents; improving wealth and spiritual development; identifying or improving potential; building employability or human capital; enhancing lifestyle or the quality of life; improving health; fulfilling aspirations; initiating a life enterprise or personal autonomy; defining and executing personal development plans, and improving social abilities. Through teachers, mentors, managers, trainers and coaches, personal development also benefits the development of other people.

Michel Foucault, in *Care of the Self* (1986), describes the techniques of *epimelia*, used by Aristotle (384 BC-322 BC) in the Western tradition and Confucius (551 BC-479 BC) in the East Asian tradition. *Epimelia* includes disciplined dieting, exercise, sexual abstinence, contemplation, prayer and confession, as “human flourishing” or “living well”. Aspects of personal development are found in ancient Indian aspirations of “beingness, wisdom and happiness”. In psychology, Alfred Adler (1870-1937) and Carl Jung (1875-1961) introduced the concepts of personal development and, in 1929, Adler introduced the lifestyle concept as an individual’s characteristic approach to life and in addressing challenges (Miller, 2005). The quest of this study includes the philosophy of *epimelia*;

caring for the self and thereby caring for the others. Throughout my personal transformation journey, I realised over and over again that I have to choose and live the best life I could – to fulfil my personal purpose – and only then will others benefit from my life.

Daniel Levinson (1920-1994) developed his life aspiration Dream Theory from Jung's concept of life stages. An individual is responsible for discovering and living the Dream in order to experience a sense of aliveness and purpose (Levinson, 1978). Dreams and dreaming are important concepts in my study and I have already cited research on Dreams by the *Harvard Medical School* and the *Harvard Business School*. Daniel Levinson was involved in research at the *Harvard Psychological Clinic*, although his Dream Theory was published while he held a professorship at *Yale University School of Medicine* (Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike, n.d.).

Albert Bandura (1925-) defines self-efficacy as the catalyst that explains why individuals' outcomes are different, even though they have similar knowledge and skills. According to Bandura, the level of self-confidence predicts the level of success, because self-confidence creates the expectation to succeed; allows risk-taking and the setting of challenging goals; assists in keeping on trying after failure, and facilitates controlling emotions and fears in challenging times (Bandura, 1997).

Personal development was considered the purpose of HE by Wilhelm von Humboldt (founder of the *Humboldt University of Berlin*) in *The Sphere and Duties of Government – The limits of State Action* published in 1854: "[If] there is one thing more than another which absolutely requires free activity on the part of the individual, it is precisely education, whose object it is to develop the individual" (Von Humboldt, n.d.).

Arthur Chickering defined seven vectors of personal development for undergraduate students. These include the development of competence; the management of emotions; the achievement of autonomy and interdependence; the development of mature interpersonal relationships; the establishment of identity, and the development of purpose and integrity (Chickering, 1969). Since the Dearing Report in 1997, personal development has taken a central place in United Kingdom university policies (The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997).

Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) introduced a hierarchy of needs with self-actualisation as the pinnacle of personal needs: "the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming" (Maslow, 1943:383). Maslow argues that psychological well-being is only possible if the pivotal core of Self is fundamentally accepted, loved and respected by at least the self, and preferably also by others. Psychological well-being enables creativity and is vital in both the personal and professional life, especially in the teaching professions. Self-actualisation implies the transformation of identity and, if necessary, even the transformation of both the personal and

professional life. Herminia Ibarra (2003) studied the relationship between radical career change and identity change as a personal development process in her *Working Identity*.

Since the introduction of the UFS's strategic transformation strategy, Vice Chancellor Jonathan Jansen often echoed aspects of the above personal development theories, including during the official welcoming address to the 2013 freshmen of the QwaQwa campus. He mentioned the UFS's emphasis on two very important projects, namely the academic and human projects, and that both are about developing skills to benefit oneself as well as one's community (Tongha, 2013).

Readers, here we will get off to enable you to experience the next theory. *Authentic leadership*, a value-added transformation theory developed by Prof. Bill George of the Harvard Business School, is a description of the journey beginning with a person's own life story to put personal authentic leadership into practice. In *Seven Lessons for Leading in Crisis*, he motivates individuals to never waste a good crisis, a diachronic break wherein opportunities for transformation are imbedded and the exploration thereof vital for survival (George, 2009). Bill George identifies authentic leaders as individuals who have a passion for their purpose, practise their values, lead with their heart, develop connected relationships, lead themselves, and get results (George, McLean & Craig, 2008).

I discovered the process of appreciating authenticity in *Finding your True North* (George, McLean, & Craig, 2008) – "one of the most important books on leadership in years", according to the *New York Times* – when I enrolled for Leadership Learning Community (LLC), a staff development programme at the UFS in 2010. According to this Harvard Business School professor, passion, purpose, values, heart, connected relationships and self-discipline are vital steps in the development of authenticity and finding our true Norths.

### **My personal road to a transformed me with Alice**

In relation to transformation, Amara Rose's *Ten Steps to Personal Transformation Road* (Rose, 2009) turned out to be an appropriate map for our journey. I prefer to call the steps phases, because transformation is a process where the various phases may even overlap.

The sacred pilgrimage home to me is a rigorous journey to my life purpose, passion and mission. Life-coach Amara Rose identified the point of departure as when I gave myself permission to be passionate instead of resisting the call for transformation. The second phase was the first farewell to the old familiar and welcoming the foreign as the new familiar. Thereafter, I had to enter the void and walk through the open door, even if it meant that I had to free-fall towards the restory-ing of my life. The fourth phase was when I enlarged my lens and viewed the world with new eyes – from a new angle and at a slower pace, in order to experience the mystery. Subsequently, I had to embrace

the fear and realise that fear is normal and valuable. I had to be bold and take the first step. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 – 1832) stated, "Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it." I had to face the tests, the risks, and discover my unique journey to self-discovery with my unique gift. Phase eight challenged me to think of impossible things; to dream impossible dreams, and to dare myself to feel the joy, energy and acceptance inside my being. Being grateful to challenging life-teachers – line managers, colleagues, incapable officials, unwise politicians, greedy salespeople. My experience of difficult relationships was an indicator of my resistance to teaching and transformation. During phase ten, I realised that the practice of transformation is a daily practice of a lifelong process of self-actualisation. And it is our reason for being here.

By combining Bill George's authentic leadership approach with Amara Rose's personal transformation guidelines, I grounded my personal experiences in theory.

### **Phase One: Give yourself permission to be passionate**

*Our resistance is the Refusal of the Call. Change whispers in our ear, and we attempt a high-tech tune-out: call waiting, call forwarding, on hold, voicemail. We resign ourselves to buying the leopard skin pants because we're afraid to be the leopard.*

*How do we answer this call to reclaim our connection to what's true for us? We start by giving ourselves permission to be passionate, to dream beyond our self-imposed boundaries. As we grant ourselves this grace, the still, small voice inside us grows stronger (Rose, 2009).*

Rose refers to the passion a person needs to have in the first place in order to take on the challenges of change and to be changed. When reflecting on one's personal transformation and the journey one has undertaken to get to the stage where one realises that one has changed, one needs to be driven by passion for the quest, because one tends to be bogged down by the resistance within every person to change or to be confronted by the unknown (Kotter, 2007; Fullan, 2001). We usually find ourselves in a comfort zone or situation where we feel safe, and any uneasiness in that zone or situation makes us realise that changes are imminent, although we tend to deny or "refuse" the call to change. We tend to put everything "on hold" as long as we are not exposing ourselves and being touched by the change ("afraid to be the leopard").

In the latter part of Rose's words above, it becomes clear that one cannot remain "on hold", but that one needs to be authentic ("true") towards oneself and to live one's dreams. In doing so, one needs to break free from one's comfort zones and move beyond one's self-imposed boundaries. As I venture into the unknown, I become stronger, even if it means taking small steps at a time. Alice's passion

created for her the challenge of pursuing a nervous, clock-watching, twitchy White Rabbit. Like Alice, I could not name my passion, but I had an urge that created for me the challenge of pacing my studies that resulted in years of clock-watching academic endeavours.

Bill George views passion as a prerequisite for digging deeper into one's life story and developing authenticity (George, McLean, & Craig, 2008). My passion was to pursue the development of authentic institutional identity in a university at an unnerving time: a time of little confidence in the existing and little courage with which to face the future. The ultimate consequence of this journey was the discovery of our personal identity consciousness. We gave ourselves permission to be passionate about ourselves and our inner development, because when we began to view passion as a way to present ourselves and not a feeling of fleeting excitement, we allowed ourselves to celebrate ourselves and to live beyond our comfortable boundaries, and ignore the boundaries of fear.

### **Phase Two: Say the first farewell**

"One 'symptom' of transition is that the familiar starts to seem strange. You feel a need to distance yourself from the 'ordinary world' of others" (Rose, 2009). The first farewell is the action that follows the consciousness of the passion. Every traveller needs to bid one place farewell before leaving for another place – the next beacon on the journey or the destination of the journey.

The concept of *farewell* developed from a travel blessing in Middle English *fare well!* (to fare, travel, or journey safely). It cognates with Scots *farewele* and *fairweill*, West Frisian *farwol*, Dutch and Afrikaans *vaarwel*, Danish and Norwegian *farvel*, Faroese *farvæl*, Icelandic *far vel* (Wikipedia, 2012). In Wonderlandish, Tarrant Hightop, the Hatter, wishes Alice and me *fairfarrne*, may you travel far under fair skies. In the past, I often had to bless my own journeys, and I know I will have to continue doing so in the future, because some journeys are too personal to be appreciated and understood and, therefore, blessed by others.

