

**A Meditation on Caritas and Teaching the Dramatic Arts:
A Re(act)ion to Teacher Wellness**

By

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Abstract

Teaching is a high stress occupation that requires much from the personal and professional resources of a teacher. Strategies for coping with workplace stress challenge educators to shift away from habitual and entrenched ways of being, while opening a space for re-designing how the job of teaching may be approached. Current research in teacher stress suggests that both teachers and the educational system could benefit from taking ownership of the sources of workplace stress. Performative autoethnography is a form of critical self-reflection research. Combining arts-based research with autoethnography challenged me, as an educator, to explore varied and creative research methods. Through theatre arts-based research, I staged the need to live, write, and research personal and embodied experiences of teacher wellness. The re-telling of these life experiences, at the intersecting sites in my life story, then became an interruption that expands understanding. Theatre, as political action, can interrupt our habits of engagement and inspire change. A Catholic teacher's creed of caritas breaks open a space for my arts-based performative autoethnographic study, to address emerging interconnections, within an educational culture of possibility. Caritas, in education, is offered as a disruption to current discourse on teacher wellness and joins a growing chorus encouraging transformation in the ways students learn and the redesigning of a healthy and sustainable workplace for professional teachers who facilitate that learning.

Preface

This dissertation is an original work by Cynthia Cecilia Stratulat. No part of this dissertation has been previously published.

Dedication

Thank you, all the high school drama students I have taught over my career, for taking the risk,
to share with me, the wonder of creating in the theatre.

You are my motivation to approach every new day in caritas.

Thank you, Michael Panić, for motivating me to fulfill my dreams.

You are my blessing.

Thank you, Pearl and Stefan Stratulat, my parents, and Sandra Stratulat, and Alexandra Badzak,
my sisters, for infusing me with hope, faith, and love.

You are my family; all that I accomplish is a part of you also.

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You are my confidantes; I appreciate every moment of your time, given to me, on this passage to
teacher wellness.

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Sometimes a provocative conversation, graced with kindness, can encourage an epiphany and begin a whole new line of academic investigation; such was my fortune to experience in the company of Dr. Jim Parsons. Thank you for the reassurance that, no matter how difficult, I must honour my authentic self.

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Before Words: Inside an Exhale**Prologue**

SETTING: a theatre stage empty except for a small black stage box up centre right.¹

AT RISE the ARTISTEACHER, my professional persona and where I locate my work at the intersection of being a pedagogue and an artist, enters and stands centre in a spotlight. She is entangled with photographs, pages of scripts, e-mails, and marking sheets, which have been taped together to form a chain. She unwraps herself out of the knots and tangles of the artifacts of her career.)

ARTISTEACHER: Unraveling, peeling away, discarding...freeing one's self to dwell in ambiguity.

(Lights x fade from spotlight to a leaf-designed gobo. ARTISTEACHER moves into the light of the gobo enjoying the leaves on the stage she sits on the black box as if it were a bench under a tree.)

How many years have I yearned to sit in the fall and let the sun pull me from myself? For years, decades, I have journeyed through the unexpected landscapes of breath and presence spinning suddenly recognizing myself in a creative process that transformed the personal to the very essence of understanding through theatrical play. I surrounded myself with dreamers and we danced in playgrounds of joy. *(Beat)* Straining toward what ought to be. *(Beat)* And yet the spent leaves of every autumn rustled a lament: stay close to yourself. Change the way the past lives in you. I didn't listen. I muzzled and squashed the seeping acedia. Colours dulled and vines of melancholy snared me from the clouds. How many years have I dwelt in the shadows of

¹A font change of Ariel 11-point will denote a theatrical offering and offset these writings from other elements of this dissertation, which will be printed in Georgia 11-point.

discontent? Of pretending all was great! How long has that painted smile twisted my pain into false happiness?

(ARTISTEACHER stands lights x fade to spotlight.)

Is not one moment too long? Straining toward what ought to be my work begins inside an exhale.

(Big breath in then...)

MAGGIE, SUPERHERO MAGPIE OF TEACHER WELLNESS (Voice Over or VO): ...What the hell! You didn't write me into this script?

ARTISTEACHER: Damn it! Maggie, you just wrecked my dramatic ending. You know I wanted to make the point that during an exhale we can find an opening, a possibility, in the stillness, as the diaphragm releases, space can be found to hold deep held pain as it untangles. That's the whole reason I have entitled these vignettes: *Inside an Exhale*.

MAGGIE (VO): untangling pain...that's all you talk about since you spent a year in sabbatical studying for your Education Doctorate and creating art in your art therapy classes. I'm bored. Show someone else your drawings of tangled knots representing your disillusionment with your teaching vocation. Now, introduce me to your friends...

ARTISTEACHER: *(talking directly to audience)* Forgive me, I'll make this quick because, if I don't, she's going to squawk all night.

(ARTISTEACHER moves to box up stage and with her back to the audience places MAGGIE'S collar [a black, white and electric blue feather boa] around her neck metamorphosing, and turning to the audience, as MAGGIE, the superhero magpie, a trickster and the one who finds shiny bits of meaning, and the inhale to the ARTISTEACHER'S exhale)

MAGGIE: I don't squawk...I reveal shiny bits of meaning. I'm the yin to her yang...I'm the in/piration (*takes a giant inhale*) to all the work she is doing on the exhale (*giant exhale*). I told her to let me on the stage so I could meet her supervisor and committee members. Now, where is everyone?

(Finds supervisor and committee in audience)

Are you doing ok? I'll rein her in and this is the last time she is going to "dwell in shadows of discontent" if I have anything to do about it.

(Opens to the general audience)

The point is she lost her self after 28 years of teaching she couldn't hear her body and soul screaming that the time had come to peel back the layers of stress and break from her habituated routines. The answers may come from the past, those ribbons and chains, (*motions to the artifacts*) but they need a new direction, the challenge of new possibilities and the unpredictable.

ARTISTEACHER: (*slipping the feather collar off and holding it behind her back the actor morphs back into the ARTISTEACHER*) Thank you Maggie.

MAGGIE: (*the actor becomes MAGGIE again by placing the collar over her head again*) Say it...

ARTISTEACHER: (*the actor takes off the collar and emerges again as the ARTISTEACHER*)

Thank you Maggie, super hero magpie of teacher wellness—satisfied? Insights collide and new orbs of inquiry spiral out and then spin closer, as the research shifts from the subjective to the objective, and back again, returning altered and ready to insert discernment into the personal, cultural, and spiritual meaning of my research...What are you doing?

(The actor replaces the collar becoming MAGGIE and struggles to get comfortable in a meditational prayer pose)

MAGGIE: I thought I might pray for guidance. Your spirals of spinning research are stressing me out. I know you are using a first person reflective research method, as a form of artistic self-referential enquiry, revealing greater understanding of identity and the culture of wellness from stress and burnout for fine arts teachers, but you seem to be spinning out of control. Try taking a moment to breathe and pray with me.

ARTISTEACHER: *(starts to take off the collar and make an excuse but MAGGIE interrupts her grabbing the collar and firmly putting it on her neck).*

MAGGIE: Don't tell me you don't have time or you're too overworked. If you are going to call this dissertation: a meditation on caritas, then you need to engage in some deep praying on how caritas, in your life, relates to teacher wellness. Right! Right? My advice, would be to involve the whole person, bird, umm...clever theatre convention and find caritas in your body, mind, and spirit. Let caritas open a space for creative, harmonious, and conscientious best praxis in your work and life.

ARTISTEACHER: *(the actor slips the collar off and slumps as she sits on the black box)* Maggie, if the solutions to teacher wellness were so easy, that they could be solved by prayer alone, I wouldn't be struggling to change my story of teaching in the fine arts.

MAGGIE: *(the actor slips on the collar speaks to the box as if the ARTISTEACHER was still sitting there)* Do you really think there is no power in prayer or deep listening? Then, girlfriend, it's no wonder you're in trouble.

ARTISTEACHER: *(slipping the collar on and sitting on the box)* No, that's not what I said. I just feel overwhelmed and not sure where to start.

MAGGIE: *(taking the collar back one final time)* If you were asking me, I could give you a list of issues that you need to address, but as this is your self-study and I am merely the overseer...*(she just can't help herself)*. Ok just one bit of advice, which I would have thought was noticeable...to anyone...at first glance...ummmm...spoiler alert! I think you need to change your name, obviously artisTeacher, isn't working for you anymore. Just saying. Peace out!
(MAGGIE spins and exits upstage as lights fade).

Chapter 1: Passage to Wellness

I have journeyed through several passages during in my life. If my life could be compared to a passport, it would be full of entering and exist stamps, as I have journeyed through the joys and sorrows of living. I have travelled most of my life's journey as an educator. This dissertation represents one of my most interesting journeys in self-understanding. As a practicing Catholic Christian, I do not journey alone. I have fashioned my dissertation as a meditation on caritas, which represents a thoughtful intersection between the most basic tenet of my faith and one of the biggest challenges to my vocational life: workplace burnout and teacher wellness. My understanding, of the term meditation, is as a form of prayer in which we try to "understand God's revelation of the truths of faith" opening a space to adhere and respond to what is being asked of Catholic Christians (Chilson, 1987, p. 54). This dissertation is just such a space, open for emerging discussions, greater understandings, and, perhaps, a new orientation for a passage to wellness.

In the process of creating a piece of art, a painting, movie, or a theatrical performance there are elements, created along the way, that do not make it into the final product; the abandoned colour palette or the scenes, filmed, but left on the proverbial editing room floor. Playwrights can find themselves with a cast of dialogue fragments auditioning for a place in the main show. In my arts-based self-study, these incidental moments can "utilize multiple forms of information such as theoretical ideas, artistic representations, or emergent understandings to deepen, complicate and satirize unquestioned ways of knowing, living, and thinking" where is the first "?(Carter, 2012, p. 1). To introduce each chapter of this dissertation, Maggie, the superhero magpie of teacher wellness and the Artist-Teacher spar and navigate their way through this performative autoethnographic research on fine arts teacher wellness. The bird and the teacher are composite creations, devised from my personal memories of teaching and my

research encounters with current discourse on teacher wellness. They have been cast as the major players, in a series of scenes, entitled: *Before words: Inside an exhale*, created from dialogue fragments. For me, creating with theatrical conventions generates opportunities for a polyphonic or multi-voiced reaction to the theoretical material presented in each chapter.

Why a magpie? Living in Western Canada, the magpie is an ubiquitous and mischievous part of my everyday life. I notice birds, I always have, and the temptation to personify a magpie was irresistible. Their natural curiosity, boisterous nature, and insistence to be involved in everything that is happening in the neighbourhood seemed a good set of characteristics for a superhero, especially one who is willing to cut through any solipsism of my autoethnographic performance, and keep me honest. As a theatrical performer, I engage with the world more readily through a theatrical platform; interlacing research with the performative opens a place for my story to intersect with the cultural issues of teacher wellness.

In chapter one of this dissertation, under the theatrical heading of *dramatis personae* or the persons of the drama, I will introduce my personal descent into *acedia*, which I am engaging as a metaphor for workplace disillusionment, a symptom of burn out, and how I journeyed from understanding teaching as a vocation to struggling with the difficulties of maintaining a work/life balance. I will introduce the professional significance of my self-study by first defining my conceptual framework for understanding *caritas*, as a Catholic educator, in response to teacher wellness amidst high school redesign in Alberta². A discussion of my understanding of teacher identity and its role in teacher wellness will follow, and I will conclude by isolating some global issues that influence teacher wellness.

² Moving Forward with High School Redesign is a province-wide initiative focused on three outcomes: engaged students, high levels of achievement, and quality teaching. This high school redesign initiative is student-centred and responsive. The initiative was initially created by the Alberta Conservative Government in 2012 and endorsed by the New Democratic Party, which, came into power in Alberta in 2015.

In the section entitled: *mise en scène* or the design elements, I will articulate art as process and product in my self-study. I use transpersonal art therapy techniques to ignite my research and imaginative process. Art therapy techniques offer not only concrete activities that glimpse into the illusive process of creating an original theatrical production, but also language that comes close to expressing what at times can be inexpressible in words; namely how ideas are generated and art created. Art is also presented in this self-study, through creating a solo theatrical production, as a reaction to fine arts teacher wellness through the arts-based research method of performative autoethnography.

This introductory chapter opens a space to dwell with the teacher wellness issues, ideas, and challenges that will be investigated in greater detail in the literature investigations in Chapter Two and in a detailed explanation of my research methodology and methods in Chapter Three. My theatrical performance, set in the mind of a fine arts teacher in prayerful meditation a few minutes before classes begin, is based on personal epiphanies informed by societal issues of wellness in the teaching profession is presented in Chapter Four. Finally, Chapter Five offers *caritas* as a way into current discourse on teacher wellness. I will also share my personal creed of teaching created to move beyond being a victim of workplace burnout and actively redesign my own personal teaching experience one class at a time.

1.1 Dramatis Personæ: A Descent into Acedia

In seeking hope over despair, I utilize the metaphor of working inside an exhale, finding a moment of stillness before the next breath to reflect, heal, and change I accept artist, educator, and researcher M. C. Richards' (1962) challenge to study deeply, "to press in, extend upward, widen, contract, to develop a feel for the centered position, and then to work out of a variety of impulses" (p. 129). Mirroring Richard's process of reflecting on and noticing the heart of the issue and then expanding and honouring embryonic insights, I intend my research to engage

with life, my life, at its most profound and its most ubiquitous, teasing out sacred values to guide me in changing how my story as a fine arts teacher continues. My hand opens and tips downward dropping the burden of my disillusionment with my vocation. I am evolving within a process of unfolding, giving rise to an emerging flow of new discoveries; what was hidden revealed and what was obscure becoming accessible and clear (Welwood, 2014).

Thomas Falkenberg's (2016) research on the inner life of teachers encourages reflection on those teaching actions that need attention in order to bring my teaching practice in line with my "ethical commitment to teaching" (p. 7). What is it about teaching that has been lost in the fog of workplace burnout? Can I still use vocation to describe what has become a job I hurry home from every afternoon? I need my career to shatter and break open into a million shiny pieces of meaningful epiphanies so I may find my way back to my lost passion for a profession that nurtured me for decades, that I am now, in danger of abandoning just years before full retirement. I am lost, disenchanted, burnt out, disillusioned, displaced, and disgusted with teaching in the fine arts. If enthusiasm, motivation, and commitment define passion and vocations are sustained with passion (Day & Gu, 2010) this is a story of passion lost.

I believe in spiritual awareness as a vital dimension of human life (Norris, 2008). As a Catholic educator I thought I was committed to a lifelong search for meaning and clarity, yearning for the mystery of God to be communicated to me (Riechers, 2002). I thought I was paying attention to how my life was unfolding. How did this descent into acedia, into heedlessness, into care(less)ness happen? Acedia is one of the deadly sins of Catholicism in the medieval times; losing out to sloth, by decree from Pope Gregory the Great in the sixth century, during reformations to Catholic Church doctrine.

Acedia, indeed all the deadly sins (sloth, lust, gluttony, greed, pride, wrath, envy), were never intended as a guide against harmful actions but rather to provide a framework with which

to develop self-awareness, to come to the root of harmful actions challenging the faithful to greater personal honesty about their innermost thoughts (Norris, 2008). It is this self-reflection element of acedia that I turned to when, in a moment of clarity; I connected to Shakespeare's sonnet 29 "with what I most enjoy contented least" (p. 82). I believe in God as love and understand the monastic response to acedia, as a daily reflection, on the workings of my innermost soul. I trust that the solutions to life's challenges and temptations flow from self-knowledge imbued with God's love. But somehow, sometime during the past 28 years, I forgot that it is a failing to lose hope or to live in joylessness. I was working too much, without balance; head down I was not looking over the horizon to see each special moment as a gift. bell hooks (2003), an American feminist theorist and education critic, describes her spiral into workplace burnout as entering a prison, a closed-down space. I can relate to these images, because I became spiritually care/less after 28 years of teaching high school drama in urban Western Canada and directing 55 high school theatre productions in addition to my teaching duties.

Collapse occurs when the props that have supported life give way unexpectedly and the world seems to lack weight and substance (Welwood, 2014). I started teaching in 1988. Ten years in I was beginning to hone my craft as a teacher and a director. My husband died in 1998. Childless and a widow I threw all my energies into my job. Between 1999 and 2012 I wrote, directed, and produced several plays a year for main stage productions and school liturgies—all this while teaching a 100 students a day. When added up, the extracurricular hours I have donated to my high school community are the equivalent of nine teaching years.

Have I simply over-committed to my teaching responsibilities, over-investing in my career at the expense of a work/life balance? Is my experience a case of late-career burnout? Or is there something much more systematic and insidious entwined in the teaching profession that is preventing me from finding the harmony I sought to live and work as an artist and a teacher? Or am I just a bad teacher? hooks (1994) is in favour of teachers breaking the good/bad binary

and suggests it is more useful to think of being a progressive teacher willing to own one's successes and failures.

Re-engaging requires a quality of presence or attending to one's life (Macy, 2007; Welwood, 1992). The need to return to engagement spotlights the truth that we hide from ourselves. What truths have I hidden from myself about my vocation? Before insight can occur an unblocking needs to take place, a moment where can I turn inward, stop, and with all the kindness and love I can muster, take a breath just long enough to notice that "things are not what they ought to be" (Greene, 1995, p. 71). What broke me wide open was my realization that I lost the heart to teach. How did that happen? I have given so much of myself to the profession, been so responsible; I thought I was doing everything right—straight on track for a fulfilling career. I hoped to discover what happened and how I could get back on that track. Or, perhaps forge a new path. Self-care and self-reflection should rupture open a space for self-understanding. Parker Palmer (2007) understands self-knowledge as the "hidden secret" to good teaching praxis (p. 3). Franciscan friar Richard Rohr (2004) offers self-study as seeking the "radical way inward and the radical way outward" (p. 101).

There is a growing interest and concern in education about how to retain teachers at the end of their career. Christopher Day and Qing Gu (2010) identify the professional life phase, or where a teacher is in her career, as the primary issue that must be attended to in order to keep teachers engaged in working at their best for the benefit of their students. As a teacher in the final phase of my professional life progression, statistically, Day and Gu propose, I can expect to be struggling with commitment and my sense of professional identity. I do not find this heartening, but I do take comfort in being part of the norm. What keeps me awake at night is the question: how do I move out of this rut and find fulfillment and engagement again? How do I avoid the label of tired and trapped, and holding out until retirement?

The image I created in *Inside an Exhale: Prologue*, of being bound by the chains of overwork, of over-giving, and all my creative work being thrown to the floor, is a source of deep personal pain. I feel I must strip away constructs of my past professional identity, to create a sustainable and new sense of self-efficacy and agency, if I am to teach for thirty years to attain full retirement. I believe there is an unavoidable interrelationship between the personal, situated, and policy related circumstances within the teaching profession that form and shape a teacher's professional self-image. It is this composite of socio-cultural dynamics, work-place policies, the personal dimension and, in my case, an artistic way of being that contributes to a healthy teacher identity. For my research, I proposed an intimate and detailed look at what I, as an Catholic educator teaching full time in the performing arts, require to renew myself from the effects of crippling workplace burnout and acedia. It is my hope that I will find re-enchantment with my profession, seek an identity that includes a balance between work, life, and creative endeavours, and re-engage with my faith through teaching with caritas and honouring the Divine within myself and all who I encounter.

1.2 Professional Significance

Caritas as a response to teacher wellness. I have been a part of Catholic education since I attended kindergarten in Regina, Saskatchewan, in the 1970s. A moment in my life in Catholic schools, which still resonates, was an October day when I was in grade 11, sitting in a math class. Sister Mary Martin started the class with a lecture on caritas, which she defined as love in action. Perhaps an odd choice for a math lesson, but her point was to encourage us to strive, not only for academic excellence, but also for an excellent life, which she defined as filled with acts of service to others. Sister Martin confided in us that we could study the doctrine of our faith our whole lives and, in the end, we would arrive at her simple mantra, the basic meaning of our lives as Catholics: love defined as service. My understanding of this tenant of my faith resides in St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 13:

⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. (New International Version,

1 Cor. 13:4-7)

These four verses from Paul have been my guiding principles for how I attempt to live my life and how I try to be as a teacher in my classroom.