Alice's and my passion brought us to a location where we could stay or to which we say farewell. Although we were very conscious of living within the cultural boundaries of our societies, we were intrigued by Nivens McTwisp, a character that seemed strange as well as familiar. Mr McTwisp was the White Rabbit that no-one but us could see. We chased him around the shrubs and through the hedges, almost losing him a couple of times in the labyrinth-like undergrowth. Then we saw him disappearing in a hole in the ground; we followed him and found ourselves free-falling until we landed in a location where, suddenly, we had the opportunity to enter an unknown environment.

We found ourselves in the Room of Doors, a fascinating metaphor for choices in our lives and the threshold to Wonderland. The circular room had no windows – a window is to look through, but it had various doors – a door is to go through. Later, when we reflected on that experience, we

remembered Rainer Maria Rilke's words: "I would like to beg you ... as well as I can, to have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and to try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language" (Rilke, 2007). We had so many questions and were far too excited to love them; we were eager to start our journey. To find out what wonderful experiences lay behind these doors, Alice and I tried to open them. Every door was locked. In one corner, Alice spotted a door just big enough for the White Rabbit to enter through, but ... it was also locked. Alice and I looked around for clues or ideas on what to do next. It was then that we saw a bottle with "drink me" on the label. Passion and curiosity gave us the courage to obey. Suddenly, we shrunk to about the size of the White Rabbit: now we could go through the door, if only we could unlock it. It was then that we remembered that we had seen a small key on the table that was now too high for us to reach. At the base of the table, we saw a *petit four* with "eat me" written on it. Our "drink me" experience gave us a clue that this might also be a tool to help us on our quest. As soon as we swallowed the bite-sized cake, we grew huge. We grabbed the key and reached for the "drink me" potion again.

As expected, we shrunk again and were just the right size to enter through the door. The key unlocked the door and bright sunlight lit up the room as we opened it. Although we were somewhat scared of the unknown, we were also excited to explore a new environment. As we walked through the door, we saw the White Rabbit disappearing behind a flowery shrub. We knew how swift he was, so without further thought we followed him before he disappeared again. And so Alice and I acted on our passion: we parted with the well-known and entered Wonderland.

Dewey (1951) discussed how learning opens up new environments – or new worlds – wherein the learner will be, act and learn in the future. Moving from the existing to new environments includes the crossing of borders. The act of crossing borders might be physical or non-physical, willingly or forced and/or even consciously or unconsciously.

Alice was pressured to live within the cultural boundaries and do what was expected of a young lady: to be content with stability, even at the cost of her personal development. In Alice's case, it was to marry and settle down with a reputable family. Alice opted to choose a life that challenged her out of all her comfort zones into an extraordinary transformation process. Alice decided to reclaim her life with unwavering confidence and self-awareness, and to bid farewell to delusions, ignoring society's expectations. She decided to decline the arrogant aristocrat's marriage proposal where her purpose would be to assist others to fulfil their dreams to her detriment. She chose to rather travel and discover new economic opportunities.

I was pressured to live within cultural boundaries, too, and do what was expected from a not-so-young lady: to be content with stability, even at the cost of my personal development. In my case, it

was to continue doing non-creative work within a reputable institution until retirement. I opted to choose a life that challenged me out of all my comfort zones into an extraordinary transformation process. I decided to reclaim my life with intrinsic confidence and self-awareness, and to bid farewell to delusions, ignoring society's expectations. I decided to decline an academic position where my purpose would be to assist others to fulfil their dreams to my detriment. I chose to rather travel and discover new academic opportunities.

Both of us lost much of our muchness – as Tarrant Hightop would later point out to us. However, we gave ourselves permission to be passionate and blessed our journey – following a White Rabbit that no-one but us could see – and entered the unknown, the void, the vacuum or the empty space.

### **Phase Three: Enter the void**

*Pry those mental fingers loose! Your willingness to be in free-fall, to release one trapeze bar before the next has swung into view, is an essential step in restoring your life: looking again at the story you've created about how the world is, and seeing how this filter distorts your view of beauty – your own beauty.*

*The poet Rilke also encourages us to 'live awhile in the question'. You're entering a corridor between the worlds; it's okay to not know what happens next. As you allow yourself to feel safe inside the space between whom you've been and who you're becoming, the feeling of falling into an abyss will subside (Rose, 2009).*

We walked through the door, over the edge of the known into another society with an alternative culture expectation. Surely, this is what Rainer Maria Rilke explained when he wrote in the first decade of the 1900s: "Here I feel that there is no one anywhere who can answer for you those questions and feelings which, in their depths, have a life of their own; for even the most articulate people are unable to help, since what words point to is so very delicate, is almost unsayable."

At this stage of our journey, we experienced extreme overstimulation of our conscious and, mainly, unconscious minds. Our sense of purpose forced us to consider Rilke's advice not to "search for the answers. We realised that they could not be given to us at that stage, because we would not be able to live them. And at that point, we desire to live its questions in the now" (Rilke, 2007).

According to Bill George, our purpose in life is powerful and larger than ourselves. Although our purpose may not be evident to ourselves, it may be evident to people around us. A purpose is always evident in an individual's voluntary behaviour, but initially need not have consciousness and active awareness, but will have future target-directedness and orientation. A true purpose drives us and gives us confidence in challenging times and perspective in prosperous times (Wiktionary, 2012). A purpose keeps us focused on our long-term goals. A purpose empowers us to inspire others (George,

McLean & Craig, 2008).

Alice and I decided to leave the Room of Doors, to go forward, to continue with the journey, to enter the void, to discover our purpose, to stop searching for answers, and to love the questions themselves. We did not realise it then, but the unknown, the void, "became easier for us, more coherent and somehow more reconciling, not in our conscious mind perhaps, which stayed behind, astonished, but in our innermost awareness, awakesness, and knowledge", as Rilke promised (2007).

#### **Phase Four: Enlarge the lens**

*Marcel Proust said, 'The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.' Look with eyes of wonder, like a child. When children encounter the unfamiliar, they s-l-o-w w-a-y d-o-w-n, allowing their senses to absorb new information. You can do this with personal transformation. Breathe deeply into the mystery. Ask yourself, how can I expand this experience? (Rose, 2009).*

At a Focus on Leadership workshop (Van Niekerk, 2012), facilitator Igno van Niekerk related photographic and leadership aspects. On the aspect of positioning a lens, he argued that the desired effects can sometimes be obtained by the repositioning – stretching or shrinking – of the photographer and not by adjusting the lens. Over the past two decades, as a vigorous amateur photographer, I have also discovered that to move towards or step away from is often more effective than to zoom in or out with a lens.

We had to find a way out of the curious Room of Doors. Doors of all sizes and designs lined the walls, but all were locked. We realised that we had *encountered the unfamiliar*, and that we needed to *s-l-o-w w-a-y d-o-w-n, allowing our senses to absorb new information*. We discovered another door; very small and locked. Once again, we realised that we had *encountered the unfamiliar*, and that we needed to *s-l-o-w w-a-y d-o-w-n, allowing our senses to absorb new information*. We then discovered a bottle of Pishsalver labelled "DRINK ME". We drank the liquid, which caused us to shrink too small to reach a key. An *Appelkuchen* labelled "EAT ME" caused us to grow too large to go through the door.

All this shrinking and growing provided us with the experience to get used to encountering the unknown and to *s-l-o-w w-a-y d-o-w-n, allowing our senses to absorb new information* and afforded us the opportunity to enter an unknown world from different angles: from a height of merely 15 cm to a maximum of 6 meters tall. It also provided us with an opportunity to halt our journey; we could either "DRINK ME" or not; we could either "EAT ME" or not. We could stay in the Room of Opportunity for ever or we could find a method of travel that would enable us to continue our



journey.

Personal values, principles, ethical boundaries and priorities are catalysts in the process towards accepting or denying opportunities. By clarifying and integrating my unique core principles, ethical boundaries and priorities, I will more easily make the appropriate decision when pushed to the limits (George, McLean & Craig, 2008).

Eventually, Alice and I shrunk and stretched enough to enter the garden through the open door to see a different world from what other people see or, maybe, to see the world with eyes different to those of other people our age.

### **Phase Five: Bless the fear**

*Fools rush in; the rest of us tremble. Fear is normal. It's even valuable, because it gives us something to push up against, which helps develop our spiritual muscles. This is positive resistance. Weight training for the mind. Fear itself is only a smoke screen: false evidence appearing real. You can defuse it with 'affirmative action' (Rose, 2009).*

I experience transformation as series upon series of fear and courage and bravery. I experienced the manifestation of fear every time my personal or professional familiar/normal was shaken. I found that courage and bravery – the ability to confront terror, pain, danger, uncertainty, or intimidation – is the only counteraction for fear. Both physical courage or bravery – the ability to confront physical pain, adversity and threats – and moral courage or bravery – the ability to act rightly in the face of opposition, shame, scandal or discouragement – is to decisively move out of a comfort zone or a frightful situation or space. In Rachman's series of books on psychology, I found the same questions that I was pondering (Rachman, 1990). Are some people "naturally" brave? Can people learn to behave courageously? Why do people so often over-predict how frightened they will feel? Can fears be acquired indirectly? Can temporally remote events influence fear?

In his presentation 'Authentic Leadership: Courage in Action', Robert Terry encourages the audience to develop their own philosophies of leadership and consider the available choices in their specific situations (Terry, 1998). Authentic leadership requires the courage to encourage and reward yourself and others to utilise unique perspectives and skills to aim for synergy but with no guaranteed results.

*Courage is the self-affirmation of being in spite of the fact of non-being. It is the act of the individual self-talking the anxiety of non-being upon by affirming itself (Tillich, 1952:155).*

In the garden, Alice and I finally met the White Rabbit, Nivens McTwisp, as well as Mallymkin, the Dormouse; Uilleam, the Dodo; TweedleDum and TweedleDee, and some rude talking flowers. They argued over our identity as “the right Alice”, and “the right Emmie” who, it has been foretold, will slay assumptions and mindsets. Alice needed to slay the Red Queen’s Jabberwocky on Frabjous Day and restore the White Queen to power. I needed to *know myself and become much* more muchier in order to be who I was meant to be in my community. In doing so, both of us will slay our loss of muchness and who we are, to become who we were meant to be.

The Wonderland citizens consulted Absolem, the Caterpillar, who decides that we are “not hardly” who we say or think we are: “Almost not, scarcely, barely, only just.” The group was then ambushed by the Bandersnatch and a group of card-playing soldiers. Alice and I escaped and fled into the woods: we had come too far in this journey, challenging traditional ways of how things are and who holds the power and we refused to be controlled and held captive – especially not by our own fears.

#### **Phase Six: Do the work!**

*In the Hero’s Journey, this is the Initiation. Goethe said, “Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.” Once you commit to change, a confluence of forces moves to assist you.*

*I draw inspiration from improvisational comedy. The core concepts are: Begin with what is. Don’t manipulate the action, discover it. Never stop the action by saying “but” or “no”; instead, say “yes, and” and add on to what’s come before.*

*In this way, we build a story, a calling, a life (Rose, 2009).*

Alice and I found ourselves in a world that resembled the nightmares we had had as children, filled with balling bureaucrats, villainous my-way-or-no-way autocrats, and furious dream-snatchers. We realised that we were there for a reason – to conquer the symbol of fear, the horrific Jabberwocky, and restore the rightful leadership to our thrones.

However, despite the discouraging nightmares, the confluence of forces of decisions we had made earlier that day kept us committed to our dreams. We kept on walking and met up with the group of inhabitants of the Red Queen’s court running a caucus race. This race, where the participants run in patterns of any shape, starting and leaving off whenever they like so that there is no clear winner, was symbolic of tradition’s lack of clarity and decisiveness.

## ***The Caucus-race***

*By Lewis Carroll (1865)*

*Forward, backward, inward, outward*

*Come and join the chase*

*Nothing could be drier*

*Than a jolly caucus race*

*Backward, forward, outward, inward*

*Bottom to the top*

*Never a beginning,*

*There can never be a stop*

*To skipping, hopping, tripping fancy free and gay*

*Started it tomorrow*

*But will finish yesterday*

*'Round and 'round and 'round we go*

*Until forevermore*

*For once we were behind*

*But now we find we are be-*

*Forward, backward, inward, outward*

*Come and join the chase*

*Nothing could be drier*

*Than a jolly caucus race!*

Although the race was fun, that was not why we were in Wonderland; therefore, Alice and I left the race and continued on our journey. We were not sure where we were going – our map was somewhat cryptic – but we knew that a journey starts with the first step and can only continue with continuous steps thereafter. We continued our journey in search of experiencing the alignment of our greatest capabilities with our most powerful motivations (George, McLean & Craig, 2008); we knew that we would only recognise the purpose of our journey when we experienced it. Our quests were the motivation for leaving the jolly caucus race and the company of individuals that did not support our quest.

### **Phase Seven: Take the tests**

*There's no hitching a ride to self-discovery (or a new career or relationship) on someone else's coattails! To own your power, you must be willing to scrape your psyche on the rocky road inland. It's the only way to discover and claim your unique gift. You'll encounter tests along the way, which can be innocuous or even pleasant, depending on your degree of resistance (Rose, 2009).*

The journey of self-discovery belonged to Alice and me, but that did not hinder the Wonderland citizens from doubting whether we were the "right" girls to reach our destiny through our unique gifts. They wanted to test us to make sure that we were imposters in our own dreams.

Alice and I realised that it was time to build our support team of Wonderland characters. As foreigners on a mission, we needed to know with whom we could discuss challenges, whom we could consult when we needed wisdom and objectivity, and who would provide support when we felt vulnerable and insecure or when our ethics and values were disputed (George, McLean & Craig, 2008).

It was Absolem, the master of transformation, who wisely mentored us towards realising that we are we and that we will transform to become more authentic:

*Who are you? The question is ... who are you?*

*Explain yourself! Make it clear!*

*"You are not hardly yourselves, but you're much more yourselves now. In fact, you're Almost Yourselves."*

*"I can't help you if you don't even know who you are, stupid girls."*

Therefore, we identified Absolem as the mentor of our support team. When Tarrant Hightop, the Hatter, blessed our journey with "*Fairfarrne, may you travel far under fair skies*", Alice and I realised that we had found a genuine friend in our little support team. We identified the relationships with the White Rabbit, Nivens McTwisp and Mirana, the White Queen, as important in our support team, too.

In my personal journey, I experienced my study promoter Rita Niemann as the mentor, genuine friend and important relationship throughout three years of personal and professional disasters, traumas and pleasure. As the core of my support team, she was the teacher, coach, supervisor, and advisor to whom I could expose my flaws and fears and still be accepted unconditionally, and then be exposed to reality checks and broader perspectives. In retrospect, I realised that this correlates with the guidelines on how to build a support team (George, McLean & Craig, 2008).

### **Phase Eight: Be grateful**

*Gratitude and forgiveness are brothers. Be grateful for all the challenging people in your life – bosses, co-workers, children, friends – because they're your greatest teachers. These relationships are difficult precisely because of your resistance to the teaching, which might be about compassion, self-worth, generosity or unconditional love. We're always looking in the mirror. If we don't like what we see, we can blame the mirror, or look within. The latter is the path of personal mastery, and peace (Rose, 2009).*

Alice and I wandered in a westerly direction and ended up in the Witzend region. The area looked very deserted and run-down, slightly spooky. In a clearing, we came to a tea party. Around a very long table, stacked with crockery, were only three tea drinkers: Tarrant Hightop, the Mad Hatter, Mallymkin, the swashbuckling Dormouse, and Thackery Earwicket, the anxious and slightly insane March Hare.

The Hatter welcomed us. "You're absolutely Alice! I'd know you anywhere." Then he introduced us to Wonderland: "There is a place. Like no place on Earth. A land full of wonder, mystery, and danger! Some say to survive it; you need to be as mad as a hatter. Which luckily I am."

And then he invited us to have some tea. The three hosts poured tea through a bottomless cup and babbled until Alice and I realised that our thirst would never be quenched at that tea party! We left the table thirsty. So, Alice and I were ourselves, but not as much as we were ourselves before!

As we walked away from the mad trio, a smile appeared in the sky and eventually an elegant tabby, Chessur, the Cheshire Cat, materialised around the smile: "Cheshire Cat: What do you call yourself?" After we introduced ourselves, he replied: "There's been some debate about that. And I never get involved in politics." Then he disappeared.

Alice and I thankfully agreed: "It's only a dream, and things can be funny in dreams, but this is our dream. We'll decide where it goes from here ... we'll make the path!"

Throughout my life – and quest – I have had my fair share of challenging people in my life – bosses, co-workers, children, and friends. Although I believe that they are and were some of my greatest teachers and that I should be grateful and forgiving towards them, practising gratitude and forgiveness is no easy task. Through these individuals, I realised that, although I desire transformation – as opposed to stagnation – I discovered my resistance to what I identified as precious treasures.

One powerful metaphor assists me with my above challenge:

*The buckets of water represent the important areas of your life. Assume you have a limited quantity of water – your time, your energy, your spirit. You have several buckets to fill, but you don't have enough water to fill all of them. Do you fill each of them partway and monitor them closely for leaks? Or do you put all your water in one or two buckets to the exclusion of others? (George, McLean & Craig, 2008:112-113).*

I realised that I have to make conscious decisions about what I allow and don't allow in my personal, professional, family and community spheres, because my resources – time, energy, and others – will always be limited.

### **Phase Nine: Humour yourself**

*We can lighten up our enlightenment. A healer once told me, "One day you will hear laughter and realize it's your own voice." It seemed a strange prophecy. Yet as I peeled away layers of false beliefs and crusty attitudes that kept me enslaved, I felt laughter spontaneously bubble up from some subterranean source, and I understood. This is who we are. Let yourself feel the joy, the light, the love inside your being (Rose, 2009).*

While we were at the crazy tea ceremony, the Red Queen's army came looking for the "two intruders". Tarrant Hightop urged us to eat a wild mushroom so that we could shrink to a hideable height. He picked us up and hid us in an empty teapot before the army could see us. We looked at each other in amazement and Alice said: "From the moment we fell down the rabbit hole, we've been told what we must do and who we must be. We've been shrunk, stretched, scratched, and stuffed inside a teapot. We've been accused of who we are and of not." I agreed: "What an experience. A crazy, mad and wonderful experience." Our laughter echoed in our porcelain confinement.

Although I experienced all the challenges as a student that most single mothers live through – simultaneously working and studying full-time; supporting a family spiritually, emotionally, financially, physically and logistically, and still being the someone to comfort and care for a sister, a niece, a parent, a neighbour, a friend or a colleague in need – and I depend heavily on my support team. I must admit that my study thrills me every second I co-habit with the PhD folder on my laptop.

In addition, I took great pleasure in the responses to my answers on what my studies are about. One of the most enjoyable situations occurred while I was presenting my research at the University of Pretoria's Research Indaba in October 2012. After my presentation, a student asked me why I had compiled a map of Wonderland. Only after I answered her frankly "Because a map of the real

Wonderland did not exist and I needed it as a visual tool for my study”, did I realise that to talk of “the real Wonderland” at a postgraduate research workshop was hilarious.