The greatest commandment is “not thou shalt be right; the greatest commandment is to love” (Rohr, 2003, p. 89). My understanding of caritas was renewed during my Masters of Education program where I had the pleasure of studying under Dr. Leah Fowler (2006), an educational narrative researcher at the University of Lethbridge. In her research, Fowler calls into question naïve and cheerful understandings of the teaching profession as problematic and suggests instead that interpretive narrative research of difficulty may lead to a more authentic understanding of what it means to be a teacher.

Fowler advocates educaritas, appropriate love in teaching, as a fifth addition to the ancient Greek lexicon of classic love as a “new way of being generative amid difficulty” (2006, p. 18). As she describes, “especially in education and practices of teaching in this new century of sophisticated violence, thoughtful malice, and too many citizens without heart, spirit, and basic life resources, caritas may be essential” (Fowler, 2006, p. 19). This is education as awareness in the present moment witnessing new knowledge and being; the quiet stewardship of nurturing life connected to the truth of one’s own worth (Fowler, 2006). Fowler understands educaritas as slow schooling and a form of relational education based on the “complicated conversations Pinar describes of a re-conceptualized understanding of curriculum” with love as its center (p. 18). Pinar’s (2004) invitation in curriculum and pedagogy for reconstruction urges “an

increasingly sophisticated and auditory field of education, one worthy of those schoolteachers and students who, each day, nearly everywhere on the globe, labour to understand themselves and the world they inhabit” (p. 258). Fowler also locates her understanding of educaritas within child-centered education as the “quiet enduring witnessing gaze of a mentoring that fosters individuation in community...a healthy steady growth in new knowledge, and being as a living caritas” (2006, p. 19).

I am in no way suggesting that Dr. Fowler and I share the same faith, or spiritual background, or that her research is grounded in Catholic education as mine is, but I did experience an honouring of time, of conversation, and of individuality in her classroom which was noticeably different than other experiences. My story, from my high school math class, requires a deeper investigation because it holds the seeds of the conceptual framework of this dissertation and my reliance on caritas as a renewing agent for teacher workplace burnout and as a way of moving forward on issues of high school redesign. My self-study adds to Fowler’s (2006) caritas in education, through placing the concept of caritas, within my experience and the context of being a Catholic educator.

What is caritas? As the benevolent and positive Catholic attitude toward life, caritas, in its most simplified form, is defined as love (Groome, 1998). Historically, caritas, when translated from Latin, originally came to be known, in English, as charity (Chilson, 1987). In the early 19th century it became more common, in Catholic catechistic texts, for charity to be replaced by the word love as one of the three theological virtues, created as a practical response to avoid sin (Chilson, 1987), joining faith and hope, as articulated in St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians: “And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.” (New International Version, 1 Cor. 13:13). Charity, in modern Catholic theology, now means almsgiving and is a spiritual discipline to aid our understanding of the “place of money in

our lives” much like fasting raises consciousness around food and vigil around sleep (Chilson, 1987, p. 130).

Love, as defined as a Catholic Christian disposition, “embraces one’s humanness as [a] gift, to celebrate it as essentially good, to relish its joys, to be tolerant of its imperfections and merciful when it sins” (Groome, 1998, p. 75). Thomas Groome (1998), a scholar of the theoretical underpinnings of Catholic education, in his definition of love, focuses on the essential goodness of the human condition and that our likeness to the Divine is never lost to us. A Catholic definition of love tips the scales in favour of original Grace, as understood in chapter one of the Book of Genesis, where the creations of humans is seen as a very good thing, rather than the Protestant theological focus on original sin, based on chapter three, and the actions of Adam and Eve in response to the tricks of the serpent (Groome, 1998). Groome (1998) gives the example of the God becoming human in Jesus as an affirmation of humanity accepting our “sinful proclivity” but knowing, there is always salvation in God, who is love (p. 77).

Fowler (2006) derives her understanding of *educaritas* from the ancient Greek definition of *agape* or which, is defined by Catholic doctrine, as the “Christian form of love, implying total dedication and devotion to the welfare of the other” (Chilson, 1987, p. 294). This is the virtue of love and the fullness of love as manifested in Jesus (Chilson, 1987). Love is not passive but rather sacrificial, it gives without thought to receiving, because we know that being in a relationship with God will sustain us (Chilson, 1987). Love is compassionate to those who are unloved and neglected, “this love is the only true power in the universe; having created the world, it now sustains it in being” (Chilson, 1987, p. 294). I propose to continue using the original term *caritas* rather than love, in this dissertation, with the hope, that by being less ubiquitous, *caritas*, when read, will bring to mind the sentiments behind these rich definitions and include a fuller understanding of the Catholic faith condition.

Caritas, according to Groome (1998), can be understood as a term that not only holds the two-fold definition of love as God's love for us which dwells within us and our commitment of love for each other, but also other foundational aspects of Catholic beliefs "that...suggest the contours of the 'dwelling' that a Catholic Christian anthropology" understands as the original home of being human (p. 74). Caritas, in the Catholic context, is a complicated concept that includes the body-soul union, our partnership with God and the community, the responsibilities of living with others, the value and purpose of life, and our eternal destiny. I believe it is important to briefly discuss these aspects, as best as I can, from my perspective as a Catholic educator and not as a theologian, as the educational system I work for is founded upon these aspects of the human condition. I have spent 28 years grappling with the responsibility of teaching and engaging in Catholic education as my pedagogical practice. I will contextualize how these aspects relate to Catholic education and teacher workplace wellness.

Foundational aspects of Catholic belief and Catholic education. Groome (1998) refers to the following aspects of the Catholic faith as "angles of visions" and notes a difficulty in trying to isolate each concept as they overlap, interconnect, and echo each other, and only in culmination do they give life to the overall sense of what is Catholic belief (p. 75). James Mulligan (2006), a Canadian Catholic education researcher, defines Catholic education as the "common vision and core set of beliefs rooted in the gospel, [with] teachers integrating the faith dimension into every subject area, [and] a welcoming Christian community with staff and students living a personal relationship with Jesus Christ" (p. 134).

The case for Catholic education is in the argument that there is no such thing as a neutral teacher, hence no such thing as a neutral school system (Mulligan, 2006). Philosophically committed teachers have to "co-operate with parents and the Church to transmit our values and disseminate our Roman Catholic heritage" (DiGiovanni, 1992, p. 29). Catholic teachers are challenged to live the values of the gospel by teaching as Christ taught both, in deed and in love.

Catholic educational theory is “irrevocable rooted in the message of Christian love, both as a model of pedagogical witnessing and as a method of pedagogical approach” (DiGiovanni, 1992, p. 28). Foundational aspects of Catholic belief act as the groundwork of Catholic education.

There is a long Catholic tradition of affirming that the body and soul are not separate entities (see Genesis 2). The corporeality of the human condition is witnessed in our coming from the earth and brought to life through the breath of God. The resurrection represents that death is only a temporary suspension of their union and that a person’s soul retains its individuality and “each unique person will be reunited as risen body and soul—one entire person in eternity” (Groome, 1998, p. 79). The primary biblical metaphor for the relationship between God and humankind is that of a covenant or partnership. Groome (1998) explains that all covenants place “responsibility on both parties; though God is clearly the primary agent” (p. 79). This promised relationship speaks to the paradox between God’s grace or help and human responsibility; we are free to act, but that freedom is supported by God’s love. This [what?] is especially important in parental and educational contexts as children are empowered to act responsibly, with freedom, confident that they are supported and loved.

Our essential personhood is social and the “communality of the person” defines the human experience, for without others we would be less than whole (Groome, 1998, p. 80). We are responsible for others as our selves, despite having our own independent agency and autonomy. Catholic belief resists individualism, as championed by modern capitalism, and believes instead that, as individual persons, we are “always partners in society, and the personal and common good are simply aspects of the same reality—our human condition” (Groome, 1998, p. 81). Most Catholic school district mission statements identify the communal aspect of our faith and its importance for welcoming children into a caring and loving society (Mulligan, 2006). Groome (1998) explains that our very personhood renders us responsible and “no other aspect of God’s creation is held so accountable for its actions...we are responsible to live with

integrity to our own best selves, to care for the neighbour, and for the common good of all” (p. 82). This, of course, includes our planet and all living things. The theme of the personal and the community continues to resonate, in regard to responsibilities, in that no one can replace what I am called to care for in my life and I can do nothing, but in community, with God and others. Our goal as Catholic educators and parents is to be committed to the development of children as compassionate beings, who oppose all “forms of social oppression and discrimination” (Groome, 1998, p. 193).

Becoming human is a life-long journey that unfolds “with the help of God’s grace, partnership with others, and our own best efforts” (Groome, 1998, p. 83). We use reason, memory, and imagination to attend to the world and judgments and decisions become understanding and meaning. Self-reflection allows us to make sense of our place in the world and our own existence. This aspect of the Catholic perspective on the human condition is a resounding affirmation of simply being alive: proclaiming that no life is meaningless or useless. Groome (1998) uses the term agent-subject to describe our autonomy to choose, decide, and make a difference. When personal agency is combined with “working with each other and empowered by God’s grace, our human efforts, creativity, and ingenuity can be significant for the well-being of self, others, and creation” (Groome, 1998, p. 85). Students can be encouraged to action through activating their own metacognition and advocating for their personal diverse needs and unique way of learning. Our personhood is never finished, for we will never exhaust our capacities for personal growth, learning, discovery, and creativity (Groome, 1998). As an educator, this conviction translates into an attitude that appreciates students as “agents of knowledge rather than simply recipients and as creators of new expressions and possibilities for themselves and others” (Groome, 1998, p. 97).

St. John’s gospel, the last of the four gospels that can be found in the New Testament, can be summarized by three words: “God is love” (New International Version, 1 John 4:16).

Groome (1998) suggests, that from the creation stories of the Book of Genesis, to this final affirmation of St. John, the unfolding story of God's love for us is played out. God made us out of love (Groome, 1998). Having being born from love our greatest calling is to love; this is the Catholic model for humanity. We are called to "no easy romanticism but to the 'tough' love that requires a relationship with God, self, others, and creation—that demands the works of justice and peace" (Groome, 1998, p. 86). This is a call to a radical love for God, with all one's mind, heart, strength, and soul and to love one's neighbour as oneself.

The love expressed by teachers must, at times, be a tough love that challenges and makes demands, sets boundaries, and lays down a just discipline as necessary. But the toughness should be suffused with largess; this is love as the "ultimate expression of holiness of life; yet, to think of education as requiring less is to diminish it" (Groome, 1998, p. 99). This is what it is to be understood as a people of the gospel, as Mulligan (2006) identifies, as a defining aspect of Catholic education. Catholic Christianity shares the conviction that our lives have an eternal destiny to return to the Divine source from whence we came. There is continuity between how we have lived and how we may dwell in eternity. As Groome (1998) concludes, "we will be judged and held responsible for our lives—anything less would not honour who we are" (p. 86).

Caritas is not an easy creed to follow, but teaching is not a simple job and it requires a set of robust guiding principles. Caritas engages us in action and thought, demanding relationships not isolation, builds on optimism not defeatism, and requires political action in the name of justice (Groome, 1998). Increasingly, creating a pedagogical space for students to learn, in their own unique manner, is becoming more difficult and, at times, almost impossible in today's classroom. Caritas, for me as a classroom teacher, is a multi-faceted guide for engaging with the stress-causing pressures of my schooling experience. Caritas is a way to approach my personal struggle, with workplace stress and burnout, and caritas is a platform to address larger, policy-related issues to high school redesign, that impact teacher wellness and workplace conditions as

presented in this dissertation. I agree with Parkins and Craig (2006), as cited in Berg and Seeber (2016), that we are advocating for “a process whereby everyday life—in all its pace and complexity, *fission* and routine—is approached with care and attention...an attempt to live in the present in a meaningful, sustainable, thoughtful *and pleasurable way*” (p. 11). To conclude, Groome (1998) suggests that, “at its best and fullest, education is a relational encounter—intended to influence who each other becomes; it reaches into the very souls of people to affect their ‘being’ (p. 98).

Teacher identity. This discussion attempts to explain the split between the Artist and the Teacher at the beginning of the autoethnographic performance as presented in Chapter Four, a split that did not exist in the written script until that scene was physically rehearsed. In the middle of rehearsal I was climbing the metaphoric mountain to redemption, I stopped, and suddenly in a moment of clarity, I became aware of a deep need for a long overdue split between my artist and teaching self. I blushed with shame as I realized that, in my occupation as a teacher, I had used myself as artist in much the same way as I perceive others doing; subjecting all that is different, unique, and impulsive in the artist just to feed an immature desire to be different than other teachers. Indeed, as I discovered during my autoethnographic study through the practice of vulnerability, critical self-reflection is possible. The practitioner experiences agency that leads to an accountability for the conditions of one’s own emergence while gaining appreciation of self (Spry, 2011) and, in my case, a deep suspicion of all of my past perceptions of my teacher identity. These insights were visceral and emotion laden and happened in a moment; it took several weeks to be able to articulate, in words, what happened that afternoon in rehearsal.

By way of background, I created the conjunction artisTeacher to describe my teaching practice for my 2011 Master of Education research into drama teachers creating original theatre through performative inquiry with students. The capital T represented the centre axis, my

teaching identity, and the expansion of the teacher as pedagogue and artist. This interconnection was with both words relying on the capital T to complete their meaning. As an artisTeacher, I twisted, held, and breathed in the profound responsibility of a teacher while honouring the artist within. For me, artisTeacher set a tone for teaching that addressed the artist within my students and the need for thoughtful and tacit pedagogy that acknowledged that education is concerned with issues of the heart as well as the head.

I have been blessed to dwell, inspired, in the inhale of creativity. For many years, all I focused on was the next production to write and direct. But I worked without balance, constantly gasping for the next inspiration without taking the time to release what no longer served or to reflect on the next step. To be inside an exhale is a powerful symbol for me. After the last bit of breath is exhaled, there is a pause before the next intake, and in this moment, I believe, there is an opportunity to plant the seeds of openness and readiness to seek renewal. In describing this type of work, John Welwood, (1992) notes that, “only when we slow down and really see and feel our distress can it have an impact on us...our pain can begin to awaken our desire and will to live in a new way” (p. 167).

When I acknowledged that I had been masking workplace stress and was in danger of burnout, I came to a different understanding of the term artisTeacher. During my sabbatical (fall 2013-spring 2014), when I had the time to pause and reflect, I came to realize that artisTeacher is not a compound identity but, perhaps, it is an enmeshed construct suffocating both the artist and teacher, and leaving little room for anything else like friend, researcher, daughter, sister, or traveller. Maybe my identifying as an artisTeacher was part of the reason I found myself experiencing burnout instead of being eager and passionate for a job I loved. Finding breathing room was new to me. Slowing down and allowing myself to notice what is honouring my work as a teacher and what is destroying my artistic soul is not how I had understood my career up to that point.

Patti Pente (2004) advanced my understanding of artisTeacher into Artist-Teacher as “a negotiation of my personal and public lives as they form into unanticipated results, shaping my students and myself” (p. 91). This is a reminder that the personal cannot be levered out of the profession of teaching but that the connection between the two is mediated, allowing both identities of an Artist-Teacher, the private and the professional to flourish. Carl Leggo (2008) positions his teaching, writing, and researching as “merging from the intersections of the personal and professional” (p. 90). For Leggo, the work of the artist and teacher is connected, and the researcher does not stand outside the experience, watching an objective reality but seeking “to enter lived experiences with an imaginative openness to the people and activities and dynamics at work and play” (p. 90). George Szekely (1978) encourages the combining of the artist and teacher suggesting, “the creative individual who is able to combine their artist self with the concerns of teaching has a great deal to offer” (p. 17). Artist-Teachers make pedagogical decisions that impact students informed, simultaneously, by artistic concerns and educational tact. Tactful and thoughtful pedagogy drives artistic sensibilities and artistic sensibilities push pedagogy into creative ways of being. From her personal perspective, Laurie Ball (1990) warns that, “as I ponder the daily confusion that sometimes threatens to engulf me...it is hard work—and it can all change from moment to moment: do I want to teach or make art” (p. 58).

This was a provocative question for me, coping with workplace disillusionment, and one that initiated my research. Can the equilibrium created with the dash rather than the shared T be maintained when workplace demands on teachers and the issues of stress and burnout threaten to engulf the artist? Is there a place for the Artist-Teacher in our school system or must they leave the institution and abandon a career in teaching to maintain their creative integrity (Carter, 2012)? Can changing my dependence on identifying as an artisTeacher to an Artist-Teacher open and introduce enough space for a new understanding of myself as an educator in the fine arts? Can I find workplace wellness in this new identify?

Up to the moment that the Artist-Teacher performed the line: *Why did I live and work like this?* (p. 151 of this dissertation) I thought that I had opened enough space for healing from workplace burnout. In the moment of rehearsing that line, I understood how much more space was needed. I agree with Pente (2004) that there is an unavoidable interrelationship between the personal, situated, and policy related circumstances within the teaching profession that form and shape a teacher's professional self-image. It is this composite of socio-cultural dynamics, work-place policies, the personal dimension and, in the case of fine arts teachers, an artistic way of being that contributes to either a healthy teacher identity, an unhealthy one or something within this continuum. Subjectivity is the complex and life-long process of self-discovery; the intersection of the diverse forces that make up a life and the integrity in relating to those forces in ways that bring wholeness and life rather than fragmentation (Palmer, 2007).

As Leggo (2008) imagines, there is an intersecting place where work, life and artistry all converge in wholeness. A fine arts teacher holds positions between two systems, teacher and artist, working in the boundaries of both; a place much more susceptible to role stress and workplace burnout (Scheib, 2006). As never before in my career, I find myself pulled into role conflict issues. The pressures and expectations of my teaching career are increasing and moving more and more away from a mindset where art can survive, let alone thrive. Because teachers are expected to redeem society's problems our role becomes more ambiguous, the difficult enough work of facilitating learning is given less priority and teachers find the quantity and wide variety of different roles expectations overwhelming to the point that no one role can be performed satisfactorily (Scheib, 2006). In my experience, the skills of the trained artist are underutilized. There is a perennial lack of funding to actually create art, and the real and rarely addressed issue of agency where artistic concerns are never included in decisions. Time and again I have been asked for an artistic product, such as a theatrical reflection for a Remembrance Day celebration, with no consideration of the time and extra effort needed to

write, rehearse, and create the technical elements needed for such a production. Fine arts teachers are pressured to somehow magically produce professional results with students who are emerging as artists. This results in a space that no longer holds the artist in conjunction with the teacher. I admit that I too, step into my classroom, as Ball (1990) did, and ask myself: do I want to teach or make art? Trying to do both, after 28 years, has become the source of my unhealthy teacher identity and my struggle with workplace burnout.

The image I created of being bound by the chains of overwork, of over-giving, and all my creative work being thrown to the floor, is a source of deep personal pain. I feel I must strip away constructs of my past professional identity, to create a sustainable and new sense of self-efficacy and agency, if I am to teach for thirty years to attain full retirement. I am trying to address the myths of being a better teacher through over-work and over-investing, in my profession, to heal my teacher identity, but what can I do to prevent the artist becoming nothing more than an adjunct to the teacher?

Writing about these issues, through scripted dialogue, was a way for me to reflect and reframe my teaching and creative experiences. The one image that is so clear, for me, in the autoethnographic performance presented in Chapter Four, is how divided the artist and teacher are from each other no matter what label they are operating under or choose to call themselves. Every fiber of my being wants to, somehow, be whole, but how? Is it not better to break apart the two identities giving each the full attention needed to thrive? I echo the belief of Day and Gu (2010) that healthy and whole teachers can act as examples to our students. Fine arts students need mentors, to set examples of how to live an aesthetic life, which goes beyond the stereotype of the starving and suffering artist. So, am I retuning to Leggo's (2008) site of intersection? Or might I embrace Rohr's (2003) interconnection of who I am with what I do and remain open to the possibility of unity.

Teacher workplace wellness. My first step on this passage, toward fine art teacher wellness, took the form of one simple question: “What makes teaching a livable experience?” (Smith, 2006, p. 27). When I read those words *livable experience*, they took my breath away. Suddenly, I was weeping, my heart broken wide open; I finally stopped all pretense and acknowledged that my work, the work I loved, the work my talents and gifts are perfectly suited for, was making my life unlivable. Finally, I had been asked the question that broke everything wide open, exposing my current situation for what it was: unsustainable. I was Smith’s example of the teacher caught in the middle, recognizing my own “powerlessness within contemporary educational decision-making” and an artistTeacher seeking a way through to wellness (p. 16).