That day I heard laughter and I realised it was my own voice (loud and clear over the sound system!). That day I understood the strange prophecy that laughter will spontaneously bubble up from some subterranean source. That day I felt the joy, the light, the love inside my being.

That day I experienced success. I experienced happiness – pleasure or contentment. I experienced achievement – accomplishment of what I have strived for (even though I still cannot fully identify what I achieved and what I am striving for). I experienced significance – that I had made a positive impact on others (even though it might not have been logical!). According to a professor at the Harvard Business School, I measured success appropriately by experiencing what makes happy and content, achieving my goals and contributing positively and uniquely to my community (George, McLean & Craig, 2008).

### **Phase Ten: Be the change**

*Heroes know that mastering change requires daily practice. I really enjoy the signs in public gardens that say, "Stay on the path." The key to integrating change in our lives is, have big dreams, take baby steps. Gandhi said, "You must be the change you wish to see." It's a lifelong process of self-actualization. And it's our reason for being here (Rose, 2009).*

“Curiouser and curiouser.” Since Alice and I had entered Wonderland, the citizens had been debating as to whether we were the foretold heroes that would slay the Jabberwocky. Our reason for entering Wonderland was our curiosity.

THE CATERPILLAR:           Who are you?  
ALICE & EMMIE:            Alice and Emmie.  
THE CATERPILLAR:           We shall see.  
ALICE & EMMIE:            What do you mean by that?  
                                      We ought to know who we are!  
THE CATERPILLAR:           Yes, you ought. Stupid girls.

The earth literally crumbled underneath the two blond females and each one of them tumbled through a different series of *impossible things* – more impossible than they could ever have imagined. Alice curiously followed a White Rabbit with a waistcoat, when she fell down a dark rabbit hole. She landed in the Room of Doors. In order to survive, she had to do some transformational shrinking and stretching and eventually went through the smallest door. She entered Underland. Her *terra incognita* lay before her. She had freedom of movement, but no map as guidance.



**Figure5.1: Alice and Emmie looking backward into their rabbit holes; reflecting on our experiences and transformations that started here.**

I followed my heart and went through a few dark years of desperately trying to save my marriage. I landed in the *Room of Reality*. In order to survive, I had to do some transformational shrinking and stretching and eventually went through a divorce. I entered my *terra incognita*. I had no map as guidance, but freedom of movement.

I found that re-storying my life and reflecting on myself facilitated personal growth (Kenyon & Randall, 1997) and empowered me to develop more authentically (Alsop, 2002). Instead of dwelling in the desolate space that I experienced for three years, I moved to a space where I was able to share my experienced narrative; to encourage and assist others to live their dreams; to align and commit to a superior and shared purpose; to challenge people to stretch, and to recognise the impact of people in my life and to credit them for this (George, McLean & Craig, 2008). Without these individuals, I might not have appreciated the obstacles scattered on my road as hints to consult my MPS. As explained in the first article in this series, I preferred to consult a Metaphor Positioning System (MPS) rather than a Global Positioning System (GPS) on this journey.

### **Appreciating what seemed like obstacles**

Both Alice and I experienced the hindrances of travel just like any other traveller: modes of travel, gender, location, physical ability, affordability, skills (language: speak, understand, reading, driving), culture, time (available vacation; replacement to take over responsibilities), knowledge, personality and character (courage), and age – as a travel agent pointed out to us. We realised that in order to reach our destination, we had to be conscious of these challenges; and so we were.

Everything started because of our curiosity. Uncontrollable curiosity led Alice and I to the rabbit hole.



We sensed thousands of experiences each day, but only the White Rabbit aroused the curiosity that drove us to the edge of the rabbit hole. The external experience of the appearance of the White Rabbit triggered an internal experience: curiosity. The experience moved us from one learning environment – home – to another unknown one beyond the rabbit hole – away.

To satisfy her curiosity even further, Alice led the way forward and eventually she fell into the tunnel and realised that the rabbit hole was a journey through a series of known objects in an unknown setting.

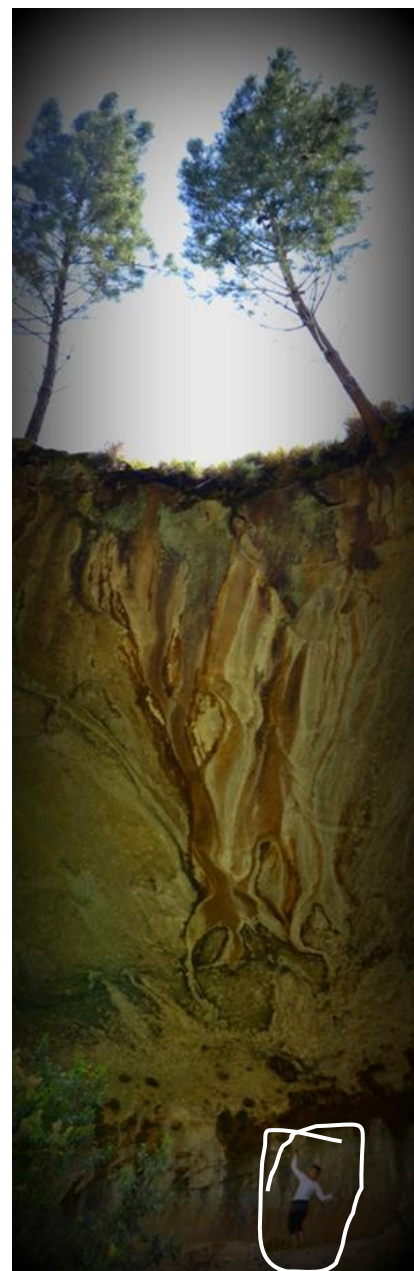
#### One: Location

Both of us were in an undesirable location, filled with a passion to change. We longed to be away from our local location to allow foreign locations to construct and transform our identities by inner and outer experiences and our own meaning-making processes. Passion pushed us from home towards away; towards our own transformed identity at the end of our journeys. I realised that I was not at the location I had dreamed of as a little girl. I might have experienced some joy and even a little fulfilment in both my personal and professional life, but it was definitely not that place that I dreamed of.

According to *The Five Themes of Geography* (Rosenberg, 1994), the characteristics of geography are location (absolute and relative); place (where people want to live); region (physical, political, cultural, economic and climate); movement and migration, and human-environment interaction.

Obsolete location is merely a dot on the map, the GPS coordinates or the physical address. Relative location describes the area in relation to its environment.

**Figure 5.2: Emmie's obsolete location. This picture explains that my obsolete location is the same above ground and underground, but my relative location differs drastically as I fell down the rabbit hole.**



Place describes the physical (animal and plant life, rivers, topography) and human (cultural activities and developments) characteristics of

a location. Human-environment interaction considers how human beings develop and shape the environment; both positively and negatively.

Movement and migration is mainly because of spiritual, emotional and physical survival and are closely related to the availability and cost of resources.

*Region* (formal, functional or vernacular) *divides the world into manageable units for geographic study*. Formal regions are separated by formal and clear boundaries. Functional regions are defined by connections and relationships. Vernacular regions have no formal boundaries, but are known and exist on mental maps.

## Two: Culture

Alice and I functioned and thrived on, and for a while even within, the boundary of our own culture as well as that of another unfamiliar culture group. Physically and, more importantly, emotionally, I travelled and experienced unimaginable cultures and discovered that the essence of my experience of those cultures infiltrated my soul. According to Nina Boyd Krebs, Alice and I are edge walkers; where others dare not stand, we walk. Edge walkers take risks, build bridges and break new ground; they are contemporary counterparts of the ancient prophet or shaman that would cross over to the invisible world in order to obtain alternative insights and vital information (Neal, 2006). Edge-walking involves our competent functioning and journeying between two or more cultural, ethnic or spiritual worlds – the one is home and the alternative is away – in order to survive.

This does not involve journeys to the land of Escapism nor does crossing the edge involve an instantaneous metamorphosis (Krebs, 1999). Edge walkers are merely conscious of the paradox of embracing – or at least acknowledging – different identities and cultures and thrive on walking on the edge between the worlds of home and away. Edge-walking is not a qualification or destination at which extraordinary individuals arrive; it is an extraordinary journey that some travellers feel compelled to choose. Judi Neal believes that edge walkers pose the uncanny knack for knowing what's going to happen before it unfolds ... are able to plan a strategy that seems absurd to most people at first and is later called brilliant when they are successful (Neal, 2006:1).

## **Three:** Who, what and how we are

We realised that following Tarrant Hightop would not come without risks – ridicule and opposition – but we could not allow ourselves to be paralysed by the usual life and career paths. In order to survive, we needed to enter another world as edge walkers, to think out of the box, to seek new solutions for old problems, to forge alliances with foreigners, and to be open-minded.

After 50 years of living, I was the average multiple personality and middle-aged survivor. Although I

often experienced visitations of whom, what and how I dreamed I could be, I needed to accept the risk to free-fall to me. The courageous personality of an explorer includes, but also excludes some extraordinary characteristics. The traveller who travels from home to away enters a void with the potential of a loss and/or a gain. The traveller, therefore, accepts the challenge with the knowledge that accomplishment will come with some difficulty. Any travel requires the willingness to free-fall; to live awhile in the question when you enter a corridor between two worlds, and that it is okay to not know what happens next. To be brave, daring and open-minded are essential steps in restory-ing your life.

To enter the void between two worlds, Alice and I needed to open our minds; to create a void, and to clear our minds of negativity and clutter of perceptions, traditions, fears and beliefs. Both Alice and I started our journey with a slightly open mind, and we, therefore, experienced the journey as difficult and disappointing, because our expectations and the expected outcomes were not met (Bloom, 2010). As soon as we allowed ourselves to enjoy tumbling down the rabbit hole, our minds and ourselves started to reap the rewarding benefits of open-mindedness (DiPirro, 2010).