Lori Brown and Michael Roloff (2011) suggest the root of self-harming work relates to the constructs of over-investing, over-doing, and over-caring. Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA) commissioned a study in 2013, which agrees with Brown and Roloff’s (2011) list of over-doing and questions the “sustainability of the current reality” of teachers and their extra-curricular duties (p. 451). The adjunct programs, a teacher takes on extra to the regular duties, feed the soul of classroom work, but the practice of taking on extra (Duxbury & Higgins, 2013) is exhausting veteran teachers and disillusioning teachers new to the profession. I see this awareness as the outcome of Smith’s proposal that education today has finally come to place of profound rupture between “a new, deep social awareness of the human world’s interconnectedness” and the hardline of economic interpretations of life insisting on another rationality that relies on exactly the opposite (p. 16).

This other rationality is the commodification and commercialization of education where radical personal autonomy, accountability, and global competitiveness continue the “hegemony of Western economic, cultural, and political interests throughout the world” (Smith, 2006, p. 19). Governments plan educational policy with apparent little interest in the wisdom of front line educators and fail to honour “what teaching is in its own right...with scant concern for the

effects of new plans on the quality of life for either teachers or students” (Smith, 2006, p. 25). Henry Giroux (2015) understands education as under attack from “ruthless market fundamentalism that mistakes students for products and equates learning with the practice of conformity and disciplinary mindlessness” (p. 7). Day and Gu (2010) recognize that the necessary conditions for good teaching and successful learning is teacher individual and collective efficacy.

The words of Day and Gu (2010), Giroux (2015), and Smith (2006) rang true as they illuminated my personal narrative of the enmeshed issues of my personal and artistic objectives clashing with institutional expectations creating a toxic and unsustainable experience. My story as a fine arts teacher over-investing, over-doing, and over-caring goes beyond my classroom experiences and includes the immense extracurricular commitment of two major theatrical productions a year. It is a tale of too many 14-hour days with little help, no extra compensation (monetary or time in lieu) and a creeping imbalance between work, life, and art. The irony is I was hired for my artistic talents and those exact talents have been smothered. I create a space in my classroom for knowing and unknowing and “trusting the art, trusting the process, and knowing that art is spirit” (Snowber & Bickel, 2015, p. 76) without doing the same for my own personal artistic endeavours. Adding to my story, I was seduced by the myths of education (Britzman, 1986; Scheib, 2006) that perpetuate the teacher as individualistic, isolated, controlling, and a cog in a machine delivering compartmentalized curriculum and teaching decontextualized skills. The conflict between the teacher and artist sent me into a spin of workplace disillusionment and burn out.

Teacher wellness has never been addressed in any professional development workshop or staff meeting that I have attended in 28 years of teaching. Student wellness, as a reaction to student stress, is now addressed in curriculum and in individual progress plans, created by teachers, to help students find success in testing. Testing in a smaller room or having more time

to finish the test or assignment can accommodate students who are struggling with stress. There are, however, no accommodations for teachers who experience stress other than to leave the job on a medical leave. It is difficult to even speak about workplace teacher stress without feeling that teachers are whining or complaining. Maggie Berg and Barbara Seeber (2016), researching the culture of speed in the academy, address this discomfort about talking about teacher, or in the case of their study, professor stress, as if talking about stress might “appear as self-indulgent” (p. 3). Berg and Seeber (2016) find it ironic, when investigating wellness in education, that “teachers are left to shift for themselves; the cynic may wonder whether this situation is symptomatic of the corporate university’s emphasis on customer satisfaction” (p. 6). Defined by Alberta Education, for a curriculum developed to address stress in K-12 students:

Wellness is a measure of an individual’s physical, mental, and social health. It is the state of optimum health and well-being achieved through the active pursuit of good health and the removal of barriers, both personal and societal, to healthy living. Wellness is more than the absence of disease; it is the ability of people and communities to reach their best potential in the broadest sense (Alberta Education, 2008, p. 17)

I think this definition from Alberta Education is a place to start. I appreciate the goal of reaching our best potential and that wellness goes beyond the individual and includes a healthy community thereby acknowledging the interplay between self and environment; a recognition of the multi-dimensional nature of wellness. I am interested in wellness for teachers so I suggest that the culture of schooling is an important factor to be considered in any definition of teacher workplace wellness. Spiritual wellness is not included in this definition, which prompted me to investigate caritas.

Smith (2006) cautions that to enjoy a livable teaching experience will require “a disturbing profound personal and public relinquishment of those fictions through which they

[teachers] may be unwitting partners in the very logics that are killing them” (p. 31). One such fiction that needs to be addressed is the way that fine arts teachers are educated. Traditional professional development initiatives support a person’s understanding of being a teacher and usually offers little, if any, support of the artist once they have made the transition into the teaching profession (Carter, 2013; Scheib, 2006).

There is considerable personal distress when the artistic side of a fine arts teacher’s identity is not ratified by others (Scheib, 2006). This is role stress within a single professional identity; fulfilling the expectation of one role might be in contradiction to fulfilling the expectations of the other. I spent much of my career trying to convince my artist self that it was enough to be entwined with my teacher self. But much of my descent into acedia was a denial of how unsatisfied my artist self was with my conflicting and overwhelming fantasy that if I just kept working hard within the context of teaching and education all would be well. It was my artist self that was stressed to the point of breaking; suffering from occupying a boundary position within the system of my high school (Scheib, 2006). A boundary position is common for coaches and fine arts teachers as they find themselves between the worlds of athletics or the arts and the school system. By dishonoring the artist within, I sullied both the artistic creation and pedagogical joy. I now understand the need to give the artist a breathing space from the teacher perhaps as a conjunction rather than a connection: an artist-teacher with separate identities that support each other but do not suffocate. How I salvaged my identity as a fine arts educator is the subject of many epiphanies discovered during my inquiry into performative autoethnography. [I was just thinking that your writing style calls for the use of many pronouns that is distancing you from your topics – and lives – I think.

Stuart Richmond and Celeste Snowber (2009) would reframe my workplace acedia as a detour, affording me an opportunity to follow another way—however unwanted. I think of myself as having a flexible personality, someone good with change, but truthfully, I dwell in the

“preconception that the road will be smooth” (Richmond & Snowber, 2009, p. 123). Is life ever clear and straightforward? Often the direct way bypasses the unusual or the unique. Is it possible that this detour, into investigating my teacher identity and issues of teacher wellness, will lead me, in a circuitous way, to a state of balanced and authentic living? Is such a state even possible? Perhaps the best way to instigate change is to look at the problem of a chaotic and unworkable modern education system from a completely different point of view. Miya Tokumitsu (2014) advocates a more honest conversation about the value of work and an exposure of the myth of *working is not work if you do what you love*:

In masking the very exploitive mechanisms of labor that it fuels, do what you love is, in fact, the most perfect ideological tool of capitalism. It shunts aside the labour of others and disguises our own labour to ourselves. It hides the fact that if we acknowledged all our work as work, we could set appropriate limits for it, demanding fair compensation and humane schedules that allow for family and leisure time. (para.4)

Opening the conversation about the nature of work challenges the corporate model of competition and accountability, which is so pervasive in public education and in post-secondary academic institutions. Berg and Seeber (2016) offer, as an alternative, a global *slow* movement approach to education and academic research, dedicated to “asserting the importance of contemplation, connectedness, fruition, and complexity (p. 57). Berg and Seeber understand that taking the time needed to create, research, and learn is honouring the natural “rhythms, [of these activities] which include pauses and periods that may seem unproductive” but constitute a sustainable attitude toward education (p. 57).

1.3 Mise en Scène

Art as process. I understand the creative process that I engage in, during my daily work with drama students, as a shifting, illusive, and a bewildering combination of tried and

true techniques in combination with being open to creative inspiration. I believe artists must find their own way to and through the creative process. For years I have used transpersonal art therapy without realizing that my creative routines were definable. Having never had to speak about my creative process, I rely on the words of others to say what I know intuitively, but have difficulty putting into words.

Transpersonal art therapy. Art therapists and art researchers (Allen, 1995, 2005; McNiff, 1998, 2004; Rubin, 2010) believe that art making may reconcile the conflict between our intuitive knowing and the demands of society and contemporary living. McNiff (1998) envisions the basis of creation as spontaneous movement “keeping the channels for expression open and responsive to what is moving within us and within our environments” (p. 21). Creating art can offer insights, understandings, and interruptions through the personal experience of the art-making process and the societal reflecting ability of art (Allen, 1995, 2005; McNiff, 1992, 1998, 2004, 2013). Without realizing what I was activating, I have always engaged with a variety of techniques such as using music, dreams, journal entries, prayers and scripture passages, and theoretical concepts as inspiration to jump-start an art making session.

It was not until I attended St. Stephan’s College art therapy classes, during my sabbatical at the University of Alberta in 2013, that I found the words to describe the techniques that I have been using for decades to access “parts of the psyche that are not yet conscious” and express my creative and imaginative ideas (Dean, 2016, p. 1). My study in art therapy encouraged me to sit with my work, in the moment of creating, and glean any insights offered into the source material. A natural outcome of working in this manner is an “attending to healing,” first, as facilitated by the art therapist, and ultimately by the individual (Dean, 2016, p, 2). Without this aspect of working within the techniques of transpersonal art making, I am not sure I would have found the determination to begin my self-study on teacher wellness. I am not healed from workplace burnout as a result of transpersonal art therapy, but I am convinced that creating art in this

manner, creating through very painful and dark issues, whether they were used as idea generators or as ways into my inner life, is an aspect of healing. I have included a section, in chapter two, that investigates art therapy as a healing agent for stress reduction.

Arts-based research and art as product. Performative autoethnography is a form of critical self-reflection research (Chang, 2008; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011; Hughs, Pennington, & Markris, 2012). Combining arts-based research with autoethnography challenges me to think creatively about what constitutes research, to explore even more varied and creative methods, and to share “questions and findings in more penetrating and widely accessible ways” (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008, p. 3). This research project is dedicated to maintaining a balance between the requirements of the academy and my need to live, write, and research my personal embodied teaching and learning experience.

I rely on educational researchers who have also used the creative arts to “stretch researchers’ capacities for creating and knowing a healthy synthesis of approaches to collect, analyze, and represent data in ways that paint a full picture of heterogeneous movement to improve education” (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008, p. 4). Cultural data, rather than statistical, is quintessential to autoethnography because, as Heewon Chang, (2008) explains, analyzing bits of autobiographical data into a culturally meaningful and sensible text is the stringing together of cultural tenets to one’s personal relationship with others. Data for performative autoethnography is constructed as meaning in motion: inclusive, conflicting, and contradictory. Norman Denzin (2014) understands that autoethnographic research suggests the end to pure description; rather, there is a gap between reality, experience, and the performance.

This blurring of the genres between research and art, Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor and Richard Siegesmund insist, has three strong goals to support educational research: to incorporate tools from both the sciences and the arts to make new insightful sense of data

during and beyond the research project; to share an explicit recognition of the self, where the researcher is recognized as the primary instrument for documenting and interpreting knowledge which ultimately informs the researcher about him or herself; and to speak to diverse audiences using accessible vernacular and aesthetic language and image. Jane Piirto (2002) argues arts-based educational research must be valid and useful. Research that establishes excellence based on refined critical arts-based scholarship and criteria will continue to establish arts-based autoethnography as an acceptable method for fine arts education researchers (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Cahnmann-Taylor and Siegesmund insist that producing an *example* of arts-based research rather than *talking* about arts-based research is the goal.

It is important to my self-study that my theatrical production, the end product of my performative autoethnographic research, be a site of political action. Yvonna [thought it was Yvonne – but I might be wrong] Lincoln and Norman Denzin (2003) purpose the performative arts as an examination of the “crises and moments of epiphany in the culture. Suspended in time, they are liminal moments. They open up institutions and their practices for critical inspections and evaluation” (p. 377). Thoughtful engagement with the embodied lived experience and imagination invites, as Lynn Fels (2015) encourages, attending to the emergent, contextual, and relational in order to embrace new understandings of relationships within the “concepts of our environment, our relationships, our communities, and our choices of action” (p. 114).

Fels (2015) advocates that theatre gives the fragmented and silenced story a voice, allowing the “unsayable, the unspeakable, and the unsaid to dwell within moments of performative action” (p. 112). Theatre is a profound medium through which the human condition can be portrayed symbolically and aesthetically for spectator engagement and reflection (Fels, 2015; Saldaña, 2005). If held in a moment of presence, theatre as political action can interrupt our habits of engagement and suggest, in the held space before the next breath, an inspiration for change.

The sting of memory is an opportunity for the arts-based researcher to collect personal epiphanies or turning points; the caveat being subjectivity is not to be romanticized (Denzin, 2014). The epiphanies are mined for textual elements, which become performed interpretive events. I am interested in performing stories that move outward from myself, thus embracing Denzin's suggestions of creating open-ended, inconclusive, and ambiguous productions. Multiple interpretations and points of view bring differences, oppositions, and presences that push me to move around the whole story and not just fixate on my own experience or illusions of reality. Denzin offers that epiphanies are the space where biography intersects with history, politics, and culture. The re-telling and re-performing of these life experiences then become an invention or a re-presentation where historical moments are ripped and torn out of context and re-contextualized expanding the understandings of the story. To me, my epiphanies, which rediscover the meaning of past events, suggest theatrical story elements: people to pick as characters, a scene, place, *mise en scène*, or context, a temporal order of events, and a point or a moral to the story that gives the experience meaning. Epiphanies are events that linger in a person's life story.

Theatrical conventions such as tableau, monologues, silent scenes, and soundscapes transform the internal elements of a self-reflective text (Neelands & Goode, 2000; Spry, 2011) making them available for an actor to physicalize on a stage. These elements include the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and emotions taken from personal epiphanies or turning points (Denzin, 2014) that create artistic worm holes or time folds through which the artist can explore the past, present, and future within the same scene. The purpose and intention of performance choices through theatre conventions include the tone or rate of the voice, movement or blocking, and physical gestures or expressions. Motivated by the internal moments in the text, the artist is free to design multiple access points, for the audience, as a way into the theatrical moment. Tami Spry (2013) explains the use of performative-I as a "methodological location that requires

a deep critique of our motives through a collaborative reflexivity of how, when, and where we function in the obvious, obtuse, and invisible systems of power inherent in our everyday lives” (p. 55). This use of the performer as researcher and the researched allows my performance to reflect connections, both personal and cultural, and create opportunities for me to comment on performance choices objectively and subjectively. Denzin offers this performative action as an untangling and the “mediation and interaction between text, performer, and performance” (p. 11). This breaks opens a space for my arts-based performative autoethnographic study to address how I understand, live, and work in, the culture of teaching in the fine arts.

Research questions. To reach my goal of creating an example of arts-based research that reflects my personal experience with fine arts teacher wellness viewed through the lens of current education culture as a Catholic educator, I propose to explore the following primary and two secondary questions. My primary research question is:

What insights emerge, about teacher workplace stress and burnout, when a Catholic Christian artist-teacher creates a performative autoethnographic study?

The following are two secondary questions:

What new understandings emerge, through an arts-based inquiry, into fine arts teacher professional development opportunities?

What are possible interruptions, in the current discourse on high school redesign that, could address teacher wellness?

To conclude this chapter, teaching is increasingly recognized as a high-stress occupation (Currie & O’Brien, 2012; Day & Gu, 2007; Hayes, 2006; Montgomery & Rudd, 2005; Prilleltensky, 2013; Yorimitsu, Houghton, & Taylor, 2014). I find teaching to be an unlivable experience when stress and disillusionment, symptoms of workplace burnout, overwhelm and

paralyze my ability to be effective in the classroom. I acknowledge my need to change my teaching praxis, how I identify as an artist-teacher, and accept that I need to take on the challenge of self-care as an educator and an artist.

Chapter Two of this dissertation surveys current research on teacher stress and burnout in the workplace. The research literature defines stress and identifies personal and professional risk factors that are sources of stress and the protective factors that teachers may utilize to cope and hopefully eliminate stress. If nothing is done to alleviate stress, workplace burnout is an inevitable possibility. Teacher workplace wellness is challenged through the pedagogical and social interactions with students as well as current trends of accountability in education (Soini, Pyhältö, & Pietarinen, 2010) driven by ever-changing government initiatives. Embedded within the literature on stress is a undeniable call for a re-imagining of how schooling is delivered and a frank discussion of the entrenched practices that frustrate teachers from becoming change agents.

Before words: Inside an Exhale

Scene i

SETTING: a theatre stage with a chair at centre

AT RISE the centre light is on the ARTIST-TEACHER sitting in a chair with a laptop, she is editing. She is completely absorbed in her task: we hear the sound of keys clicking and the occasional backspace followed by a sigh.

MAGGIE (voice over or VO): Did you know that personal well-being strategies must be matched with improvements to workplace conditions or all the benefits of personal well-being will be undermined because they're not supported and reinforced?

ARTIST-TEACHER: *(distracted and still working the ARTIST-TEACHER responds to the voice of MAGGIE)* Yes, I do know that, in fact I'm basing much of my performative autoethnographic study on that connection between personal well-being and workplace conditions. What you just quoted is from a 2013 research study by Dr. Prilleltensky.

MAGGIE (VO): Is he from Vanderbilt University in Nashville?

ARTIST-TEACHER: *(still distracted and still working)* Yup.

(The sound of ripping paper is heard...lots of ripping paper, which finally, catches the attention of the ARTIST-TEACHER).

ARTIST-TEACHER: Maggie! Maggie, what are you doing?

MAGGIE (VO): I told you, I'm doing a bit of a tidy, getting rid of old treasures to make room for new ones!

ARTIST-TEACHER: *(over sounds of ripping paper)* Are you in my den? Are those my research articles?

MAGGIE (VO): Maybe. *(silence)* Everything is available on the net? Isn't it? Besides, you've been through all this stuff. Now is the time for your own research.

(more sounds of ripping paper)

ARTIST-TEACHER: Please, just leave everything alone. Like most research, my performative autoethnography builds on the work of others. How about you engage with your lunch and leave my research alone?

MAGGIE (VO): No more ripping?

ARTIST-TEACHER: No more ripping.

MAGGIE (VO): You know I am a part of you. Right? What does the research of others say about talking to yourself? And, while we are on the subject of you, nice name adjustment.

ARTIST-TEACHER: Oh, thanks. I thought the hyphen gives some space for the identities of both the artist and teacher to thrive.

MAGGIE (VO): Oh, yes? That's not what the artist told me yesterday when we were discussing the performative autoethnographic script for chapter four...

ARTIST-TEACHER: I beg your pardon?

MAGGIE (VO): *(trying to sound innocent)* What?

ARTIST-TEACHER: What did the artist say? How did you know there is an artist in the first place? Maggie?!

MAGGIE (VO): Who? *(changing the subject)* Like I said, you know we are all in your imagination. Take some time and talk to the artist yourself or get your precious goodie-goodie Second Self to do it? *(MAGGIE realizes, too late, that she shouldn't have said that either).*

ARTIST-TEACHER: Have you been reading ahead? *(loud ripping of paper is heard)*

MAGGIE (VO): Maybe. What? I can't hear you? *(more ripping of paper)*

ARTIST-TEACHER: Maggie, honestly, I do not need you today. This chapter is a collection of the work of others, as you know, having shredded most of it. Just stop ok? Please leave my den and go find some cat to torment. There's a good magpie. You are stressing me out. I need to seriously rethink why I put a superhero magpie into this performative autoethnographic study in the first place. And I thought teaching was stressful...

(Shaking her head the ARTIST-TEACHER tries to go back to writing on her laptop as lights fade.)

Chapter 2: Investigations of Current Literature

Teachers are experiencing conditions of professional practice that, according to a growing body of research, create job-related stress (Duxbury & Higgins, 2013). In a comparative review of 26 occupations, Johnson et al. (2005) found that teachers score lower than average on measures of physical health, psychological well-being and job satisfaction—an indication that teaching is one of the most stressful professions. Like workers in many other professions, teachers are suffering the effects of work intensification, an employment situation in which work has increased in volume and/or complexity, leaving workers feeling constantly anxious and uncertain of role expectations (Duxbury & Higgins, 2013). Far from increasing productivity, work intensification may deplete an employee's health, energy, and creativity. New communication technology and government accountability further distracts teachers from their core work—engaging students through facilitating learning (Duxbury & Higgins, 2013).

The following survey of research literature investigates issues, within the teaching profession, that contribute to the crushing stress that can lead to teacher burnout and the current response to educator workplace wellness. In the first investigation workplace stress is defined, as are some of the personal risk factors of the teaching profession: isolation, alienation, and interpersonal relationships. Work overload, lack of agency, and externally imposed educational policies are the risk factors of school culture and are also presented in Investigation I. In Investigation II the elements of workplace burnout: exhaustion, depersonalization, and inefficacy are addressed. Protective coping strategies and resiliency are part of the current response to teacher wellness and the subject of Investigation III. Because my self-study is art-based with a focus on fine arts teacher wellness, art creation and stress reduction are the subjects of Investigation IV.

2.1 Investigation I: Teacher Stress

Teaching is a high stress occupation (Day & Gu, 2007; Hayes, 2006; Montgomery & Rudd, 2005; Prilleltensky, 2013; Yorimitsu, Houghton, & Taylor, 2014). Teaching is also marked by a myopic focus on day-to-day events, separation from adult interactions, and limited opportunities for teacher self-reflection (Chang, 2009). The main sources of teacher stress (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005) stem from: teaching students who lack motivation; maintaining discipline in the classroom; confronting general time pressures and workload demands; being exposed to a large amount of change; being evaluated by others; having difficult or challenging relationships with colleagues and administration; and being exposed to generally poor working conditions. Work related stressors are known to fuel teachers' personal anxieties and negatively impact their performance, workplace competency, professional identity, physical and mental health, career decision-making abilities, overall job satisfaction. As well as being the leading cause of teacher worry, tension, frustration, depression, poor job performance, and absenteeism. Workplace stressors are the reasons given by teachers for exiting the teaching profession (Yorimitsu, Houghton, & Taylor, 2014). Stressful feelings are a result of too many risk factors or difficulties and too few protective factors of positive personal or situational attributes (Prilleltensky, 2013). Teacher workplace wellness is challenged through the pedagogical and social interactions with students as well as current trends of accountability in education driven by ever-changing government initiatives (Soini, Pyhältö, & Pietarinen, 2010).

Eustress or *good stress* was first explored and identified, as a stress model, by the psychologist Richard Lazarus in the 1960s, is a state of positive stress (Prilleltensky, 2013). Eustress gives a person drive, energy, and enthusiasm. Eustress can act as a motivator and increase successful outcomes, providing one has the means and time to contribute to the work. In contrast, when a person feels that what needs to be done is unrealistic or nonsensical, negative stress or distress is experienced. Distress occurs when there is an imbalance between

what is realistic and what needs to be done (Prilleltensky, 2013). States of both insufficient and excessive stress can negatively impact a person's mental and physical welfare: too little stress and the person will not be motivated to achieve, too much stress, and they may find it difficult or even impossible to thrive. Well-being occurs when there is a balance between the protective factors in a person's life and the risk factors they experience (Prilleltensky, 2013). But, what is the experience of stress?

Stress is the biological reaction to any adverse stimulus mental or emotional, internal or external that triggers the flight or fight reaction (Queen & Queen, 2004). Once the brain starts the stress cycle, the sympathetic nervous system increases blood pressure, heart rate, and the stress hormone cortisol. Psychologically, stress is a state of mental or emotional tension due to involvement in adverse and demanding situations (Prilleltensky, 2013). Stress is an excess of perceived demands over an individual's perceived ability to cope; one person's stress is another person's busy day (Budd & Earley, 2004; Cenkseven-Önder & Sari, 2009; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Prilleltensky, 2013; Yorimitsu, Houghton, & Taylor, 2014). Stress, taken as an individual's experience, is based on life happenings, perceptions, and resiliency rather than on a universally accepted formula or list of events and situations. The unique nature of each individual's response to stress results in a disconnection between people who are experiencing stress and those who are not, even though they may be sharing the same situation. For teachers, stress is defined as negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, or depression resulting from some aspect of their work as educators (Mattern & Bauer, 2014).

Physical symptoms are often the first signs of stress. Excessive perspiration, an increase in blood pressure, rapid heart palpitations, dilation of the pupils, difficulty in swallowing, and chest tension are physiological signs of stress and are related to a person's emergency reaction or the fight or flight response (Queen & Queen, 2004; Prilleltensky, 2013). Other physiological indications of stress include excessive fatigue, changes in eating habits, sadness and crying,

increased smoking, drinking and other drug use, and difficulty falling or staying asleep (Howard & Johnson, 2004). Stress can also alter a person's behaviour in three distinct ways: *counter behaviour*, characterized by defensiveness, crankiness, irritability, angry interactions with others, and withdrawing from friends, family, and colleagues; *dysfunctional behaviour*, which presents as increased anxiety and nervousness coupled with difficulty in concentration and decision-making, and excessive self-criticism; and *overt behaviour* such as tics, twitches, skin flushes, perfectionist tendencies, and withdrawing from activities (Prilleltensky, 2013). These counter, dysfunctional, and overt shifts in behaviour act as markers to be recognized as signs of imbalance between the protective and risk factors in a person's life and indicate a state of difficulty in coping with stress (Prilleltensky, 2013).

In the teaching profession, stress presents, as an extremely complex experience. A risk factor is a condition or situation that has the potential to cause or exacerbate feelings of stress (Prilleltensky, 2013). Teachers are faced with demands that expose them to a number of situations that are sources of stress. The source of stress may arise from within oneself, from various outside sources, or from a combination of internal and external factors (Cenkseven-Önder & Sari, 2009; Prilleltensky, 2013). Stress elicits job related anxiety and is an inherent result of a risk factor causing interference with a teacher's growth and well-being (Prilleltensky, 2013). There are two sources of teacher stress risk factors, which I will examine separately: personal risk factors that include inter-personal relationships and risk factors relating to school culture.

Personal risk factors. Personal issues or risk factors relate to weakened or destroyed self-esteem, personal goals, values, social interactions, personal competencies, immune system, and abilities (Howard & Johnson, 2004; Prilleltensky, 2013). Personality traits may influence how effectively an individual can utilize specific coping strategies. However, although there is much research, nothing conclusive has been reported regarding the relationship between

personality traits and an individual's ability to cope with personal risk factors (Prilleltensky, 2013). There is no clear type of person who makes a better or stress-free teacher. Teachers need to be aware that personal risk factors relate to one's sense of self. This awareness can help a teacher understand and manage stress. Research highlights three possible situations in the teaching profession that pose the potential to become personal risk factors: isolation, alienation, and interpersonal relationships (Day & Gu, 2007).

Isolation. In the teaching workplace, isolation occurs because there is not enough time in a typical teaching schedule to build good working relationships with other adults. Isolationist tendencies are particularly hazardous because they can induce feelings of hopelessness and aloneness. A teacher may have a friendly out-going personality, but the reality of the profession is that most teachers work alone in classrooms filled with students not adults (Hayes, 2006). Deborah Britzman (1986) understands isolation in the teaching profession to be less about the structural arrangement of schools and the timetable and more about an insidious cultural insistence to identify the teacher as an individualist. Reflecting historical, cultural, and consumer driven images of the individual as a familiar and admired legend, teachers are falsely flattered as being able to overcome all stressful situations through sheer individual effort (Britzman, 1986). Excluded from opportunities to engage in long-term planning by administrators and policy-makers, teachers focus on daily challenges in the immediate and the concrete where isolation develops a non-innovative culture of conservatism, individualism, and a fixation on short-term results (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). Current practices, in some new teacher training arrangements, reinforce this stereotype of autonomy and isolation as pre-service teachers mimic their teacher mentors. Until schools are structured to reflect Britzman's suggestion that teaching is a social relationship characterized by mutual dependency, social interaction, and engagement, teachers will continue to be isolated in their classrooms, controlling students, and teaching decontextualized subjects and skills.

Teachers need to strike a balance between autonomy and isolation from their colleagues and embrace the social networks available for collaborative connections (Hayes, 2006). Teachers can be reluctant to add to the burden of others and to acknowledge to others how difficult their experiences may be. The teaching community is a loosely cobbled together expert organization that enables and even facilitates autonomy but does not necessarily offer a sense of belonging or encourage professional collaboration (Soini, Pyhältö, & Pietarinen, 2010). Workplace loneliness is debilitating and as Berg and Seeber (2016) explain cannot be fixed “by telling ourselves to find some more rewarding activities outside of work in hopes of diminishing its role in our lives; sidestepping the issue isn’t the answer” (p. 82). Berg and Seeber caution that workplace loneliness “affects our well-being, interferes with professional development, and makes us more vulnerable to burn out” on the other hand, a supportive environment can actually reduce perceptions of stress (p. 83).

Alienation. A personal risk factor that arises as alienation is defined as the gap between what one expects from a career and what one actually experiences (Prilleltensky, 2013). This discrepancy can precipitate feelings of powerlessness, normlessness, and meaninglessness (Benham Tye & O’Brien, 2002; Prilleltensky, 2013). Isolation can create alienation. A sense of alienation is reported as high among all teachers as it is a product of the school environment (Benham Tye & O’Brien, 2002). Research on fine arts teacher retention and job satisfaction has identified that “arts teachers, perhaps more so than other subject area teachers, are especially prone to alienation and isolation due, in no small part, to the specialized nature of their subject area that results in fewer, if any, colleagues with matching backgrounds, experiences and interests” (Scheib, 2006, p. 6). Classroom teachers are especially prone to locating the problem within themselves; first, in their preparation programs they are not usually taught to recognize how the school system works; second, in the course of a typical work week, they do not have time to talk to one another and learn that others feel much the same way that they do (Benham

Tye & O'Brien, 2002). Teachers seldom acknowledge that larger systemic issues are the source of their dwindling job satisfaction. As people react in their own ways to stressful environments, focus is usually on the effects of stress rather than the causes—on the struggle or perceived weakness of the individual rather than on the structural and organizational cause of their pain (Benham Tye & O'Brien, 2002). Teaching embodies the potential for a professional experience that is simultaneously highly inspiring and emotionally exhausting (Soini, Pyhältö, & Pietarinen, 2010). Pacing oneself, taking things with more humor and less unnecessary seriousness, identifying negative behaviors, and systematically desensitizing oneself to unsubstantiated negative feelings are ways to deal with stress from personal risk factors (Prilleltensky, 2013).

Inter-personal relationships. As a risk factor, inter-personal relationships are a paradox (Prilleltensky, 2013). They can be a source of strength, especially when support is offered from students, colleagues, and administration and, simultaneously, a complicated source of teacher stress. Poor communication skills and unprofessional interactions with educational stakeholders can cause interpersonal relationship conflicts. Managing one's personal emotional energy in the educational workplace is not an optional extra; it demands considerable intellectual and emotional commitment (Day & Gu, 2007).

As in other human service professions, teachers' emotional commitments are associated with an ethic of care for the well-being of their students. The benefit teachers gain from their work can be linked to the extent of their students' growth and this growth is measured in terms of enhancement of cognitive, social, and personal knowledge, qualities, and competencies. Effective teachers will strive to engage with students requiring them to bring reserves of emotional energy to their work (Day & Gu, 2007). The more such emotional energy is depleted, through adverse effects of personal, workplace, or policy experiences, the less a teacher's capacity for sustaining effectiveness in the classroom. Teaching requires emotional work to be effective; teachers need to manage the challenges embedded in the emotional contexts of

teaching (Day & Gu, 2007). Their capacities to do so vary according to their life experiences and events, the strengths and conviction of their educational ideals, their sense of efficacy and agency, and the support of their leaders and colleagues.

Teachers can feel stressed out from the extensive emotional labour in which they are engaged to maintain student-teacher relationships (Chang, 2009; Johnson et al., 2005). The judgments teachers make about their students' behaviour in the classroom underline the emotions that are aroused. The less a teacher cares about the students or the less they care about the lesson; the less likely a negative incident will be judged to be important. Emotions or intuitive feelings are aroused by the appraisals teachers make regarding their daily workplace encounters. Teaching is a profession requiring face-to-face interactions with the expectation that emotions are to be kept within a strict set of rules and professional guidelines (Johnson et al., 2005). When teachers are confronted by the risk factors inherent in inter-personal relationships, it can be difficult for them to remain proactive and adopt thriving patterns of behaviour to continue engaging in the task of teaching (Chang, 2009).

Risk factors of school culture. In the past two decades, the realities of teaching have been dominated by successive and persistent government policy reforms (Day & Qu, 2007). These initiatives and the changes in the expectations, norms and behaviours of the culture in which teachers teach and students live and learn have combined to place a strong emphasis on workplace performance and increased workload pressure that affect the motivation, morale, and commitment of many teachers. Organizational and systematic risk factors are external demands on teachers and can be great sources of stress, especially if there is an imbalance between too many expectations and too few rewards (Prilleltensky, 2013). Current research identifies three issues as contributing to teacher stress from organizational and systematic risk factors: work overload, lack of agency, and externally imposed educational policies.

Work overload. A major cause of stress among teachers is the time pressure associated with occupational work overload, resulting in reduced well-being and perhaps a cause of reduced student achievement and teacher attrition (Couture, 2013; Duxbury & Higgins, 2013; Johnson et al., 2005; Mattern & Bauer, 2014). A 2013 study commissioned for the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) found teachers spent 10 hours more per week on work related activities outside the regular work day than other knowledge-based workers (Couture, 2013). Approximately 70 per cent of teachers in Alberta reported high levels of work role overload just over twice as many as those in the total Canadian sample. Lori Brown and Michael Roloff (2011), in their study on extra role time or extra-curricular work, explain that as little as four extra hours of work per week over the average 40 hours can have a negative impact on teachers' well-being, and that working in excess of 48 to 55 hours per week is harmful.

The harm that work role overload causes is an imbalance between work and personal life. Berg and Seeber (2016) identify a major obstacle to creative and original intellectual work "is the stress of having too much to do" (p. 28). An over-worked teacher is conflicted between spending time for adequate self-care on activities such as sleeping, exercise, free time, and family/friend commitments, and spending time completing work required to do his/her job in the classroom (Benham Tye & O'Brien, 2002). Teachers invest long hours into their work. Most entered the profession with a high level of commitment and a desire to affect the world through making an important difference in the lives of students. The problem occurs when the balance between life and work is upset and too much time is spent working (Brown & Roloff, 2011).

Teachers have the lowest workplace flexibility—substantially lower than nurses and police officers, or any other human service occupation (Couture, 2013; Duxbury & Higgins, 2013). Workplace flexibility allows employees to work overtime for extra time off or extra pay. Instead of flexibility, teachers are offered a contract, with unwritten but implied assurances that society values and honours the extra time they spend preparing to teach. This contract promises

to care and support the teachers' well-being (Brown & Roloff, 2011). The fulfillment of these promises presents an economic and socio-emotional resource that the employee expects the employer to provide. Marjo-Riitta Parzefall and Jari Hakanen (2010) offer, when employees feel cared for and safe in their employment relationship, positive outcomes are generated not only in the work context but also for employees' mental health.

In Alberta, 50 percent of teachers feel that their work as teachers is valued. However, many Alberta teachers attribute 60 percent of their time absent and away from the job to emotional, mental, and physical fatigue (Couture, 2013; Duxbury & Higgins, 2013). Three quarters of the teachers in the Linda Duxbury and Christopher Higgins's (2013) study of employees, from various professions, reported that work interferes with family. Alienation from the implied contract of goodwill and being valued as an employee results in feelings of betrayal (Brown & Roloff, 2012). Working while feeling betrayed can directly deplete a teacher's psychological/emotional resources and exacerbate the negative effects of work overload.

When analyzing research on life/work balance in Alberta teachers, Jean-Claude Couture (2013) was surprised to discover how much time teachers spend doing things for students by volunteering outside of school hours. In addition to ten hours of preparatory work during every workweek, teachers are working up to 14 hours extra each week—together this amounts to approximately two additional days of work per week. Brown and Roloff (2011) conducted one of the only investigations to date on the physical and psychological effects that extra-curricular work has on teachers. Their conclusion mirrors the Duxbury and Higgins's (2013) study suggesting that, when time commitments upset the balance between work and personal life, teachers can become overwhelmed, which may lead to burnout, loss of commitment, and resignation from the profession. Berg and Seeber (2016) understand wishing for more time to finish work projects is a "collective fantasy" and that the way out of time pressures is to "challenge the corporate clock by thinking through our perception of time and the expectations

of productivity that are driving our sense that we don't have enough time...if we think of time only in terms of things accomplished...we will never have enough of it" (p. 55).

Limitless devotion to the teaching profession is not sustainable; impressive dedication distracts teachers from addressing the significant issues that contributed to teacher workplace stress in the first place (Couture, 2013; Duxbury & Higgins, 2013; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). In terms of a teacher's obligation to engage in extra-curricular activities, in Alberta, the ATA Rights, Responsibilities, and Legal Liabilities Handbook (revised 2013) is clear that an individual teacher's involvement will reflect the personal time available to the teacher and the individual's skill, abilities, and health. It is always a teacher's choice to commit extra time despite pressures by systemic expectations and school traditions. Brown and Roloff (2011) offer seven suggestions aimed at maintaining work and personal life balance if teachers engage in extra-curricular activities over the requirements of their regular teaching workloads. Their suggestions, to teachers, include: being proactive and setting limits for investment in extra work; advocating for clear communications with administration; listening to one's body, mind, and emotional states; astutely investing personal resources, participating only in what one feels connected to or perceives as valuable; being willing to pull back or walk away from extra-curricular commitments if physical and emotional limits are exceeded; continually being aware of excessive altruism that leads to overinvestment and depletion; and taking the time to devote to family, friendships, and personal health. Schools and teachers may benefit by creating a workplace where supportive organizational messages are clear, to minimize burnout potential (Brown & Roloff, 2011). School administrators can engage with employees to plan and arrange coping strategies to buffer the effects of stress and avoid overinvestment. Left unchecked, balance is lost and the overburdened employee risks burnout, disillusionment, and possibly departure from the profession.

Lack of teacher agency. Educational policy needs to promote, in teachers, a sense of active agency (Soini, Pyhältö, & Pietarinen, 2010). Powerlessness in teachers is encouraged when educational policies reinforce entrenched, harmful, or non-educative practices and neglect advancements in pedagogy and learning, thus making schools as they have been historically—slow or intractable to embracing change (Cenkseven-Önder & Sari, 2009; Margolis, Hodge, & Alexandrou, 2014). Berg and Seeber (20116) promote acting with purpose and “taking the time for deliberation, reflection, and dialogue, cultivating emotional and intellectual resistance” as an example of educators reclaiming their agency (p. 11). Increasing teacher responsibility for educational decisions is suggested as one way to improve teaching workplace conditions (Benham Tye & O’Brien, 2002; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). Provincial government’s iron grip on defining and controlling teaching professional standards is professionalism without power; teachers’ associations also need recreating and renewing, moving beyond collective bargaining toward the implementation of self-governing professional status for teachers much like lawyers and doctors (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). It is a normal for a teacher to want to feel important and needed in the school where they spend a great part of their time. Teachers want their colleagues, administrators, and students to appreciate that their work in the classroom is worthy and good (Cenkseven-Önder & Sari, 2009). The paradox of teaching is imposed autonomy, (Britzman, 1986) set against a lack of agency, which is primarily a result of the restrictive and constraining organizational set-up of education, school workplace environments, and externally imposed policies.

Externally imposed policies. Teachers are generally pleased with their choice of career as it relates to working directly with children who are willing to participate and learn (Scott, Stone, & Dinham, 2001). According to studies, outside forces have intervened to prevent teachers from performing their jobs, as they perceive them, resulting in a major decline in professional satisfaction. In a 2001 survey conducted by Barbara Benham Tye and Lisa O’Brien

(2002), Californian teachers cited the pressures of increased accountability: high-stakes testing, test preparation, and curriculum standards as the number one reason for leaving the profession. In Alberta, teachers also placed the pressures of accountability high on the list of reasons for leaving the profession and cited workplace inflexibility and a lack of control over their work domain or schedule as additional concerns (Couture, 2013; Duxbury & Higgins, 2013). The work environment itself ultimately proved unbearable and the pressures related to standardized testing were a prominent feature of that work environment.