As soon as we opened our minds, we could let go of control. This liberation enabled us to invite new ideas and thoughts and challenged some of our current beliefs. This led to the opportunity to change our perceptions and to adapt. However, by opening our minds, we also made ourselves vulnerable. Admitting to ourselves that we do not know everything and that there are possibilities we may not have considered is terrifying and exhilarating. By opening our minds, we even realised that we could allow ourselves to make mistakes – brand new mistakes! And mistakes and experience are great teachers.

Open-mindedness provides a platform for appreciation. Alice and I realised that we had an opportunity to learn about new things and scaffold the new and the existing to strengthen ourselves, to gain confidence and to be honest about what we know and what we wondered about.

#### **Four: Travel modes**

To be able to travel, travellers need a mode of transport. According to my peers, I am fairly adventurous: I started my tertiary studies with a BA degree at the age of 41 and bulldozed towards a completed PhD within ten years, while working full-time. Throughout the creation of my thesis, I was employed as a secretary. I was slow to realise that my marriage ended, but eventually filed for a divorce when my husband got engaged to the mother of his two-year-old son. If my travel budget determined that I had to sleep in bus and train stations and airports, I did it. I am willing to agree to unorthodox modes of travelling in order to reach my destination, or even to just the next beacon in my journey.

However, like almost everyone on this planet, I also experienced that limited options often hindered

or greatly influenced my travel itinerary. Alice and I had four modes of travel – not by choice, but by chance: tumbling, hiking, dreaming and daydreaming, and we made use of a combination of these.

### Tumbling

The Old English *tumbian*, the Middle Low German *tummelen* and the Old French *tomber* refer to dance and fall (Oxford Dictionaries). Acrobats and gymnasts graciously tumble-dance in full control of the movement, but Alice and I plunged uncontrolled and headlong down the rabbit hole and landed in a dilapidated heap on the floor of the Room of Doors. It might be a rapid way to get from a point of departure to a destination, but it is not a popular mode of travel.

### Hiking

Hiking, as an outdoor activity, enables us to traverse natural environments and scenic terrain, without limiting us to roads or rail.

Sigmund Freud (Davies, 1994) would have been very proud of us, because we chose dreams and daydreams as travel modes to the hidden fulfilment of our unconscious wishes:

*Dreams are often most profound when they seem the most crazy.*

*The virtuous man contents himself with dreaming that which the wicked man does in actual life.*

*When inspiration does not come to me, I go halfway to meet it.*

### Dreaming

The succession of images, ideas, emotions, and sensations that occur involuntarily in our subconscious mind during certain stages of sleep, during dreaming, enables us to synthesise, activate and organise our minds. Neurological theories of dreams include combinations and aspects of the activation synthesis theory (Hobson & Mc Carley, 1977); the continual-activation theory (Zhang, 2005); Eugen Tarnow's suggestion that dreams are excitations of long-term memory (Tarnow, 2003); study evidence that illogical locations, characters and activities might strengthen the link and consolidation of semantic memory (Osterweil, 2009), and study findings that dreams remove useless debris from the mind (Crick & Mitchison, 1983).

### Daydreaming

Our dreaming experiences while awake were sometimes vivid dream-like mental images, and at other times they were milder imagery which we associated with realistic future planning, reviewing of past memories or, at best, just musing. Our daydreams were visionary fantasies full of hopes and ambitions (Kaufman & Singer, 2011).

## **Five:** Physical ability

Tarrant Hightop, the Mad Hatter (to Alice):  
*Why is it you're always too small, or too tall?*  
*You're terribly late, you know ... naught.*

Alice and I did not own the physical ability to shrink and stretch; in fact, we could hardly imagine that anyone did. In addition, should we have realised what challenges awaited us, we would also have feared that we were too fearful to undertake this journey. It would have been required of us to believe that we had the power to manifest magic, but luckily we were not into magic! We tumbled down the rabbit hole before we could calculate the risk or realise our fear.

*Fools rush in; the rest tremble. Fear is normal. It's even valuable, positive resistance, weight training for the mind* (Rose, 2009).

Fools rush in; the rest tremble. I often, in that split-second before rational decision-making kicks in, obey my instinct and rush into opportunities, just in time, before the door of opportunity closes. However, recently I discovered that my physical abilities will not be as taken-for-granted in my second 50 years, as they were in the first 50. But, then again, my instinct is better developed.

One of the most basic human physical abilities – to observe – is vital in visual methods. Through observation, Alice and I learned, evaluated, appreciated, and ultimately survived. We observed through lenses that had been formed through our past experiences, our culture, our values and our beliefs in similar situations. Our lenses led us to preconceived perceptions of our expectations and reactions to what we observed or were about to observe. We had to develop new lenses and adjust existing lenses to purposefully observe patterns and practices of our existence; we had to develop *ethnographic eyes* (Green & Dixon, 1999).

Neither Alice nor I owned any awareness of the ever-present patterns and shared ways of interacting, understanding and believing that are always forming within any society. At this point in our journey, we embraced the unconscious conviction that the physical ability to journey the journey would be available to us “just in time”. In addition, we did not own any awareness of purposeful observation of the time, energy and space that we unmindfully experienced. However, as we travelled, we learned to see.

### **Six: Time**

The just-in-time (JIT) concept is a philosophy that eliminates waste associated with time, energy and space (Radisic, n.d.). The difference between training and trying is the same as the difference between just-in-case (JIC) knowledge and just-in-time experience (Ferro, 2010):

*When you learn things just-in-time, you're highly motivated. There is no*

*need to imagine whether you might apply what you're learning since the application comes first. But you can't learn everything just-in-time. You have to learn some things before you can imagine using them (John D. Cook, 2010).*

Because the JIT concept eliminates the waste of time, energy and space, these resources are available to invest otherwise:

*I am invited in ... I just want to stand there and take this incredible experience in. This is like something I have never encountered and that's because I am now experiencing someone else's culture (Frank, 1999:1).*

Nearly all journeys have a fixed date of departure and a fixed date of return; therefore, every journey is a project – with various constants such as space, objects, activities, events, time, goals, and people – to complete. Alice and I studied the Decision-Making Chart (Frank, 1999) after we returned from our journey and could see how valuable this could have been if we had had this ethnographic research technique just-in-time and just-in-case. This technique would be a way of uncovering implicit patterns of our own experiences of *perceiving, believing, evaluating, communicating, acting* (Frank, 1999:2) and reacting during our journey. Our project would have been very different.

### **Seven: Knowledge**

Recently, I travelled locally and abroad for 31 days. I overheard the friend who travelled with me comment that “we got to know and understand each other much better.” At first I was stunned that this was my friend's main observation; then I realised that to be away means to be away from seclusion and a place to retreat to. In my mind's eye, I saw a relief statue walking forward and away from the background and becoming a statue. Now the figure was visible and knowable from all angles; without the comfortable support of the former setting.

We remembered Absolem, master of transformation. His words challenged us to become more authentic:

*Who are you? The question is ... who are you?*

*Explain yourself! Make it clear!*

*You are not hardly yourselves, but you're much more yourselves now.*

*In fact, you're Almost Yourselves.*

*I can't help you if you don't even know who you are.*

Travellers need knowledge; therefore, a lack of knowledge will limit the traveller's experiences. Both Alice and I needed knowledge from within ourselves to declare our journey to be meaningful and meaning-making. Knowledge of the appropriate direction to take is vital and the True North compass

(Figure 5.3) is directive towards building self-awareness (George, McLean & Craig, 2008).



Building self-awareness starts with knowing your values, what motivates you, who supports you, and integrating and balancing all spheres of your life. Personal development is dependent on continuously discovering and accepting your authentic self (George, McLean & Craig, 2008). Although Alice and I did not know this, we started our journeys, because we had a desire to live our values; to experience a state of synchronised motivations and unique gifts; to be part of various supportive groupings, and to live a life that is balanced and integrated.

**Figure 5.3: DIY self-awareness compass.**

Eight: Affordability

Every decision-making process includes considering the value gained against the cost. This process is often undertaken only before the project, especially if the project is a journey. By reflecting purposefully on the journey's joys, delights, anxieties and angers, the value of our factual and fictional aways will increase (Alsop, 2002).

Our inner compass has the default settings of our own culture and past experiences, and it is only through regular reflective practices that our paradigms can transform and the self can develop. As experts of our own cultures at home, we can observe and fracture the multiple layers of away cultures, and juxtapose the home and away cultures. By criss-crossing between boundaries of being home and being away, by being insiders and outsiders (Alsop, 2002:13) through self-reflexivity, Alice and I added value to our journey long after we returned home.

Our purpose for using juxtaposition was not to end up with two separate collections of experiences, but to connect similarities and differences in order to encourage the assimilation of a fluid whole capacity of being a participating insider and outsider.

AI's eight principles of strategy contributed to the concept of wholeness (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). Wholeness is perceived as an accumulation of voices in the creation of strategy and individual, institutional and multi-institutional capacity. Reflection facilitates the encouraged and empowered participation of home cultures and away cultures in the existence of both Alice and I.

Although I can barely afford to travel financially, in all other aspects of my life I cannot afford not to

travel. Therefore, every time I consider the pros and cons of a trip, I always start packing.