In the early 1990s, site-based management was a popular reform movement in education. It sought to give teachers a greater role in decision-making at their schools, but, in fact, this management style just created an illusion of increased freedom and responsibility while actually contributing to teachers' feeling frustrated by promising more than it delivered (Benham Tye & O'Brien, 2002). Teachers' professional judgment is undermined by external and imposed policies that deny teachers the opportunities to teach beyond what is mandated or to individualize instruction for the students in front of them in the classroom (Benham Tye & O'Brien, 2002). Giroux (2015) challenges that teachers have the responsibility to engage in "critical pedagogy as an ethical referent...to reclaim public education as a democratic public sphere—a place where teaching is not reduced to learning how to either master tests or acquire low level job skills but flourishes as a safe place where reason, understanding, dialogue, and critical engagement are available to all faculty and students" (p. 10).

For the past 25 years, the current teaching climate has become more complex (Johnson et al., 2005; Scott, Stone, & Dinham, 2001). Teaching cannot be quarantined from the social context in which it is embedded (Scott, Stone, & Dinham, 2001). No amount of positive thinking can alter the effects on the profession of the profound decline in respect for and trust of those people who do the work of education. Working harder or any other fashionable or industrial model solution cannot catch up to the societal changes that have profoundly influenced

education (Scott, Stone, & Dinham, 2001). Increased governmental interference in the day-to-day operations of a school do nothing to alleviate society's perceptions that teaching is broken and that the answers must be imposed on those in the classroom who are identified as the problem (Scott, Stone, & Dinham, 2001). Giroux (2015) concludes that ill-advised, internally-imposed education policy has implications not only for schools but for democracy as well:

The rhetoric of accountability, privatization, and standardization...does more than deskill teachers, weaken teacher unions, dumb down the curriculum, punish students, and create a culture of ignorance. It also offers up a model for education that undermines it as a public good while disinvesting in a formative culture necessary to creating critical citizens (p. 11)

2.2 Investigation II: Teacher Workplace Burnout

Occupational burnout can be defined as repeated exposure to job-related stressors (Ross, Romer, & Horner, 2012). Burnout is the index of a dislocation between what people are and what they have to do representing an erosion of values, dignity, spirit, and will (Brown & Roloff, 2011; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). It is a malady that spreads gradually and continuously over time, putting people into a downward spiral, from which it is hard to recover. Once an employee identifies that they are experiencing workplace burnout their only option for wellness is to leave the situation. Without changing the conditions that attributed to burnout, the sufferer will be unable to recuperate and reestablish their former vibrant career (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Teachers, who identify as suffering from workplace burnout, in most Canadian provinces, have very few options to move out of the classroom that do not involve leaving teaching and moving into administrative positions.

Workplace burnout is manifest through three aspects: emotional exhaustion or an inability to feel true emotions and/or recover from work related activities; disillusionment,

which is a pulling away from others using isolation as a protective measure; and inefficacy or a decline in perception of job competence, achievement, and crippling anxiety (Howard & Johnson, 2004; Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Exhaustion. Exhaustion, as understood as an aspect of workplace burnout, does not refer to not having the energy to do the job; rather, it is a phenomena that promotes actions designed to distance oneself emotionally and cognitively from one's work, presumably, as a way to cope with work overload (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Teacher exhaustion results from the emotional demands of serving the needs of students, colleagues, and administrators. These demands can deplete a teacher's capacity to be involved with and respond to the needs of the job (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Not being able to respond to or empathize with the emotions of others leads to depersonalization that attempts to put distance between oneself through actively ignoring qualities that make students unique and engaging (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Disillusionment. Depersonalization or workplace disillusionment has a strong relationship with burn out emotional exhaustion. A work situation with chronic overwhelming demands that contribute to exhaustion and depersonalization is likely to erode one's sense of effectiveness. Exhaustion and disillusionment interfere with effectiveness, as it is difficult to gain a sense of accomplishment when attempting to help people toward whom one is indifferent (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). If effort goes under-rewarded, teachers learn, over time, that the reinforcement they need is not worth the emotional effort required and this can result in drastic changes to well-being, specifically in the area of efficacy (Ross, Romer, & Horner, 2011).

Inefficacy. Feelings of inefficacy or lack of capacity and anxiousness arise from a lack of relevant resources and result in teachers not: setting more challenging goals; collaborating with colleagues and parents; taking personal responsibilities for student outcomes such as individualized instruction; or implementing new programs (Yorimitsu, Houghton, & Taylor,

2014). Exhaustion and cynicism emerge from the presence of work overload and social conflict (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Guilt and anxiety appear to contribute to burnout in terms of prolonged stressors, while anger and frustration contribute to the strength and intensity of the emotions. Emotional regulation strategies like suppressing, faking or hiding true emotions lead to greater overall burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). It is imperative that teachers understand effective emotional regulation and coping strategies and understand the emotional aspects of their jobs. Teachers are encouraged not to neglect or negate their own emotions.

2.3 Investigation III: Resiliency for Teachers

Protective factors are strategies for planning, goal setting, monitoring, time management, persistence, and self-reflection (Mattern & Bauer, 2014). Teacher well-being is measured by the presence of job satisfaction and the absence of perceived stress and emotional exhaustion (Mattern & Bauer, 2014). A tool to understanding stress is Claire Hayes' (2006) stress equation where stress equals the stressor divided by one's perception of the stress plus the support available to cope with that particular stressor. At times, in the teaching profession, it can be very difficult for a teacher to recognize that the feelings of stress that are overwhelming him/her are logical and make sense (Hayes, 2006). The job is demanding. Instead of acknowledging this, teachers often fall back on automatic patterns of coping.

Most people who experience stress will first turn to palliative techniques as quick fix solutions (Howard & Johnson, 2004). These techniques include: calling in sick, drinking alcohol, smoking, avoidance behaviour, over-eating, blaming others, over-busyness, and hiding in perfectionism. Palliative techniques do not address the source of stress, but rather lessen the impact of the stressor (Howard & Johnson, 2004). Poor active coping abilities or an over-reliance of passive coping strategies may lead to negative emotional responses (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005). Mental health strategies like regular exercise, hobbies, connecting with family and

friends, and relaxation techniques are healthy alternatives to palliative coping techniques, though they are also limited in that they are reacting to stress rather than taking a proactive role in removing the stressor (Hayes, 2006; Queen & Queen, 2004).

Direct coping strategies are protective factors that attempt to eliminate the sources of stress rather than just treating the symptoms (Prilleltensky, 2013). A strength-based attitude and holistic wellness contribute to individuals becoming both productive and responsible for developing strategies consistent with their own well-being despite an inflexible workplace environment (Hammond, 2012; Margolis, Hodge, & Alexandrou, 2014). The psychological concept of well-being emphasizes physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual contentment. Other protective factors that strengthen a teacher's ability to cope with stress, regardless of the extent to which they are able to separate work from life are: keeping feelings under control, seeking support from colleagues, having a significant outside support network and having good time management skills (Prilleltensky, 2013). For a teacher to be able to activate these protective factors, cognitive behavioural therapy identifies awareness as an essential first step in eliminating sources of stress (Hayes, 2006). A suggested strategy is the coping triangle, which identifies feelings and thoughts around a stressful situation then links both with an action plan, encouraging habitual behaviour to become unlearned or at least bringing awareness to the possibility of changing one's reaction to entrenched stressors, thereby eliminating them as sources of stress (Hayes, 2006).

Resiliency is another direct coping strategy, available for educators, besides cognitive behavioural therapy. Michael Scott Cain (2001) defines a model of teacher renewal that understands that the personal is linked to the professional. A renewed teacher is one who has recovered from workplace stress by demonstrating strong personal coping skills including: a respect for all aspects of life, a commitment to lifelong learning, a spiritual center, an appreciation of people as individuals, and communication skills to foster collegiality. These

characteristics of renewal work toward a healthy and balanced life for a teacher, one that is multi-faceted (Cain, 2001). Teachers' work-related resiliency or focusing on what is going right is a choice to see the positive within a stressful situation and is one way to reach Cain's definition of renewal. [I am buying this]

Resiliency. The ability to effectively return to a situation after a failure or tragedy is called resiliency and is hailed as another direct coping strategy or protective factor for educators (Allison, 2011; Brown, 2010; Day & Gu, 2007; Henderson, 2007; Howard & Johnson, 2004). Increasing teacher resiliency increases a teacher's ability to cope with the relentless challenges of the educational workplace (Allison, 2011; Brown, 2010; Budd & Earley, 2004; Cain, 2001; Henderson, 2007; Henderson & Milstein, 2003; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Rankin, 2013). Resiliency is a response to: creating a sustainable workload, feelings of choice and control, recognition, rewards through meaningful and valued work, a sense of community, and fairness, respect and justice (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Since the 1970s, behavioural scientists, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, school counselors, and support workers in criminal justice departments have expanded the initial research on resiliency in children to include adults, communities, and families (Howard & Johnson, 2004).

Assessment and action plans may lead to change, but resiliency building is an ongoing activity that requires continuing, constant, and focused attention over time (Henderson & Milstein, 2003). Resiliency researchers Wayne Hammond (2012) and Christopher Day and Qing Gu (2007) encourage school administrators to create a school environment that supports teachers' resiliency by promoting caring relationships, demonstrating positive beliefs, expectations, and trust; providing ongoing opportunities and time for teachers to reflect and engage in dialogue and share in decision-making as well as sharing successes. Teachers should be provided with resources and training to support their personal and professional development toward being resilient with a focus on individual strengths (Hammond, 2012). This provision of

support should be responsive and differentiated to meet a teacher's professional and personal learning needs at different times in their professional work life to help counter declining commitment and to enhance continuity of positive development of their effectiveness in the classroom (Day & Gu, 2007).

In promoting teacher well-being, government educational policies need to go beyond over-optimistic reliance on resilience rhetoric and the detrimental practice of blaming individual teachers (Margolis, Hodge, & Alexandrou, 2014; Ross, Romer, & Horner, 2011). The criticism of the discourse of resiliency as a panacea for teacher workplace stress centers on there not being enough emphasis on the power imbalances within the teaching environment, school structures, and the multitude of situational factors that negatively impact the work of teachers. The concept of resiliency may be dangerous if over-emphasized by educational policy-makers (as it is currently) framed as the ability of the individual teacher to remain in her/his job. Policies that over-emphasize resiliency accept adversity as the new normal of teaching, and although resiliency is promoted as a set of coping mechanisms for teacher well-being, it does so at the expense of the individual teacher. Rather, it benefits educational institutions in retaining teachers and maintaining the status quo with its unsustainable professional circumstances (Margolis, Hodge, & Alexandrou, 2014). This perpetuates the stereotype of the teacher-martyr, who is always working on even when his/her own health and well-being are endangered. The test to resiliency is balance in a teacher's identity, comprised of interactions between professional, situated, and personal dimensions (Day & Gu, 2007). The more extreme or complex this relationship, the more support teachers need to recover from stressful situations.

2.4 Investigation IV: Art Creation and Stress Reduction

Art making engages the whole person, allowing healing to permeate unrestricted (McNiff, 2015). This includes addressing issues of angst. As Shaun McNiff (2015) suggests, in "the large

scheme of things art survives with vitality because it has a unique ability to do something productive with troubles” (p. 126). Judith Rubin (2010) argues that accessing memories, negative ideas, personal anxieties, and unknown strengths are possible through the sensory and kinesthetic engagement of art-making. McNiff (2015) concurs suggesting “the shadows of creative expression manifest themselves in fears, bad memories, negative thoughts, rigid controls, and a general inability to trust and believe in what we do...the arts give us the opportunity to not only understand [these shadows] better but to actually engage them as sources of our most authentic expression” (p. 128).

Some qualitative studies in art therapy (Abbott, Shanahan, & Neufeld, 2013; Sandmire, Gorham, Rankin & Grimm, 2012) support the connection of art creation and stress reduction whether working alone or within a group. To affect art materials through the process of creating and manipulating is a powerful antidote for feelings of helplessness and stress (Abbott et al. 2013; McNiff, 2004; Rubin, 2010); this builds agency in the artist and reduces symptoms of anxiety, such as restlessness. Kayleigh Abbott and colleagues suggest that a cathartic release of positive emotions is also thought to bring temporary relief from the effects of stress. The concentration needed to create art is connected to relaxation and mindfulness (Sandmire et al., 2012), which can enable more permanent abilities and strategies for managing personal stress. McNiff (2004) observes that often empty and disillusioned people need to go through a “breaking apart process” (p. 214) in order to access renewal; this struggle is the same struggle present in art-making. As McNiff explains, “what seems to consistently help people is the positive embrace of a fear with the understanding that [the fear] is a carrier of tremendous life-giving energy that can be channeled in new directions” (p. 214). My work with theatre conventions and their ability to short-cut narratives and create abstract and poetic reflective responses to my own experiences speak to my primeval need to literally and emotionally tear apart the past and change how the story lives in me from now on.

The expressive arts of theatre and movement are the language of my vocation and my personal and artistic interests and research. Movement heals (Rankin, 2013; Snowber, 2004; Winston-Henry & Porter, 2004) by changing the story that lives in the body. Exploring creative movement, as suggested by Cynthia Winston-Henry and Phil Porter, allows a performer to edit habitual rhythms or patterns that no longer serve or reflect the goals of the participant. I propose that my performative autoethnographic research is a site of *temenos* or a sanctuary of insights (McNiff, 1998), through art and the focus of personal and professional epiphanies from my experiences as fine arts teacher. I believe art and my spiritual practice invite me to be a human-being and not a “human-doing” (Snowber, 2004, p. 11), evoking a bodily awareness to connections rather than fragmentations in my numinous relationship with the world.

2.5 Conclusions from Investigations on Teacher Stress and Burnout

Teaching is a high-stress occupation that requires much from the personal and professional resources of a teacher (Currie & O’Brien, 2012; Day & Gu, 2007; Hayes, 2006; Montgomery & Rudd, 2005; Prilleltensky, 2013; Yorimitsu, Houghton, & Taylor, 2014). Coping with workplace stress is an entwined process demanding complex and variable solutions rather than a quick fix. I argue that the challenge is in encouraging teachers to shift away from habitual and entrenched procedures and ways of being, while opening a space for redesigning how the job of teaching may be approached. Is this just an issue for teachers to address? Falkenberg (2016) challenges teachers to identify with a “being approach to teaching where the ethical imperative of teaching is front and centre for teaching. Here ‘inner wisdom’ is of foundational importance, since it is our [teachers’] inner life...that characterizes us as ethical beings” (p. 10). What role does educational policy play in creating healthy and ethical schools for students and their teachers?

Current research in teacher stress offers arguments suggesting that both teachers and the educational system could benefit from taking ownership of the sources of workplace stress (Day & Gu, 2007; Duxbury & Higgins, 2013). Teachers can help themselves cope with crushing stress. Basic healthy lifestyle suggestions and personal protective solutions such as keeping feelings under control, seeking support from colleagues, having a significant outside support network, and being competent with good time management skills can go a long way in keeping teachers well as they engage with daily workplace stressors. These suggestions are common sense and doable solutions, even though they do not mitigate stress, they go a long way towards relieving stress symptoms and are supported by the extremely popular resiliency or strength-based training being offered to teachers by school districts. Although resiliency can be taken as a simplistic or trite solution to real workplace problems, it does act as a reminder to teachers that complaining and then continuing to do what has not worked in the past, is not helpful. This reminder is especially useful when presented as an example for new teachers that best practice is not necessarily the status quo.

Resiliency is helpful, insofar as it may create a robust and empowered teacher. Unfortunately, the resilient teacher may then encounter an educational institution that groans under its own rules and lack of inertia, thereby, stagnating or becoming unchanging or hyper-aggressive and contrary, avoiding any meaningful dialogue or attempts at change. There are issues of workplace stress that are completely out of teachers' control and here bureaucratic decisions appear disconnected from the practical day-to-day challenges of teaching. Overworking, a lack of agency, external accountability, and overwhelming new initiatives and policies that are often started but not sustained, are crippling the teaching workforce. The imbalance between too many expectations and too few rewards or actual help in the classroom is causing a crisis in the teaching profession with experienced teachers leaving before full retirement and new teachers quitting the profession in the first five years of teaching

(Montgomery & Rupp, 2005). The flat trajectory of the teaching profession and entrenched attitudes regarding change from both teachers and government policy-makers gives little relief from the current situation.

This is where my journey toward teacher wellness has brought me: arts-based research through performative autoethnography. Chapter Three, which follows, outlines the research process of a performative autoethnography highlighting the unique concepts of the performative-I disposition and embodied knowing when creating theatrical connections between the self and the school culture under investigation. I will discuss ethical considerations unique to performative autoethnography, as well as opportunities for allegorical and personified epiphanies or life events. Theatrical conventions will be the foundation for my self-study into teacher workplace stress, burnout disillusionment, and the culture of teaching and schooling as expressed in this chapter.

Before Words: Inside an Exhale**Scene ii**

SETTING: a theatre stage with a theatre box at centre stage.

AT RISE the ARTIST-TEACHER is standing in the middle of the stage with a center spotlight on. She is in the middle of rehearsing physical character work: moving and adjusting her movements.

MAGGIE, SUPERHERO MAGPIE OF TEACHER WELLNESS (as voice over or VO): What are you doing? Are you sick? Why are you twisting around? I thought you said you were working with your research for your Ed Doc?

ARTIST-TEACHER: *(suddenly self-conscious stops her character work explorations).* That is exactly what I am doing. I've been reflecting on my researched epiphanies and now, I'm ready to create with those reflections. I'm spinning them into arts-based research theatrical characters and scripts for my performance.

MAGGIE (VO): How many more characters will be residing, here, in your imagination?

ARTIST-TEACHER: It may get even more crowded in there before I'm finished.

MAGGIE (VO): Ok, just remember, I was the first of your allegorical characters or personifying feelings, and I expect top billing. I'm your most important device to move your research, out from what Denzin (2014) calls the selves of the person, aka you, and inward to the persons and groups that give them meaning and structure, aka your experiences as a drama teacher. Without me, to keep you on point, this theatrical performance of yours could wallow in self-reflection, instead of moving on to the intersections, between fine arts teachers and the world of schooling. You know I'm right...

ARTIST-TEACHER: *(sits on box)* Yes, you're right.

MAGGIE (VO): Good. Now, are these three separate characters: personifying emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and workplace disillusionment, the symptoms of workplace burnout, really necessary? They are just a contagion of wet blankets: one of them keeps having anxiety attacks every time I squawk and the other two vacillate between moaning and complaining and freaking out in anger.

ARTIST-TEACHER: Maggie, I expect you to respect and understand all the characters of this research-based performance. Besides, you haven't met Awful Thoughts, yet. As a critic of public education, she is really difficult. *(Shooing MAGGIE)*. Now, off you go now. I'm trying to figure out how to personify the concept of caritas and it's proving to be a bit tricky.

MAGGIE (VO): Fine, I have more important things to do than watch you. Besides, you need to get back to work, because if you can't embody this research through theatrical conventions and interesting characters, this performative autoethnographic self-study, is going to remain dull and uninteresting and who wants to be a part of that?

(The ARTIST-TEACHER returns to creating characters, as the light slowly fades to black).

Chapter 3: Performative Autoethnography and Field Work

My research takes a performative autoethnographic approach. This chapter will define performative autoethnography and explore the benefits and ethical cautions of this type of research. I have included a detailed explanation of the methodology of performative autoethnography, including the process of data collecting and coding or sorting the data. This chapter also includes my field notes, a collection of epiphanies articulated in various forms with reference to how various pieces of data informed the final production script.

3.1 Performative Autoethnography

Research in autoethnography (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011) is located along a continuum that combines aspects of self, culture, and the research process that acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher's influence. Sherick Hughes, Julie Pennington, and Sara Makris (2012) define autoethnography as a hybrid form of critical self-study where the researcher takes an active and systematic view of personal experience in relation to a cultural group identified by the research. Heewon Chang (2008) argues, "autoethnography should be ethnographic in its methodological orientation, cultural in its interpretive orientation, and autobiographical in its content orientation" (p. 48). Tami Spry (2011), as a performative autoethnographer, challenges theatre-based researchers to situate the textualized body to reveal "the interrelations of critically reflecting on how our bodies are inherently part of the meaning making process, how the meaning making process is inherently tied to language and writing, and how performance operates as the dialogic process with and between the body and language" (p. 26-27). Embodiment, as knowledge, is a theoretical and methodological core available to the researcher who combines performance and autoethnography. The performance is not an entertaining option to disseminate the autoethnographic study; rather, the intent is to stabilize the power imbalance between writing

(the dominant scholarly medium) and the performance. Performative autoethnography's position is that performance enacts epistemology rather than assists it: "performance does not 'illuminate' the text, rather, in assisting in the creation of the text it is in itself performative" (Spry, 2011, p. 29).

Performative autoethnography is an investment in time, energy, and heart, and searches for an understanding of others, culture, and society through self. This is research for making connections: between personal experiences and cultural assumptions; between body and text; and body and the environment. Culture is a product of interactions (Chang, 2008; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011; Spry, 2001, 2006, 2011) between self and others. Self is the starting point for cultural acquisition and transmission. Chang explains, "autoethnography benefits greatly from the thought that self is an extension of a community rather than an independent, self-sufficient being, because the possibility of cultural self-analysis rests on an understanding that self is part of cultural community" (2008, p. 26). I adopt Smith's (2006) definition of self that depends on the context of our interactions with others. I also place myself within Maxine Greene's (1995) notion of person in process, "in pursuit of themselves and, it is to be hoped, of possibilities for themselves" (p. 41). My research moves out from the "selves of the person and inward to the persons and groups that give them meaning and structure" (Denzin, 2014, p. 40). I take responsibility for my life and I should have the last word on issues of importance.

There is a give and take relationship between self and the community. The self learns values, expectations, and customs from the community and, in return, it is part of the continuity of the cultural group. Self is a relational being (Chang, 2008). Relationships with others of similarity, such as family and friends, are socially congruent and relationships with others of difference (strangers) or others of opposition (enemies) are not fixed but rather socially constructed and transformable as the self develops or perhaps reframes its relationship to others. Performative autoethnography (Chang, 2008; Spry, 2001, 2006, 2011) embraces interpretive,

subjective, and embodied ways of knowing. These locate the epistemological stance of this methodology in a critically reflective narrative frame, representing my personal and political intersections and engagements with others, specifically, within the culture of education and schooling and, generally, within Alberta society.

The body is the co-performative agent in interpreting knowledge. As Spry (2011) explains, “thinking of the body as co-performative, means that we make meaning about ourselves and our lives through our interactions with others” (p. 53). John Heron and Peter Reason (1997) emphasize, “experiential knowing is that the very process of perceiving is also a meeting, a transaction with what there is” (p. 278). Heron and Reason connect experiential knowing to performative encounters:

Presentational knowing emerges from and is grounded in experiential knowing. It is evident in an intuitive grasp of the significance of our resonance with and imaging of our world as this grasp is symbolized in graphic, plastic, musical, vocal, and verbal art forms (p. 281)

Knowledge as embodied or performed is interpreted and articulated through the body (Spry, 2011) rather than through logic exclusively.

According to Spry (2011), the construction of the narrative in performative autoethnography is based on the researcher’s embodiment of a performative-I disposition in script writing and a performative-I persona in performance, allowing the researcher to engage in meaning making with others in culture. In my self-study, the performative-I disposition will be the co-performative relationship between the artist-teacher and the ethos of teaching. The performative-I disposition is “a location or relation from which the researcher writes a critically reflective narrative about our personal/political interactions” (Spry, 2011, p. 54). The performative-I disposition allows for alternatives to taken-for-granted assumptions. These

alternatives open up an understanding of diverse experiences. The performative-I disposition invites us to an examination of how we co-performatively function within a particular sociocultural/political/historical context to (re)make meaning that illustrates the complex dialogical negotiations between selves and others in cultural contexts (Spry, 2011). The performative-I disposition in script writing allows for polyphonic and infinite manifestations of selves interacting with others in a variety of contexts. The performative-I disposition is based on the willingness to examine one's own values, beliefs, and biases. The performer in a performative autoethnography becomes "more open to bumping up against the brackets of unforgiving, straight-backed convention[s]" (Spry, 2006, p. 315). Using the body I have been given and rely on, I produced a coherent performance of my subjective self.

Embodiment, as a theoretical conception for performative autoethnography, is the corporal embeddedness of knowledge, "revealing the inherency, the seamlessness, the materiality of the personal and political, in a manner where we cannot tell where one ends and the other begins" (Spry, 2011, p. 62). The body is a site from which the story is generated. Snowber (2014) articulates the "body [as] the canvas for creativity" (p. 253). The canvas or body is the internal somatic knowing that is written into the external semantic script only to return to the body during performance. As Spry (2008) suggests:

Embodied knowledge is knowledge that is gained by paying close somatic attention to how and what our body feels when interacting with others in contexts. The knowledge is articulated through a performative-I disposition where the researcher critically reflects upon what and where the body knows. (p. 64)

Embodied exploration as research activates the senses. Celeste Snowber (2014) uses the senses as the "brushes to explore existence" (p. 254). She says, "We need to unwrite, learn to write, where creativity can take root. The interconnection between language, breath, motion, and

gesture becomes a living studio to manifest the deep flow of creativity. We are the living studio” (Snowber, 2014, p. 261).

I struggle to articulate the full effect that working within the body demands. Emotions, as intuitive feelings, can live in bodies (Brower & Jago, 2012) in my experience, sometimes for years, in hips and aching shoulders. Often these are places that need to be accessed, places of deep knowing and of profound unknowing. Spry (2011) attempts to use words to describe this type of a visceral and wholly intuitive analysis: “as I let myself fall apart, I let myself see the pieces. I let myself fall into the presence of absence” (p. 65). Retrieving memories in this manner and using them, as source material for a performance script, is a process of fragmentation and rupture, it is the pushing through of what seems fixed or settled (Conquergood, 2013). Attentive noticing is required for writing the performative and autonomous self and blindly searching in the dark for chunks of broken stories. This staying present to ambiguity is perhaps the real work of my self-reflective study. Spry (2011) insists that working with all aspects of embodied knowing through the performative-I disposition offers “fragmentation as pedagogy...presence in the absence and serves as a constant check of my own privileged hubris” (p. 70).

Benefits and cautions of performative autoethnography. Performative autoethnography appeals to me as a creative educator; it is a powerful and accessible tool to investigate human relationships within multi-layered settings: schools, classrooms, fine arts studios, and the teaching profession. Three key benefits (Chang, 2008; Hughs, Pennington, & Makris, 2012) of performative autoethnography are identified as: a transparent method, friendly to the researcher and the reader, a way into relational conversations, and as having the potential for transformation for the researcher/performer and reader/viewer.

The first benefit of performative autoethnography is the opportunity to use a researcher’s voice in a way that is more personal, friendly, and engaging to potentially non-academic readers.

My research interest is in teacher wellness—to bring to light the whispered conversations of struggle and pain, to be immediate and intimate, to serve others through an opportunity to tear apart and analyze my own story. Although the data is unique to the researcher and liberated from some scholarly conventions, performative autoethnography (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011; Chang, 2008; Hughs, Pennington, & Makris, 2012) remains acceptable, albeit challenging, to traditional ways of doing and representing educational research in the academy as researchers abide by a similar process to that of ethnographic research. A detailed description of my performative autoethnographic methods is presented later in this chapter but a brief outline of my method here may be helpful as context to place performative autoethnography within the educational research canon.

My process included: data collection from personal memory data, from self-observation, self-reflection, and from external sources; data coding, analysis, and interpretation; creation of a script using the performative-I disposition; and performance of a script generating meaning and connections for the audience opening an opportunity to reflect on their own lives. The embodied interplay and engagement with the audience will hopefully create connections and reactions for both the performer and audience members alike. This is the power of the “interpretation of the relational in-betweenness that partially joins and partially divides” the performing persona and the researcher (Spry, 2006, p. 315).

Writing cultural self-reflective narratives activates the second and third benefits of performative autoethnographic research, allowing reflection on the forces that have shaped the life of the researcher. Understanding the impact of these forces is an opportunity for a shared moment of humanity between the writer/performer and the reader/viewer. Chang (2008) argues, “personal engagement in autoethnographic stories frequently stirs the self-reflection of listeners, a powerful by-product of this research inquiry” (p. 53). Leggo (2008) insists that writing the personal is “not merely egoism, solipsism, unseemly confession, boring prattle, and

salacious revelation” (p.91). Rather, personal writing seeks to locate the experience within a rapidly growing network of contextual relationships including family, community, and professional, “by sending out resonances from one embodied and personal location to other embodied and personal location[s]” (Leggo, 2008, p. 91). Transformation is possible for the unexpected reader/viewer who suddenly is engaged in more of a self-exploration experience than they might have initially expected. This can become an opportunity for shared insights, reframing, and in my study, a broadening of teaching praxis.

All forms of autoethnography, including performative autoethnography, face criticism and scrutiny despite, or maybe because of, the growing interest (Chang, 2008) in this research method. The shrill challenge of legitimacy is fading, “as social science autoethnographers are beginning to respond to epistemological criticism and methodological rigor in ways that seem to be gaining some traction...[against] discrimination of autoethnographic scholarship (Hughs, Pennington, & Makris, 2012, p. 221). Carolyn Ellis, Tony Adams, and Arthur Bochner (2011) claim that:

Autoethnography, as method, attempts to disrupt the binary of science and art.

Autoethnographers believe research can be rigorous, theoretical, analytical *and* emotional, therapeutic, and inclusive of personal and social phenomena.

Autoethnographers also value the need to write and represent research in evocative, aesthetic ways. (p. 350)

Scholars (Chang, 2008; Denzin, 2014; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011; Hughs, Pennington, & Makris, 2012) who research through autoethnography identify four pitfalls or potential areas that need particular attention when practicing autoethnography as research. First, an excessive focus on self in isolation from others or the identified culture should be avoided. Chang (2008) insists that culture predisposes the co-presence of others even in a

discussion of the individual's culture. The research should reflect the interconnectivity of self and others. The caution is not to dig *deeper* into personal context without digging *wider* into the cultural context of individual stories commingled with others. The fear is "self-indulgent introspection is likely to produce a self-exposing story but not autoethnography" (Chang, 2008, p. 54). Related, is the issue of generalizability in autoethnography.

Generalizability moves from respondents to readers, and is always being tested by readers as they determine if a story speaks to them about their experience or about the lives of others they know; it is determined by whether the (specific) autoethnographer is able to illuminate (general) unfamiliar cultural processes. Readers provide validation by comparing their lives to ours, by thinking about how our lives are similar and different and the reasons why, and by feeling that the stories have informed them about unfamiliar people or lives. Making connections with the research sets the limits of performative autoethnography; moving from the individual researcher to members of society interested in the study through the readers making connections to their own personal experiences.

Second, another pitfall is an over reliance on personal memory as the source of data without addressing the issue under investigation through various data accessing instruments which results in generalities and not specific epiphanies. By its very nature, autoethnographic research is subjective but multiple sources of data can provide a basis for triangulation that will help enhance the content accuracy and validity of the autoethnographic writing. Verisimilitude, coherence, connectivity, believability, and a lifelike recognizable truth in experience (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011) are indicators of reliability and validity in autoethnography. The third pitfall is over confidence and disregard for who owns the stories within an autoethnographic study. This is problematic. With the main character, the researcher named and situated, it is extremely difficult to maintain confidentiality for anyone else in the story; this presents serious and ethical concerns.

Finally, confusion surrounds the definition of autoethnography as methodology—narrative inquiry, autobiography, and memoirs are not autoethnography. To ease the confusion, autoethnographers (Chang, 2008; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011) need to be clear on the criteria they are using to define their research methodology and dedicate specific methods that separate this form of research from other similar but ultimately different research methodologies. The task for the autoethnographer is to view research and writing in a socially just manner rather than maintain a preoccupation with accuracy. The goal, as challenged by Stacy Holman Jones (2005), is to produce “analytical, assessable texts that change us and the world we live in for the better” (p. 764).

Ethical considerations of performative autoethnography. There are two major ethical considerations related to a performative autoethnographic self-study: confidentiality of others and ethically problematic stances of representation.

Confidentiality of others. Stories are not created in a vacuum; no matter how narrow the spotlight is on the individual there are always others visible in the shadows. Chang (2008) concedes, “although perfect protection of privacy is not always possible, [the researcher] should model an honest and conscious effort to adhere to the ethical code of research” (p. 69). The author’s identity is transparent so hyper-vigilance is required to disguise others connected to the research from being recognized. To protect the privacy of others connected to the research composite figures can be created, real stories can become allegorical, people can become metaphors or be personified, and pseudonyms can obscure identity. Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2011) suggest that, if the researcher is unable to alter the narrative enough to truly hide the other members of the story, it is incumbent on the researcher to show the writings to the people involved for their interpretation of events and approval. These “relational concerns are a crucial dimension of the inquiry, that must be kept uppermost in the minds [of the researchers] throughout the research and writing process” (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, p. 348). The

autoethnographer needs to arrange data collection, a coding system, analysis, and final creative adaptations of the data to address these ethical considerations and the privacy of others who, inadvertently, are entwined in the research.

Ethically problematic stances. There may be ethically problematic points-of-view when writing and performing from data, which can be overcome through an opening-up process to examine value-laden perspectives, biases, and taken-for-granted assumptions. This is the researcher's accountability and the responsibility of representing self and others in writing autoethnography. Denzin (2014) suggests a deconstructed autoethnography that de-centers and challenges the writer's voice, opening the performance to multiple voices and perspectives. The signature work of the performative ethnographer Dwight Conquergood (2003, 2013) describes five possible researcher positions offering a moral map, as it were, of ways of writing and performing, four of which should be avoided when engaging with the Other in ethnographic research.

In his research, Conquergood (2003, 2013) created performative responses to ethnographic material gathered from encountering the Other within their unique cultural milieu. Conquergood cautions against the ethnographic performer who selfishly plunders performance worthy moments about the Other, without honouring the deep cultural significance of such moments, referring to this behaviour as the "custodian's rip off" (2013, p. 71). According to Conquergood, the "enthusiast's infatuation" appropriates the culture, in contrast, to the "curator's exhibitionism," which places it on display. The "skeptic's cop out" is a removed and distanced stance that does little to hide a pervasive prejudice or mistrust of the other. A "dialogical performance" is the goal and a genuine conversation is possible where the "moral center transcends and reconciles the spin off extremes" (Conquergood, 2013, p. 71). A chart, Figure 1, located on the next page, adopted from Conquergood, offers a simple visual explanation of his performative stances when creating within/about the culture of the other.

<p>The Custodian’s Rip Off:</p> <p>Selfishness</p> <p>“A strong attraction toward the other coupled with extreme detachment results in acquisitiveness instead of genuine inquiry, plunder rather than performance” (p. 70).</p>	<p>The Enthusiast’s Infatuation:</p> <p>Superficiality</p> <p>“Too facile identification with the other coupled with enthusiastic commitment produces naïve and glib performances marked by superficiality” (p. 71).</p>
<p>The Skeptic’s Cop Out:</p> <p>Cynicism</p> <p>“Instead of a performative stance, it is an easy bail-out into the no man’s land of paralyzing skepticism” (p. 74).</p>	<p>The Curator’s Exhibitionism:</p> <p>Sensationalism</p> <p>“Whereas the enthusiast assumed too easy an Identity with the other the curator is committed to the Difference of the other...performance that grows out of fascination with the exotic, primitive, culturally remote” (p. 73).</p>

Figure 1: Chart synthesized and adapted from Conquergood (2003/2013) of performative responses to ethnographic material gathered from encountering the Other.

<p>The Hero:</p> <p>One is not heroic for taking the necessary responsibility for understanding the effects of privilege. Analyzing one’s own oppressive acts takes courage, but/and must be written with the <i>humility</i> that keeps cultural hubris always in check” (p. 137).</p>	<p>The Blamer:</p> <p>“Blame prevents the process of examining and taking responsibility for the representation of our own experiences. Performative autoethnography must be about personal/political accountability and ethical agency, not blame” (p. 137).</p>	<p>The Victim:</p> <p>“as a method of scholarly inquiry, performative autoethnography must move the analysis deeper into critical examining the sociocultural systems sustaining the injustice” rather than framing self as victim without offering a deeper analysis (p. 137).</p>
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Figure 2: Chart of undesirable performative responses specific to performative autoethnography (Spry, 2011).

Conquergood’s (2003, 2013) metaphors provide a vocabulary with which to discuss difficult approaches when enacting researched material, especially material gleaned from a culture different from that of the researcher. Spry (2011) adds to this vocabulary, see Figure 2,

identifying undesirable stances that relate specifically to performative autoethnography, where, the researcher is embedded in the culture that is being studied. When interpreting the data through contextual analysis, vigilance will be required to avoid Spry's (2011) hero, blamer, and victim attitudes. To effect genuine and honest research, the performer of an autoethnography needs to edit script choices and be open to enhancing moments of humility instead of the hubris of the hero. One is not heroic for taking the necessary responsibility for understanding the effects of privilege. The blamer stance must actively avoid blaming, which, if left unchecked, prevents the process of examining and taking responsibility for the representation of one's own experiences. Performative autoethnography must be about personal/political accountability and ethical agency, not blame. As a method of scholarly inquiry, performative autoethnography must move the analysis deeper into critical examining the sociocultural systems sustaining the injustice rather than simply framing self as victim. This requires diligence and consistently rejecting simple solutions to complex issues.

When I started my performative autoethnography research I took Spry's (2011) caution about avoiding the research stances of hero, blamer, and victim very seriously. I am so close to, not only my own personal story, but also to the culture of schooling that without restrictions in place it would have been extremely easy for me to enact all three of those problematic stances. Workplace burnout has left me in a vulnerable state of mind and body, which is why I relied so heavily on the structure of the epiphanies and on coding the creative process, in an attempt to avoid lapses in judgment lest I succumbed to bragging, whining, and self-pity. Avoiding the hero, blamer, and victim stances is precisely the role Maggie, the super hero magpie of teacher wellness plays; she is the overseer of unwanted performative research responses.

Autoethnography allows for the researcher to tell their story, "keeping in mind that the construction of the story is generated from the individual's socio-cultural situated-ness, or how she constructs and is constructed by social systems such as race, class, gender, and religion"

(Spry, 2011, p. 58). D. Soyini Madison (2009) reflects that dialogue is framed as performance in order to emphasize “the living communion of a felt-sensing, embodied inter-play and engagement between human beings” (p. 9). The key to honouring the performative stance and the confidentiality of others is designing research methods with these warnings as essential considerations.

3.2 Field Work

The data for a performative autoethnography, as was the case in my study, is accessed from the memories, self-reflections, and external artifacts of the researcher conducting the self-study. I adopt Chang’s (2008) confidence in “what is extracted through memory can be written down as textual data” (p. 72). This is my open acknowledgement that I am the primary source of information and data for this study. Being aware of our embodied experiences is a crucial step toward living in a more integrated way. Art making, in my case, theatrical story telling is an embodied experience that also engages the whole person (Allen, 1995). Richmond and Snowber (2009) remind that inter-connection through art can also be an unexpected moment, a halt in the day-to-day that pulls us into the joyous chaos of the random aesthetic.

Epiphanies. Data collection for performative autoethnography begins with critically reflecting on the everydayness of one’s life experiences and seeking ruptures. Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2011) refer to the data of a performative autoethnographic study as epiphanies or emergent experiences, personal to one’s life within the culture or “remembered moments perceived to have significantly impacted the trajectory of a person’s life” (p. 347). Spry (2001, 2011) invites researchers to make connections to transformative moments and investigate what makes up one’s personal socio-culture. Denzin (1997) understands performative autoethnographic data as sounds, music, and images taken from the writer’s personal experiences—epiphanies as an intersection with history, politics, and culture. This personal text/script is retold and re-performed, Denzin (2014) continues until in autoethnographic

research, this story becomes an invention, a re-presentation or an historical object ripped and torn out of its context and re-contextualized in the spaces and understandings of the story. The specific choices for the personalized text use the sting of memory to locate the moment that is then “surrounded by those cultural representations and voices that define the experience in question” (Denzin, 1997, p. 117).