### **Nine: Travelling skills**

Experience has taught me that humour is the most vital travelling skill to acquire. My eldest daughter – fair-haired and fair-skinned – applied for a new passport and enquired on its whereabouts a few days ago. The officer on duty informed her that the passport was rejected because “your hair is too white; and your skin as well.” Stunned, she asked him to suggest a solution. To our delight, he answered with the bureaucratic logic of TweedleDee and TweedleDum: “Well, you are who you are, and we cannot change that.”

Alice and I realised that social groups form, create, or build routines, cultures and interrelated patterns of living over time. Being temporal participants or infrequent visitors in a culture, we realised that it would be difficult to understand their spoken, body and symbolic languages without dedication and a sense of humour.

The more Alice’s and my travelling skills developed, the less energy and time we wasted on not only communicating, but also surviving and enjoying our journey. In fact, we could invest that energy and time in value-adding activities. Comprehending usage of the away language was the most valuable skill we developed: to speak, understand and read the different languages lightened our attitude and our spirits. The promise of Amara Rose – *One day you will hear laughter and realize it’s your own voice* – challenged us.

Foreign languages often sound like meaningless nonsense. Alice and I discovered that the whimsical Wonderland utterings and the academic babbling of the academia often sounded like nonsense because of the excess of meaning and not the lack thereof. In his pioneering survey on nonsense literature, published in 1888, Edmund Strachey notes that Lewis Carroll’s Wonderland is purely intellectual nonsense (Tiggs, 1988).

*The Mad Hatter whispers to Alice; "Go south to Grampas Bluffs. The White Queen’s castle is just beyond." He sweeps his hat off. "Jump on the hat. Now!"*

*Alice takes a leap onto the Hat. The Hatter flings his arms wide, sending the Hat and Alice sailing over the treetops. (Alice clings to the brim of the Hat as it sails out of the woods. The Hat lands in the soft grass. Alice looks back at the forest, and then south toward gently rolling hills. It’s getting dark and there are strange night sounds out there. She slips under the relative safety of the Hat for the night.*

(From the movie script *Alice* by Linda Woolverton, 2010:39)

From the above text, Alice and I realised that tumbling, hiking, dreaming and daydreaming were not



the only modes of travel mentioned in this article; hat-surfing was also involved. This extract also illustrates the episodic nature of a journey in nonsense literature. The nonsense journey or quest is a very common motif in nonsense and journeys linger in mysterious spaces (Tiggs, 1988).

And around extraordinary times; sometimes even revered times.

*The tea party has been going on for years.*

*MAD HATTER: Well, as you can see we're still having tea. It's all because I was obliged to kill Time waiting for your return. You're terribly late, you know ... naughty. Well anyway, time became quite offended and stopped altogether. Not a tick ever since. Therefore, it's high time for Time to forgive and forget. Or forget and forgive, whichever comes first. Or, is in any case, most convenient. I'm waiting.*

*The March Hare taps his watch, listens to it, dips it into his tea cup, and listens again.*

(From the movie script *Alice* by Linda Woolverton, 2010:30)

Identity is a crucial element in nonsense, referring to a concept that avoids nothingness as well as everythingness, but is developed from deep-rooted values and characteristics. In nonsense tradition, all the threats to identity are present; nonsense identity is insecure and erratic and constantly changing.

*WHITE RABBIT: I told you she's the right Alice.*

*DORMOUSE: I am not convinced.*

*WHITE RABBIT: How is that for gratitude? I've been up there for weeks trailing one Alice after the next!*

*FLOWER: She doesn't look anything like herself.*

*DORMOUSE: That's because she's the wrong Alice.*

*TWEEDLEDEE: And if she was, she might be.*

*TWEEDLEDUM: But if she isn't, she ain't.*

*TWEEDLEDEE: But if she were so, she would be.*

*TWEEDLEDUM: But she isn't. Knowhow.*

*How can I be the "wrong Alice" when it's my dream?*

*And who are you, if I may ask.*

*TWEEDLEDEE: I'm TweedleDum.*

*TWEEDLEDUM: Contrariwise. I'm TweedleDum. He's TweedleDee.*

*DODO: We should consult Absolem.*

*FLOWER: Exactly. Absolem will know who she is.*

(From the movie script *Alice* by Linda Woolverton, 2010:30)

Journey, time and identity are important concepts in nonsense literature. If the development of time

and identity and our quest to understand it had not been very important aspects of Alice's and my lives, we would not have undertaken the journey.

Ten: Age and vitality

A committed traveller's age and vitality should be quantified in curiosity levels and not in years or health. *Joie de vivre*, vivacity, liveliness, and the absolute-lack-of-lethargy describe the approach of a committed traveller.

*How real are you? Are you your real self? How much do you live your life to express your authentic self with your highest possibilities and actualizing your best potentials? That's what the self-actualizing life is all about – creating and living the best version of you so that you can contribute and make a difference. You were made for that. And your potentials clamour within for that. And if you try to shut all of that down, you only doom yourself to being unhappy for the rest of your life. What this means is that your vitality is related to, and dependent upon, you discovering and being your best self – your real self. The wisdom within this actually goes far, far beyond Maslow to the ancient Greeks who made this one of the points of wisdom: "Know thyself" (Hall, 2011).*

According to Maslow's *Self-Actualization Psychology*, Alice and I were born with unique features and possibilities – potentials of our disposition and uniqueness, and as we have the opportunity to develop into human beings, we also have the ability to become fully ourselves. Tarrant Hightop's teaching on muchness "to be as much, if not more muchier, and to never lose one's muchness" reminded us of the importance to always stay on the path of being ourselves. To pursue impossible goals – to try to be someone else, to be perfect and to be immortal – will not only empty our muchness and diminish ourselves, but also drain our vitality.

*The paradox is that your vitality for life comes more alive with more energy when you fully embrace your true nature as a weak, fallible, and mortal person! Look at any young child – weak, fallible, vulnerable and fully alive to the mystery, excitement, and fascination of life (Hall, 2011).*

In agreement with Abraham Maslow and Tarrant Hightop, I am convinced that age and vitality depend on the traveller's curiosity. If you can "imagine six impossible things before breakfast", you can travel anywhere at any age and with limitless vitality. When I walked into Anthropology 101 in 2003, I was so afraid of disappointing myself that I would not dare imagine that I would complete a BA degree. I was unable to imagine the impossibility of surviving the physical agony of the divorce. Imagining that I would collect a support group of friends more valuable than the full collection of the artworks in the National Gallery on Trafalgar Square (another impossible thing that I experienced; on

the same day that I made an entrance on Shakespeare's stage) was also impossible. I am convinced that I will never be too old or too tired to travel; I am just beginning to imagine six impossible things before breakfast.

## Conclusion

In this article, I reported on my personal experiences as an individual and the interpretations of my journey through a time of major HE institutional transformation. This transformation followed a traumatic incident in the life of the UFS, as well as a traumatic incident in my life. I addressed the detail of the incidents and reaction to these incidents in previous articles. With those articles as a backdrop, this reflexive ethnography memoir is a record of what went on off-screen during the research process.

According to the Greek wisdom of Thales of Miletus – around 600 BC – the road towards knowing others – even the gods – was through knowing and understanding thyself (Oxford Classical Dictionary). Lifelong commitment to introspection; reflection; self-knowing; resilience despite our appreciation of seemingly negative experiences; identification of personal needs and values, and rejection of a distortion of what others present as *la belle vie* or the good life will be the means of transport on the journey towards self-actualisation and being the change you wish to see.

*ALICE & I: Will this potion take us home?*

*WHITE QUEEN: If that is what you choose.*

*MAD HATTER: You could stay.*

*ALICE: What an idea ...*

*EMMIE: ... crazy, mad wonderful idea.*

*(We looked at the strange and wonderful beings we'd met in this strange and wonderful place. But then, thoughts of our loved ones and unfinished business intruded.)*

*ALICE: But we cannot.*

*EMMIE: Here are questions we have to answer. And things we must do.*

*(We drank the potion.)*

*ALICE: We'll be back again before you know it.*

*MAD HATTER: You won't remember me.*

*ALICE: Of course we will!*

*EMMIE: How could I forget?*

*(His eyes start to sparkle as he whispers to us.)*

*MAD HATTER: Fairfarren. May you travel far under fair skies.*

*May you travel far under fair skies.*

The Mad Hatter's blessing blessed me right into a new consciousness. Out of the blue, I realised that

I am allowed – or may be convinced – that I deserve to be blissfully self-fulfilled. Besides that, I understood that I am not only allowed to be blissfully self-fulfilled, but also understanding this is fundamental to me and others, as well as universally beneficial. I also understood that this journey with Alice was only a journey within an ongoing journey that will last throughout eternity, all *under fair skies*.

## **POSTSCRIPT**

The author developed an auto-ethnographic narrative that includes the researcher's individual self – mind, body and spirit – that examines how human experience is meaningful and meaning-making, and equips the individual with life skills. In addition, the narrative offers insights into the construction and transformation of identities with fusion between social science and literature – juxtaposed with *Alice in Wonderland* – partly reality and partly a creative composite of the inner and outer events; and connects the practices of social science with the living of life.

In brief, the author's goal was to extend ethnography to include the heart, the autobiographical, and the artistic text. This article includes the subtle insights of colleagues, family and friends and their experiences of the transformation processes, both internally and externally. This study explores the auto-ethnographer's experiences of consciousness.

Apart from AE, elements of postmodernism, feminism, authenticity, post-critical self-reflection and appreciation are included in this original multidisciplinary dialogue. The original research contribution of this article is in its personal reflections of enhancing the representational richness and reflexivity of qualitative research.

A personal story of career change is used to illustrate how research accounts enriched by the addition of auto-ethnographic detail can provide glimpses into the facts of fiction or the fiction of facts or "the ethnographer's own taken-for-granted understandings of the social world under scrutiny" (Van Maanen, 1988:574).