I refer to the building blocks or the data for my self-study as epiphanies. The word invites intuitive realizing and excavating to the essence of a moment that suggests quality rather than quantity. I sought three types of epiphanies: *ritualized* moments highlighting milestones in achievement, *routinized* moments that become important simply by their constant presence, and *surprise* moments that were unplanned and unstructured. I mined epiphanies from my 28-year career as a fine arts teacher at an urban Western Canadian Catholic high school. I sought epiphanies in the intersections between my life and my career as an artist-teacher: through artifacts including art work, performance scripts, and journal entries; through other textual artifacts such as letters, e-mails, and commendations; physical artifacts such as costumes and props; visual artifacts such as photographs; and literature including my reactions to material from my literature investigations in Chapter Two. Unlike the magpie of folktale fame, I dug beyond just bedazzling and shiny bits of meaning searching instead under preverbal rocks and poking into murky depths.

To refine the data through context and ensure the epiphanies were specific, I collected personal memory and self-reflected data. I engaged several writing instruments or tools adapted from Chang (2008) to focus the epiphanies and broaden my investigation heeding, of course, Chang’s caution not to dig *deeper* into personal context without digging *wider* into the cultural context of the individual stories. I struggle to capture in writing this process of engaging and digging; a process that was neither linear nor, at times, even comprehensible. Generally speaking, my creative process followed the pattern discuss in Chapter One: insights were disclosed and

disentangled through creative practices such as writing, then words were made anew into tactile images through transpersonal art making, and finally, theatre was created, first in the body, where what had become internal and visual found voice again and re-imagined as a performance using characters, script, and theatre conventions. In this fieldwork I attempted to interlace theory with artistic process, musings, and random connections, images, and scripts. It was impossible to include everything that inspired a performance or to assume that my epiphanies, as a source of inspiration, will make sense to anyone but me. The coding procedure helped to create order out of seemingly disparate epiphanies and helped me avoid the problematic stances of the hero, blamer, and victim (Spry, 2011).

Data collection: Personal memory and self-reflection epiphanies. Personal memory of past events opens a conduit through which self-discovery is possible for the performative autoethnographic researcher. Memories are valuable (Chang, 2008, p. 72) but a researcher's memory is not always a friend; it can, at times, be a foe. Memories are recalled as partial truths, some events are clear and rich in detail while others are vague or deliberately obtrusive or suppressed. The researcher needs to be coaxed into revealing and unraveling threads of data using writing instruments as a catalyst. Denzin (2014) reassures that the tangle of memory locates the moment, the beginning, and once located, this moment can be dramatically described and fashioned into a text to be performed. Reflecting on the present or current values, thoughts, emotions, interactions, and behaviours offers the autoethnographic researcher vivid details and fresh perspectives. This is, in effect, classic fieldwork with one exception: collecting data on one's own life instead of observing the lives of others. Self-observational data records the researcher's actual "behaviours, thoughts, and emotions as they occur in their natural contexts" (Chang, 2008, p. 90). The following are notations for a major project, namely, the theatrical script presented in Chapter Four. They are ideas and musings much like the sketches that a visual artist makes before painting a canvas. These various

instruments: timelines, journals, artifacts, and self-images are employed for accessing my personal memories and are food for my imagination. These epiphanies contain little artistic merit as they are part of a process, and not intended to be viewed or read as products of art.

Timelines. Time is a key element in work role overload issues in the teaching profession (Brown & Roloff, 2011). I used timelines to condense my 28-year career of teaching high school drama and directing major theatrical productions, as part of my extra-role time, outside of regular working hours. The timeline format was conducive to generating patterns of behaviour that shifted between the personal and the professional suggesting how difficult it is to separate the two in any discussion of teacher wellness. I created five timelines, labeled as Figures 3 thru 7. The timelines reflect a shifting and intertwining of remembered moments, facts, and perceptions of joy, burnout, life circumstances, educational choices, and workplace responsibilities and choices.

The process of creating timelines was, for me, an exercise in Welwood's (2014) pre-articulate felt sensing. Working with the facts and dates of my career allowed me slip under the events as factual memories and process and look at some key moments at a more intuitive level. What was activated, at an emotional and spiritual level, was a shift to a diffused attention allowing a "holistic scanning of experiential intricacy" (Welwood, 2014, p. 54). The timelines began the opening process of identifying major themes for my autoethnographic script.

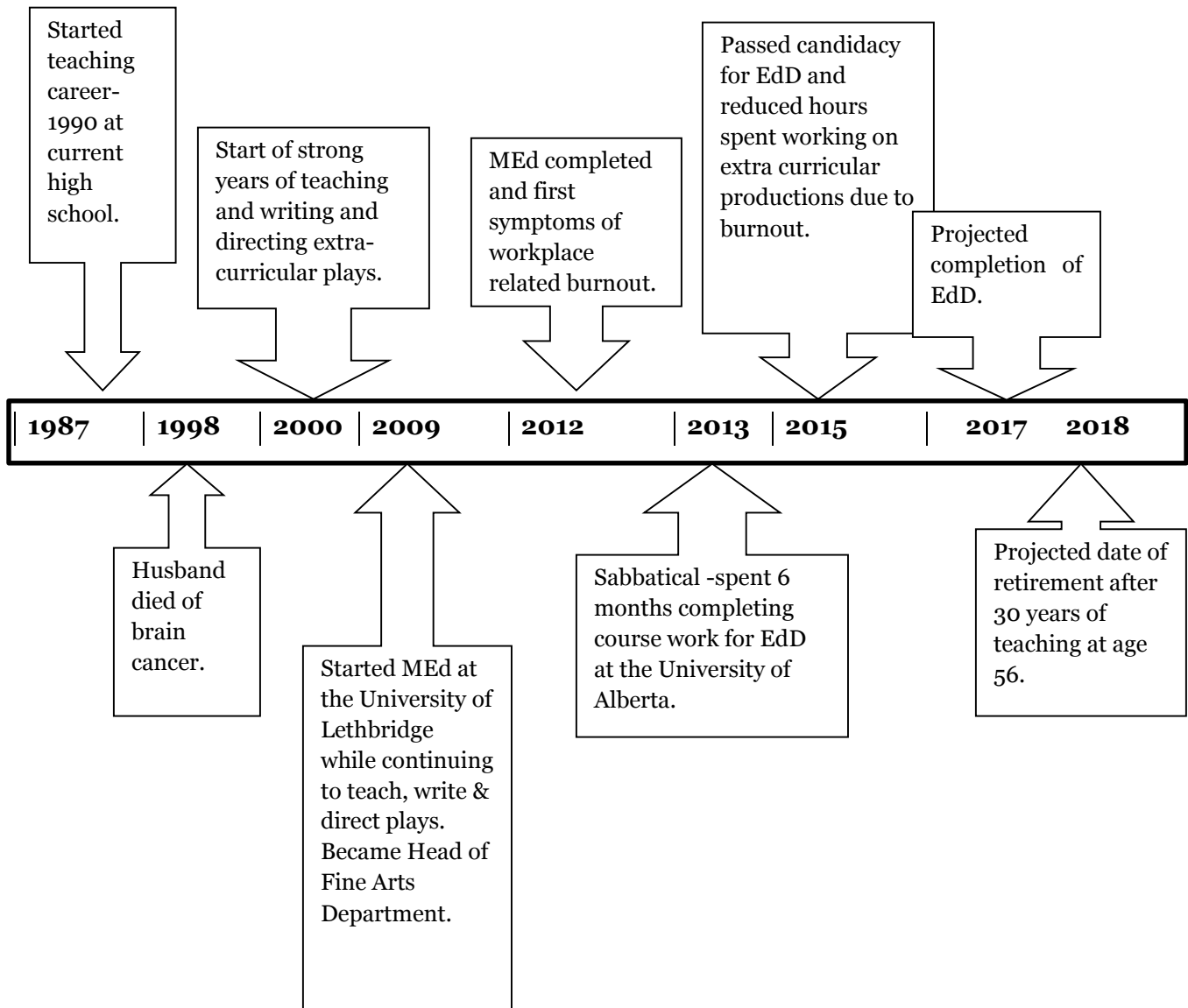


Figure 3: Timeline of life and teaching career of Artist-Teacher

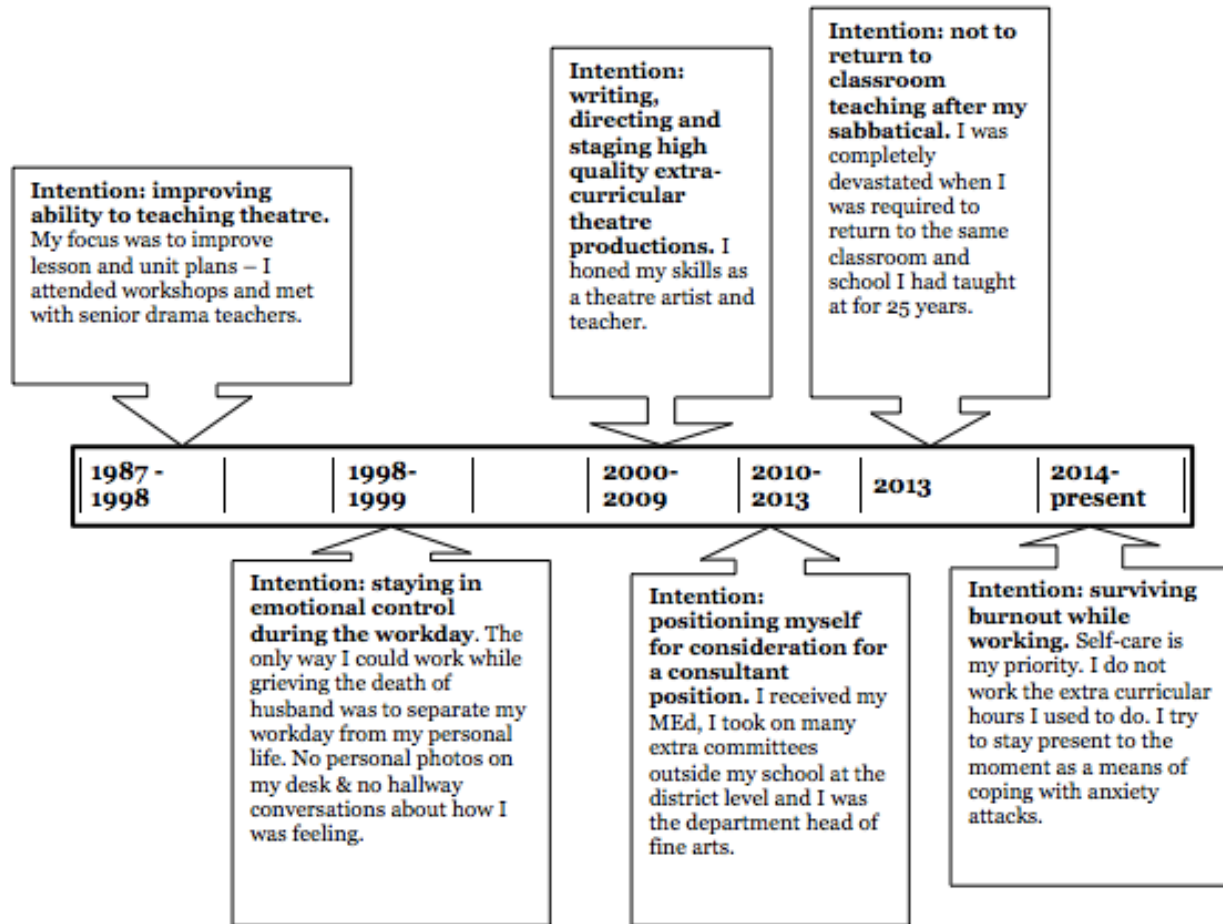


Figure 4: Timeline of teaching intentions of the Artist-Teacher

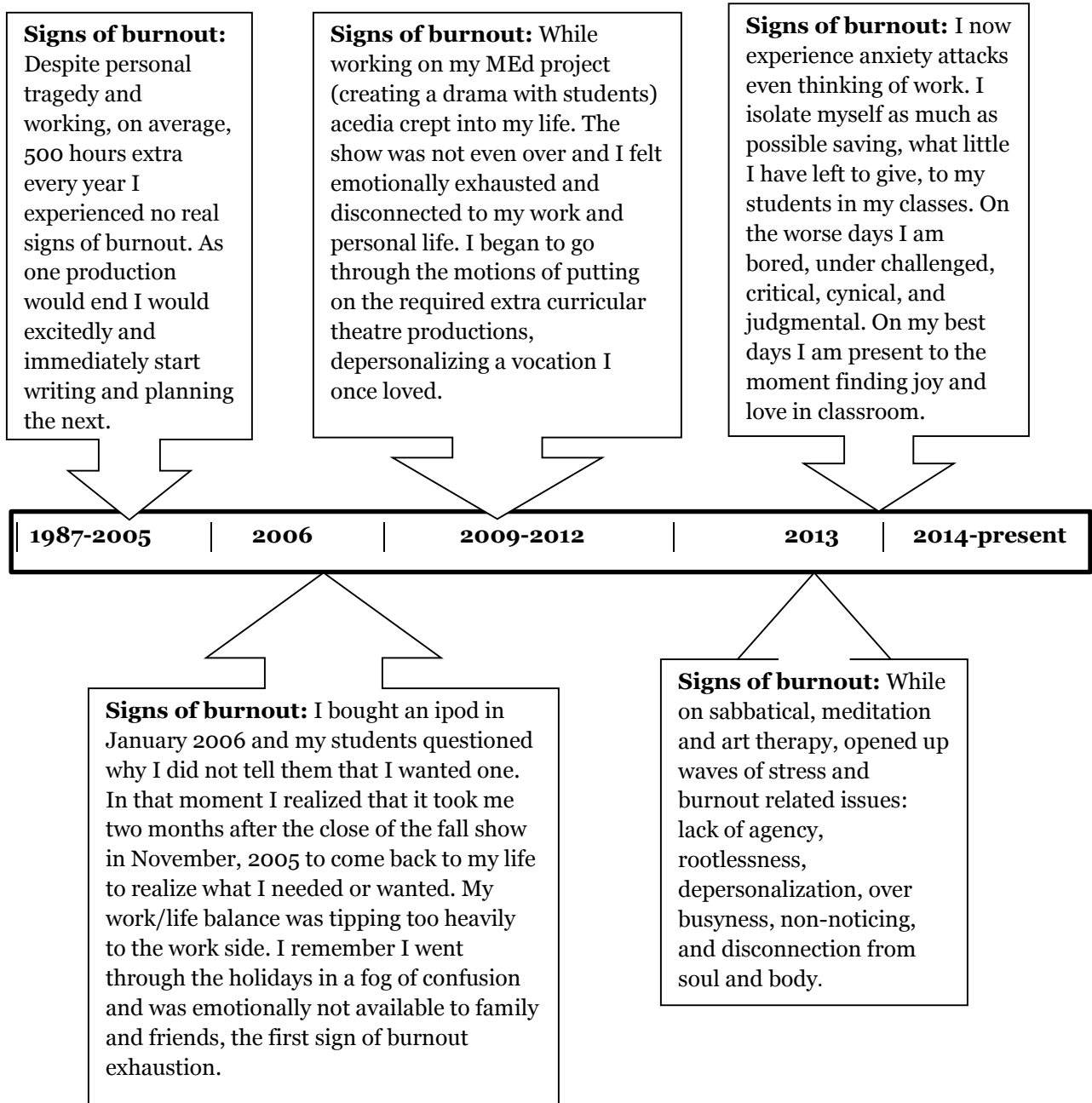


Figure 5: Timeline of signs of burnout in the Artist-Teacher

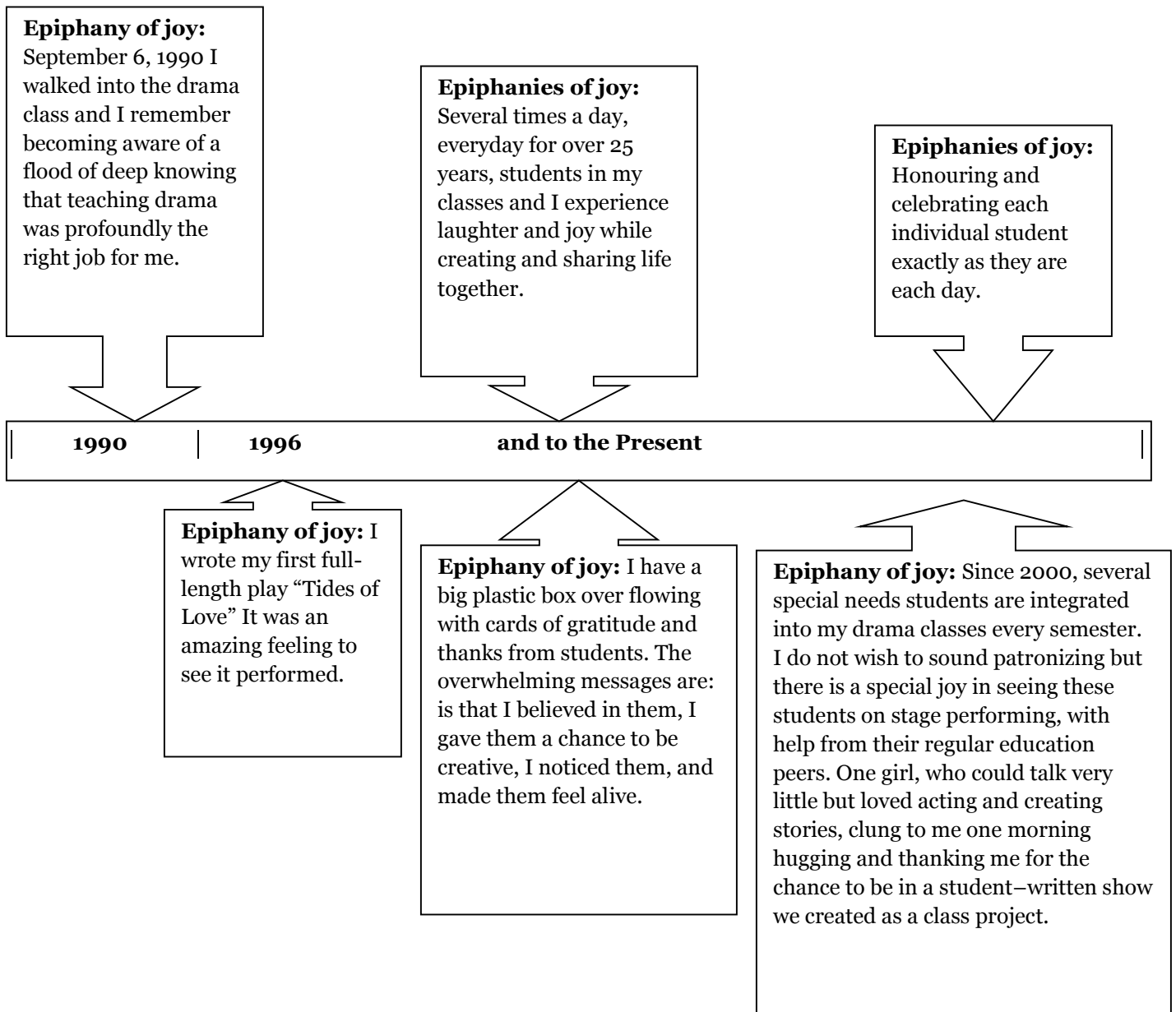


Figure 6: Timeline of epiphanies of joy in teaching for the Artist-Teacher

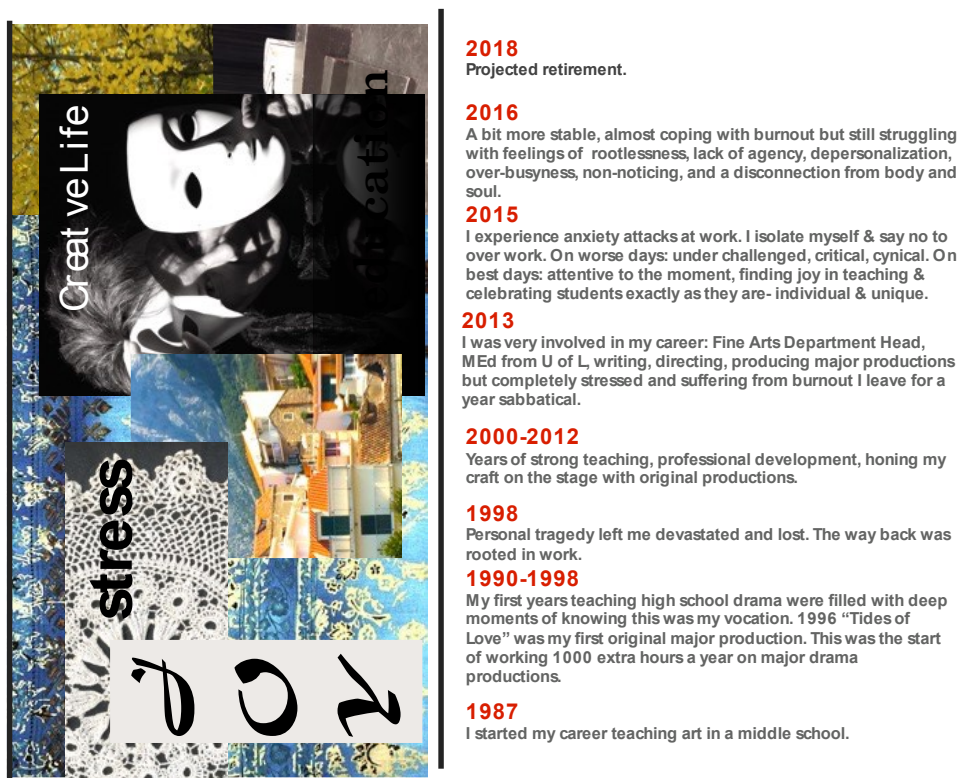


Figure 7: Timeline of the overlapping epiphanies and events in the career of the Artist-Teacher