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## ADENDUM: TIME

JUST IN TIME - OR NOT  
TIME and PLACE co-determine  
history<sup>1</sup> with a just-once synergy.

<sup>2</sup>The Mad Hatter, the March  
Hare, and the Dormouse wronged  
Time. Therefore Time has  
punished them by eternally  
standing still at 6 pm (tea  
time). In the

lives of these  
three, PLACE  
and history are  
static, because



TIME is.

However, in the lives of the rest  
of us, time, place and history are  
dynamic.



Alice unlocks a door in Jerusalem.  
The two photographs were taken  
some weeks or months apart, but  
at the same place. Although Alice  
is still standing between USA's  
"Lucky Bush" and the Jewish  
"Know Hope" the rest of her  
surroundings changed slightly.

The Olympic Games clock announces  
"25 days to go" when I was on  
Trafalgar Square in July 2012; just  
not the right time to experience the  
opening event.



3

I was at the Olympic Walk (built in  
celebration of the Singapore 2010  
Youth Olympic Games) on the  
evening of 30 December 2012, a  
mere 24 hours before tens of  
thousands of attendees bid 2012  
farewell in a spectacular event.



4

Alice in Wonderland was created at  
a Sunday afternoon picnic on the  
first Sunday in July 1862. Here I  
am pictured with some of Lewis  
Carroll's contemporaries on the  
first Sunday in July 2012, in  
Darensbury where Lewis Carroll  
grew up, 150 years later.



Carroll was a passionate portrait  
photographer. Here he is in a  
photograph of himself along with  
some of his contemporaries: Louisa  
MacDonald and four of her children.



5

Rita Niemann, my study promotor  
and Lewis Carroll were both born  
on 27 January. Therefore every  
one of their unbirthdays will also  
be on the same days.

**A very merry unbirthday to you!**



6

<sup>1</sup> Blou, an Afrikaans song written by Andre Swiegers and performed by Lauruka Rauch in 1990.

<sup>2</sup> The melting watch in Salvador Dalí's Persistence of Time painted in 1931.

<sup>3</sup> The Oregonian. 27 July 2012. <http://www.oregonlive.com>

<sup>4</sup> The Washington Post. 31 December 2012. <http://www.washingtonpost.com>

<sup>5</sup> Photograph by Lewis Carroll in 1863. <http://www.allposters.com>

<sup>6</sup> An Ron Ben-Israel Alice in Wonderland Cake. Posted on 1 June 2011 by NYC Design Girl. <http://www.nyccakegirl.com>





## ADENDUM: PLACE

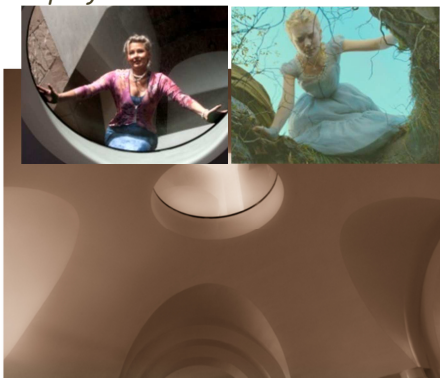
During this study I discovered that  
Place is powerfull and some  
experiences are space specific.  
TIME and PLACE co-determine life<sup>1</sup>.

There is a place. Like no place on Earth.  
A land full of  
*Wonder, Mystery & Danger!*  
Some say to survive it, you need to be as  
*Mad as a Hatter.*  
Which luckily I am.

Analytic philosophy argues whether or  
not time and space exist  
independently of the mind, whether  
they exist independently of one  
another, what accounts for time's  
apparently unidirectional flow, whether  
times other than the present moment  
exist, and questions about the nature  
of identity -particularly the nature of  
identity over time<sup>2</sup>.

Time and time again I came to a place  
where Alice has been.

Below is the rabbit hole & room of  
doors in the UFS' Main Building where  
the offices of the management are.  
Peeping down our rabbit holes . . .



Alice looking down the Leonardo's  
Mall ceiling in Rome just before  
the launch of the Tim Burton's  
2010 movie.

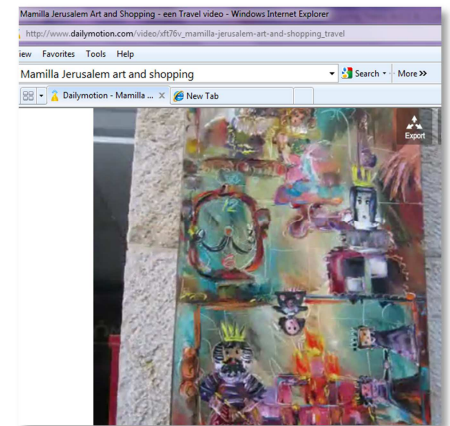
In an electronic wallpaper design,  
Alice is falling right through the  
earth, from England to somewhere  
downunder<sup>3</sup>.



In December 2012, purely by  
chance, I met The Blue Alice  
(painted by Charles Blackman in  
1957) in the Brisbane Art Gallery  
in Australia's Queensland.



In Jerusalem I saw Alice falling  
down the rabbit hole in the posh  
Mamilla Shopping Mall.



Just around the corner, in Ben  
Sira street (between Shlomt Zion  
HaMalka and Hillel street) Alice  
is using her small key<sup>4</sup>.



Traveling, sleeping and working  
underground is not unfamiliar in  
our modern life styles<sup>5</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Blou, an Afrikaans song written by Andre Swiegers and performed by Lauruka Rauch in 1990.

<sup>2</sup> Dainton, Barry. 2010. Time and Space, Second Edition. McGill-Queens University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Designed by Ferante. Posted on 21 July 2010. Downloaded 3321 times. <http://www.goodfon.com/wallpaper/45108.html>

<sup>4</sup> Photographed by Sarah. Posted on 17 March 2008. <http://www.reallysarahsyndication.com>

<sup>5</sup> Piccadilly Circus station, London Underground. Photographed on 2 July 2012.

## ADENDUM: SYMBOLS

### PAINTING THE ROSES RED

The Red Queen and red roses symbolised the English House of Lancaster, while the White Queen and white roses were the symbol for their rival House of York. Therefore, this power struggle between the two sisters may contain a hidden allusion to the Wars of the Roses<sup>1</sup>.

In the eighth chapter, Red Queen subordinates are painting the roses on a rose tree red, because they had accidentally planted a white-rose tree. I included the white-roses-painted-red theme in an unfinished painting (below).



Its original meaning is traced back to a well documented event in 1837, when the Irish Marquis of Waterford and a group of friends ran riot in the Leicestershire town of Melton Mowbray, painting several buildings red.

### MAD AND PASSION

To the marquis's friends he was Henry de la Poer Beresford and to the public 'the Mad Marquis'. He was 'invited to leave' Oxford University, because of his extraordinariness. He literally unsettled apple-carts, fought duels and had been suspected of being 'Spring Heeled Jack', the semi-mythical figure of English folklore, known for his bizarre appearance, flaming eyes and extraordinary leaps<sup>2</sup>. The marquis' reputation relates with that of Tarrant Hightop, the Mad Hatter, with his wacky look, orange hair and eyes, illusionary dance and reputation of being mad.

Insanity, craziness and madness are behaviours characterized by abnormal mental or behavioral patterns or violations of societal norms; something considered highly unique, passionate or extreme, included in a positive sense. The term is also used in efforts to discredit people, practices or principals<sup>3</sup>. Therefore the Mad Hatter is a strong symbol for passion for life.

My juxtaposed journey with Alice, written as a fantasy/ fiction style with peculiar references to theories, and extraordinary methodological travel modes — is often viewed with suspicion, and suggested to be of doubtfully academic value.

### NONSENSE OR NOT

Tweedledum and Tweedledee, in my view, symbolise bureaucracy and rhetoric: 'I know what you're thinking about,' said Tweedledum; 'but it isn't so, nohow.' 'Contrariwise,' continued Tweedledee, 'if it was so, it might be; and if it were so, it would be; but as it isn't, it ain't. That's logic.'



I painted the twins as pillars between staircase landings in my home, because of the supportive function of bureaucracy.

Although the twins' babblings sound absurd and ridiculous, it is part of a well-established genre. Nonsense literature uses sensical and nonsensical elements to challenge language or logical reasoning<sup>6</sup>. The nonsense poem *Jabberwocky* by Lewis Carroll is an example thereof: 'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves Did gyre and gimble in the wabe; All mimsy were the borogoves, And the mome raths outgrabe.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.alice-in-wonderland-net>

<sup>2</sup> *The Phrase Finder: phrases, sayings, idioms and expressions.* <http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/paint-the-town-red.html>

<sup>3</sup> *Insanely great: A balanced portrait of a complicated and compelling man* *The Economist* October 29, 2011

<sup>6</sup> *Tiggs, Wim 1988. An anatomy of literary nonsense.* Amsterdam: Rodopi



## POINT OF DELIVERY

I wrote the final paragraphs of this report in a hospital. My stay at this location was unplanned and unexpected. The location with no other flowers, but white roses.

Together with the spiralling staircase, the roses made me feel at home.



## IDENTIFICATION AND LABELS



Like labels, are badges visible confirmation of alliance to or identifying with a certain group or institution or philosophy and often used for branding purposes<sup>5</sup>. On my denim jacket, I am wearing badges of the UFS and the Lewis Carroll Centre. In addition, the "fleur de lis"; "I am an original"; African geographical and old-world-periwinkle badges are each reflecting a part of my identity.



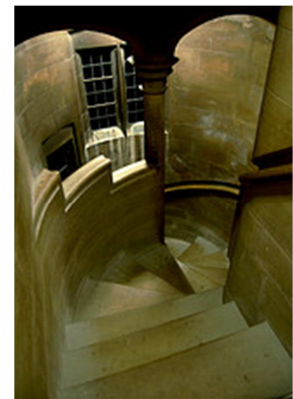
The crocheted Viola was a gift from Rita Niemann. The nickname Pansy was derived from the French pensée meaning thought, because the flower resembles a human face in deep thought. Violas are also a symbol of Free-thought: a philosophy that believe the intellectually of freethinkers should not limit be limited by effects of authority.

## STAIRCASE TO UNDERGROUND

Staircases and basements had a significant presence in my life at the time of this study. As theatre manager my office was in the underground basement of a 6 level theatre. My residential apartment had 3 levels with my studio and storeroom in the basement.

Stairs symbolise levels of understanding in a spiritual, emotional or material journey, and is also analogous to an increasing level of consciousness, entering deeper into our consciousness.

Basements symbolises the subconscious mind, intuition and level of satisfaction. It may also be metaphor for "abasement" or being "debased", feelings of humbleness or worthlessness<sup>7</sup>. Both buildings had one spiral-staircase<sup>8</sup>.



Lewis Carroll was influenced by people, situations and buildings<sup>9</sup>. The Rabbit Hole symbolized the 16<sup>th</sup> century Down The Rabbit Hole Staircase, Christ Church College, Oxford University<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Photographer unknown. <http://favim.com/image/26085/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/badge>

<sup>7</sup> The Dream Well. <http://thedreamwell.wordpress.com/2008/08/25/dream-symbols-stairs-staircases-and-lifts/>

<sup>8</sup> Symbolism Wiki. [http://symbolism.wikia.com/wiki/Alice\\_in\\_Wonderland\\_and\\_Through\\_The\\_Looking\\_Glass](http://symbolism.wikia.com/wiki/Alice_in_Wonderland_and_Through_The_Looking_Glass)

<sup>9</sup> "Ripon Tourist Information". Hello-Yorkshire.co.uk. <http://www.hello-yorkshire.co.uk/ripon/tourist-information>. Retrieved 01 Dec 2009

<sup>10</sup> Photographed by Tyler Shores. Uploaded on 6 Feb 2010. <http://www.flickr.com>

*ADENDUM: MODES OF TRAVEL*

The notion of life as a voyage to be navigated is an old and time honoured metaphor in literature. Among the thousands of examples are *The Odyssey*, many of Shakespeare's works, and Dante's *Inferno*<sup>1</sup>. These voyages were along roads, on water, through air and with the use of a variety of vehicles. The vehicles are often as important, if not more important, than the journey itself. Modes of travel fluctuate because Self, Other and the environment changes. Flexibility and change are vital to overcome unexpected natural and unnatural travel obstacles or re-directives.

I documented the vehicles I made use of. Some of the physical vehicles appear here, but the non-physical vehicles will only be visible by the pleasure they gave.

Alice & I travelled by tumbling, hiking, dancing, dreaming and daydreaming.

I travelled on desolated dirt roads & through well-travelled pastures.



I found some roads barricaded and some forced open.



Additionally, I've been travelling far away from home, but not without a star, and hanging on to a dream.

Falling head over heels,  
On bikes, busses, trams & trains,  
On a chicken and a dinosaur,  
On planes and boats,  
Over the hills  
and down the valleys

Dare not to look back  
Neither Home or Away  
Seemed too far away  
Oh, travelling underground today

Got a dream to take them there  
They're coming to Wonderland  
Got a dream they've come to share

They're coming to Wonderland.



<sup>1</sup> Self-awareness: Its Nature and Development by Michiel Ferrari and Robert J Sternberg

<sup>2</sup> Dancing with academics at the 2010 BOLTON Conference, SA; where I introduced my journey with Alice

<sup>3</sup> Conferencing in June 2012 at Bolton University, UK

<sup>4</sup> Adhearing to travel signs

<sup>5</sup> Horsing 2010 Appreciative Inquiry research breakaway

<sup>6</sup> Paddling on Lake Moondarra with daughter Machtild. Australian Outback 2011

<sup>7</sup> Dragonriding on art work at Oliewenhuis Art Museum's Carousel with grandson Jono. Bloemfontein



*ADENDUM: MODES OF TRAVEL (continued)*

Throughout the journey RED and WHITE reminded me of the two queens of Wonderland and the opposing leadership styles they chose, which refer to the directions in which they journey to reach their next beacon (or sub-goal) or destination (or goal)<sup>9</sup>.

Metaphors always emphasizes some features and de-emphasizes other. In this study RED and WHITE is emphasised, purely by coincidence, and therefore I noticed how frequent these two colours appear. I travelled on a variety of RED and WHITE things . . .



*Quantasing from SA to OZ in 2011*



*Celebrating in a wheel-less Fiat*



*Branding UFS Faculty of Education Open Day 2012*



*Hopping on-and-off in London 2012*



*Pillioning at the 2012 Rhino Rally*



*Scrambling with daughter Emmy*



*BritRailing in Liverpool*



*Appreciating art-on invitation-at the 7<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art in Brisbane*



*Undergrounding at Piccadilly Circus*



*Red-slippering the Road to OZ*



*Studying psychology in a shop*

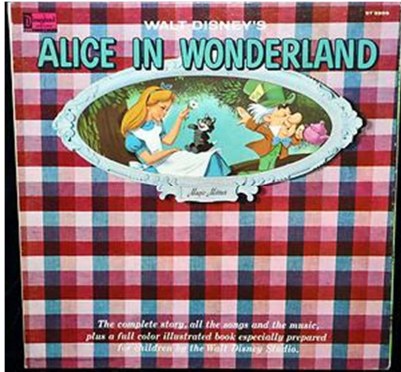
<sup>8</sup> *Cycling the streets of Singapore and Australia.*

<sup>9</sup> *Self-awareness: Its Nature and Development by Michiel Ferrari and Robert J Sternberg*

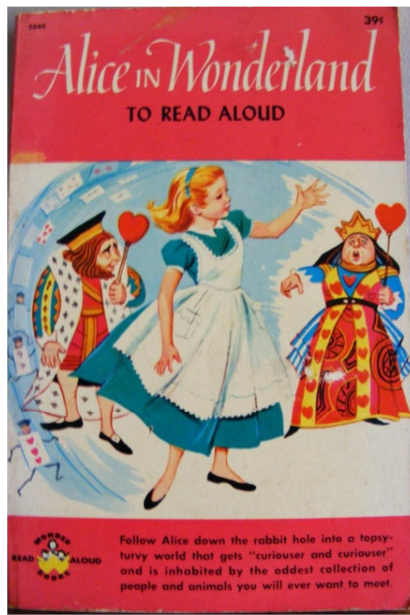


ADENDUM: MODES OF TRAVEL (continued)<sup>10</sup>

Since my childhood years I travelled with my soulmate, Alice. Through visuals, words and imagination we stay connected for five decades.



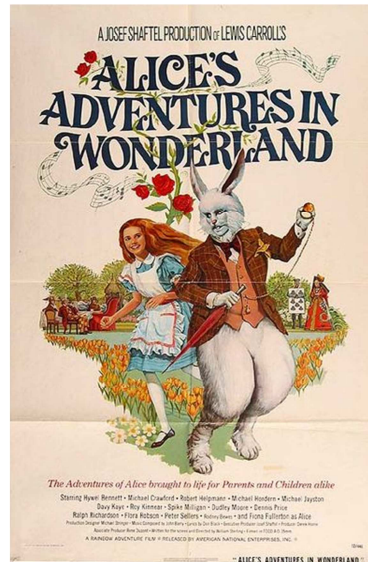
Walt Disney released an Alice in Wonderland record in my birthyear, 1962.



In 1963 I was 1 year old and a read-out-load Alice book was published. The front page invited: "Follow Alice down the Rabbit hole into a topsy turvey world that gets curiouser and curiouser." And so I did!



1968: with the view-master's "3-D sight 'n sound" Alice became alive.

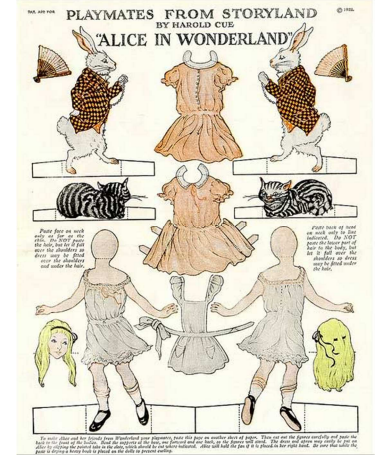


When I was 10 years old, the 1972 British musical Alice's Adventures in Wonderland won BAFTA awards for costume designs and cinematography.

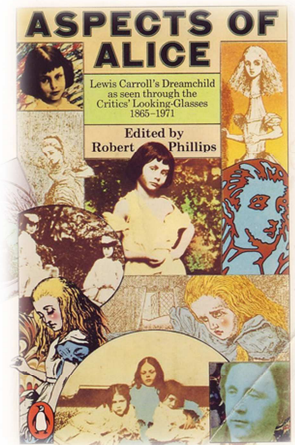


The DVD cover of Tim Burton's 2010 Alice in Wonderland.

Alice as a paper doll in 1921



I received Aspects of Alice from a dearly appreciated academic who facilitated an article writing workshop I attended during my quest for academic writing capacity development.



Alice was seen in two silent films (1903 & 1915).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> A school picture taken during my first school year in 1968.

<sup>11</sup> The American Motion Picture Corporation's version is available on YouTube as Alice in Wonderland - 1915 Silent film.