Journals. Delving into the rehearsal journals of the 53 major theatrical productions I directed, dating back to 1990, as my second data-mining instrument, proved to confirm what I already knew and, in fact, was one of key reasons for my interest in teacher wellness; I am struggling with burn out because I am worn out. I found it distressing to reread my rehearsal journals. The pictures and memories of opening nights or funny theatrical moments that happen during any production sit in stark contrast to working 14-hour days. The memories, that flooded back, were signs of burnout (as early as 2002). I consistently squashed and ignored these signs, resulting in my current situation, where the mere thought of putting a show into production creates, in me, debilitating anxiety. Years of over-commitment have turned my impression of my career into a tailspin of feeling underappreciated and disrespected; a toxic resentment of a career that I once thought of as a vocation. One image, see Figure 8, plucked from my rehearsal

journals, that seemed to sum up my complex relationship with work role overload, was an entry in 2011, written during the second performance of our fall production. This entry, transcribed reads as:

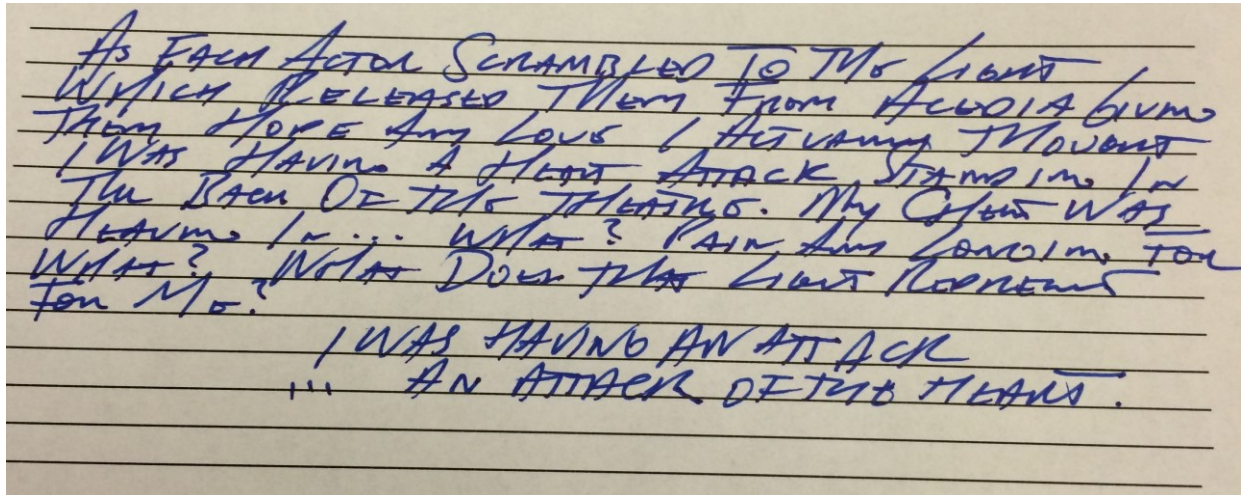


Figure 8: Rehearsal journal entry and transcript, November 23, 2011

As each actor scrambled to the light, which released them from acedia giving them hope through love, I actually thought I was having a heart attack standing in the back of theatre. My chest was heaving in...what? Pain and longing for what? What does that light represent for me? I was having an attack ...an attack of the heart.

The question that I posed in this journal entry: What does the light represent for me? Really stood out as a thoughtful and important moment as most of the journal entries were notes to actors or lists of what had to be finished or ideas for scenes or designs. There were few moments of reflection in my rehearsal journals. I remember writing that reflection in 2011. Of course, I was not physically ill, but the pain in my heart would have to wait several years before I slowed down enough and found time enough to care about what happened that evening. Answering what the *light* means to me motivated my work in teacher wellness and inspired the key scene in

the autoethnographic performance script between the artist and teacher. This journal entry also prompted a scene to be set a circle of light and represents a profound re-imagining of what it means to be an artist-teacher.

Artifacts. Artifacts are ubiquitous physical foundations of a society, “cultural artifacts are objects produced by members of the society that explicitly or implicitly manifest societal norms and values” (Chang, 2008, p. 80). I touch several items every day that define my experience in the culture of the educational workplace. From the simple yellow, extra sharp pencil I use every class to take attendance, to the middle seat of the fifth row in the theatre where I usually sit to mark presentations, my educational artifacts are institutional shabby, characterized by the need to care for these items as they may never be replaced. It has been my experience that the work of schooling is conducted in under-maintained classrooms that either no one cares about or have become over-personalized, territorially protected spaces that teachers treat like their own property. My “institutional biography” is reflected in my tidy costume room, classroom, and theatre; everything in a place ready to be used or lent out just like the acting spaces at university during my undergraduate degree and my high school in Regina during the late 1970s (Britzman, 1986, p. 443). This is my learned behaviour, at the intersection of the world of theatre and the realities of mainstream schooling.

The artifacts of my career suggest how hard it is to instigate change, how slowly that change happens, and how random, haphazard, and precarious is the job of teaching. It took five years to fix theatre lights that are used for curricular and extra-curricular events beyond drama productions and classwork. As school-based and district administrators fought over what to do, who should pay for it, and who would follow through with the repairs, in the end, money raised by student productions paid for the repairs that, by all accounts, should have been a part of regular maintenance. I write major production scripts to save money on royalties and my colleagues compose their summer marching band show every year for the same reason. Often,

the items needed to do the job come with a price tag that our meager budgets do not cover. My relationship with the artifacts of my profession reinforce feelings of being undervalued, and any feeling of accomplishment is tarnished as it has come at too high of a personal cost. The items I work with every day: an old desk, a broken chair, the theatre connected to my classroom, and simple costume pieces and props inspire the *mise en scène* for the performative autoethnographic script in Chapter Four.

Incredible enriching **best** exciting welcomed favourite
 teacher experience amazing kindest enjoy
Thanks wonderful **LOVE**
 Sweet fun happiness belong giving happiest
 Happiness magnificent **confidence** nicest
excellence true compassion
 Smiles enriching **role model** great
inspiring guidance being leader gratitude

Figure 9: Word collage from cards from students, 1990-2013

There is another side to the artifacts of my professional life: thank you cards and letters from students and parents. These usually come in the form a large card signed by the cast and crew or end-of-the-year cards from graduates. I created a word collage, (see Figure 9), by processing the comments from the cards and letters through a computer word-cloud generator. The word-cloud gives greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text. The results of the word-cloud are in stark contrast to my frustration with the other artifacts of my profession. The constant repetition of *love*, *thanks*, *confidence*, *role model*, *inspiring*, and *best*

reflects hooks' (2003) musings on being a beloved teacher and her students' appreciation of her teaching as a force that kept her wedded to the classroom long past the moment when she felt she needed to separate and leave.

The comments from my students are heartfelt and incredibly sincere. hooks (2003) understands the classroom as one of the most dynamic work settings precisely because teachers are given such a short amount of time to do so much, and understands that to perform with excellence and grace teachers must be totally present in the moment, totally concentrated, and focused otherwise teaching is diminished. I am in deep gratitude to all the students in my classes; I have learned so much from their burgeoning confidence and their emerging talents. I cannot deny, despite suffering with workplace burnout, that I still, when attending to the moment, experience the dazzling joy of teaching and creating with students, which leaves me confused and sad. Perhaps the image in Figure 10, coupled with my previous description of teaching while suffering with workplace burnout, see the timeline in Figure 5, comes close to expressing the contrasting and conflicting feelings of joy in the classroom. It is a precious shiny ball of creating with students and then stepping out of the classroom into a black void of stress, I am overwhelmed by the symptoms of crushing workplace burnout: exhaustion, anxiety, and disillusionment.



Figure 10: Image of the paradox of teaching for the Artist-Teacher

Self-images. Creating a polyphonic environment, in which to explore teacher wellness, can rely on the visual self-image as a powerful generator of characters and their narratives. Chang (2008) understands the “power of visualization as a communication tool is enhanced by the simplicity and succinctness of a visual image into which complex texts are condensed and captured” (p. 81). Welwood (2014) offers opening to our experiences and facing and working with ourselves, as we are, instead of aggressively trying to make ourselves into something different as a positive approach to wellness. The next set of epiphanies centres around a series of self-images I created using the technique of collage. I created a written collage in the form of a culture gram and several visual representations of myself. These epiphanies are my understanding of myself as a person, an artist, and an educator.

Reflecting on the present or current values, thoughts, emotions, interactions, and behaviours offers the autoethnographic researcher vivid details and fresh perspectives. This is, in effect, classic fieldwork with one exception: collecting data on one’s own life instead of observing the lives of others. Self-observational data records the researcher’s actual “behaviours, thoughts, and emotions as they occur in their natural contexts” (Chang, 2008, p. 90). Cultural values are what a person is encouraged to strive for and are “encoded in moral standards by which behaviours and thoughts are publicly and privately sanctioned” (Chang, 2008, p. 96). Cultural values are manifested in personal preferences: liking and disliking of people, activities, and material possessions.

To analyze my personal preferences and values with the goal of opening the possibility of understanding my social ethos I created a culture-gram or web-chart presented in Figure 11. At the centre reside my primary identities with the arms of the web labeled: language, religion, class, interests, multiple intelligences, profession, gender, and race/ethnicity. Details for each section are connected to the applicable arm or branch of the web-chart (Chang, 2008). This web

chart locates myself within my social context. The culture-gram, similar to the timelines, is a means of charting or visualizing the connectivity and the fractured nature of my lived experience.

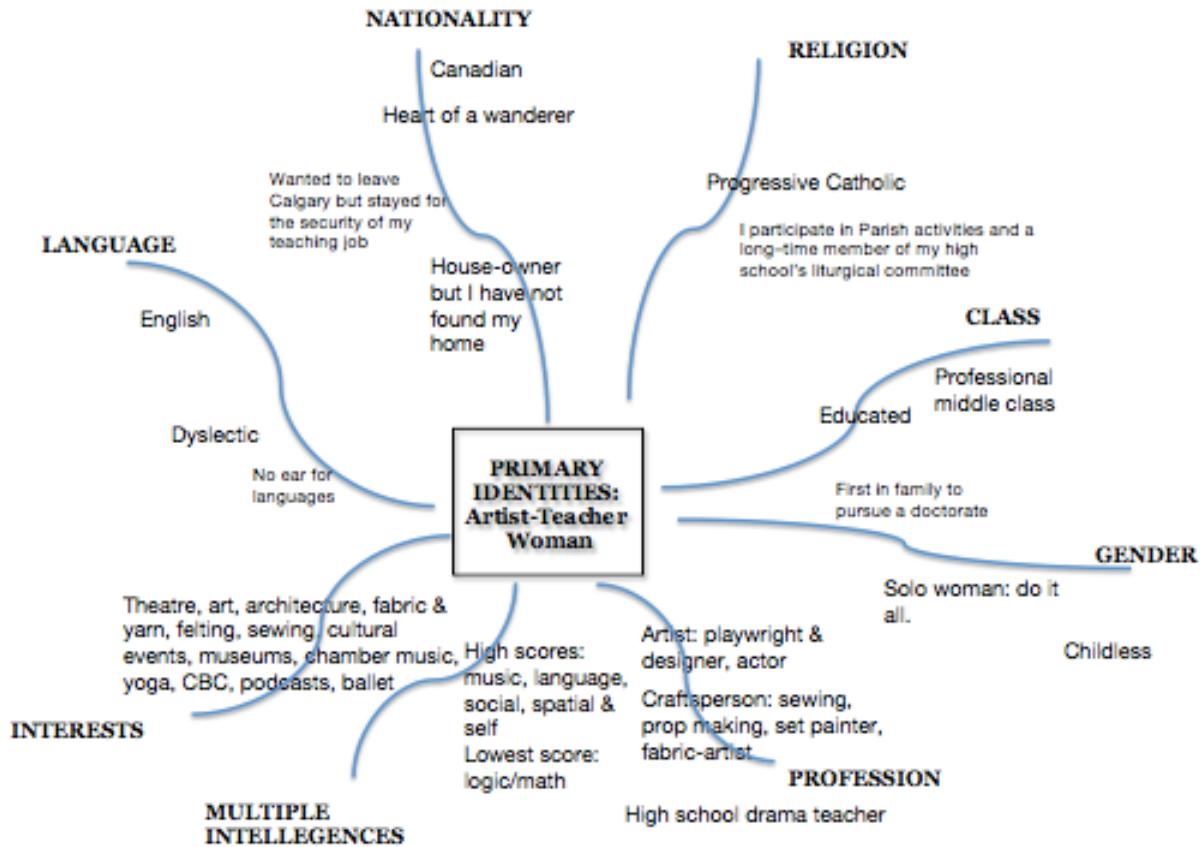


Figure 11: Culture-gram of the Artist-Teacher



Figure 12: Self-image of Artist-Teacher I



Figure 13: Self-image of Artist-Teacher II



Figure 14: Self image of Artist-Teacher III

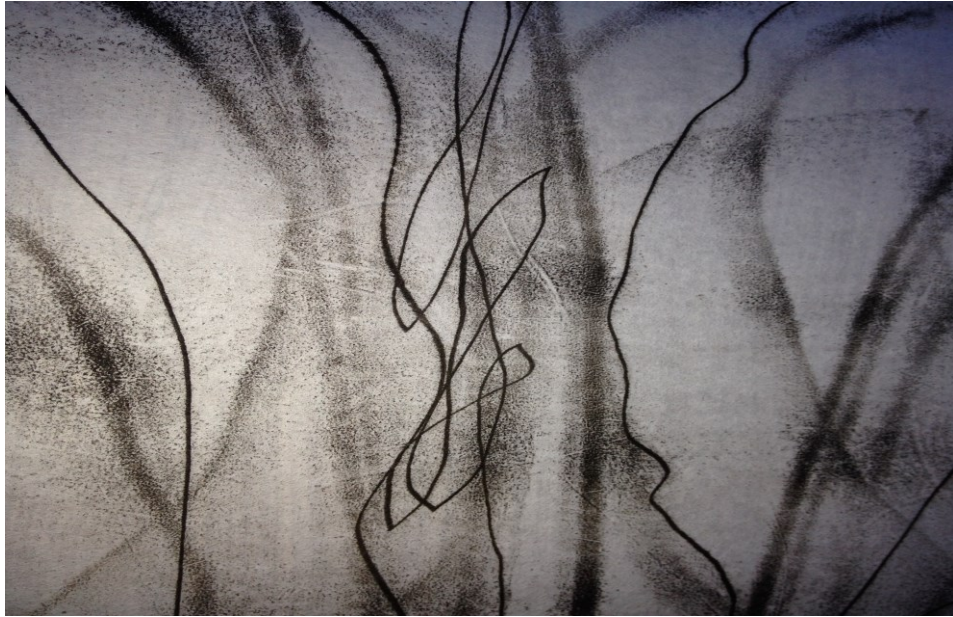


Figure 15: Self-image of Artist-Teacher IV ink on rice paper (2013)



Figure 16: Self-image of Artist-Teacher V craft paper, tempera, oil pastel (2014)

I created five self-images. The first one, Figure 12 was created during an art therapy class at St. Stephen's College on the University of Alberta campus. The image evolved through a series of challenges involving painting my own image for the first time and a state of deep introspection I found myself in when on sabbatical in 2013. It felt that I peeled away layers of artifice surrounding my own self-identity as I ripped away the various papers I had glued to a photograph of my face; I found I was ready to expose more of my true nature. I continued to work with the ideas of masking and revealing with the second self-image I created as seen in Figure 13. The full mask represents my constructed identity as an artistTeacher.

I hid behind and within this professional paradigm for years. The half mask is my struggle with work place burnout—half in the job and half trying to be open to my authentic self, searching for balance. I am shy and leery to reveal my whole self; free from a constructed way of being. The third self-image, Figure 14, is a collection of my staff identification cards. These cards have hung around my neck for decades and I discovered that a collage of these cards created a generative space for character building. Viewing an image, especially a photograph, allows for a “fusion of horizons...between material and idea, photograph and word, authorship and audience, one culture and another...[creating] spaces that not only accommodate, but demand poly-media play” (Emme & Kirova, 2010, p. 177). The camera captured a particular view of reality within the boundaries of its frame (Rahn, 2010). A playwright's imagination and ability to come at an idea from various directions also can work within a boundary.

As I am creating a performance autoethnographic script, I was interested in the various emotions I noted in each of the photo identification cards, which, speaks to the possibility of one character representing many voices or aspects of a single person's reflections on their lived experiences. The last two self-images are abstract, created again in my art therapy class. Figures 15 and 16 are only two of many pieces of art that I created during my sabbatical that highlighted for me that I was in need of changing the way the story lived in me. I experienced sublime

moments of raw and authentic art making in the art therapy studio during two graduate-level art therapy classes at St. Stephen's College on the University of Alberta campus. I was able to stop (Fels, 2015) long enough to glimpse the depth of my disillusionment with the teaching profession.

Through creating art every week, I began to notice the re-occurring motif of a tangle or knot. Over and over I witnessed embodied truth through art making, revealing to me that I had, knot by knot, bound myself up with paralyzing stress and struggle. All was not right; I finally took notice. Figure 15 was created in silence listening to live music. It is part of a series, in which each piece was pulled off a simple ink press and revealed what was imaged by just touching the ink though the paper. Figure 16 is a close-up of a large piece created while blindfolded. I was encouraged to fill the page using whole-body gestures. These tangled knots became very strong images, both figuratively and physically, for prop and directing elements that found their way into my final autoethnographic script.

If I am to renew my teaching vocation as a fine arts teacher, I needed to undo the tangled mess I found myself in—a mess of my own creation. And yet, what is the point of this self-care if the system is a mess, too? Speaking truth (Smith, 2006) is the first step to finding a way to make teaching a livable experience. The art projects from my sabbatical are my true confession; hand on heart, stating I am part of the problem. I believe my choice to hold on to both identities, in the last moments of the autoethnographic performance when the artist returns to the teacher, echoes McNiff's (1998) channels of spontaneous response and expression opening to what one knows intuitively to be true. Art making, for me, has the potential to be visceral and reflective; it is the knowing and the unknowing (Snowber & Bickel, 2015) the way to live and teach in truth. The immediate problem is the silent conspiracy teachers have with the institution of schooling, the conspiracy that allowed my work in education fall into workplace disillusionment. The solution rests in the moment when one stops being one's own enemy and frees oneself from

institutional constraints to gain power, if one is able, to confront the institution through caritas and self-knowledge.

Coding the data. Johnny Saldaña (2013) defines “a code in qualitative inquiry [as] most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 3). I coded my data using a dramaturgical coding system, which employed words reflective of theatrical performances. My level 1 code, Figure 17, was developed as a response to seeking renewal for the Artist-Teacher by addressing the multidimensionality of the self, the teacher, and the artist. I made use of Saldaña’s (2013) dramaturgical coding that can approach the data verbally, physically, emotionally, spiritually, visually, and aurally. This code allowed a distancing to occur between current research on teacher wellness found in Chapter Two and my own personal stories and experiences as expressed in the fieldwork displayed in this chapter. The analytical and unemotional aspect of data coding afforded an opportunity for the research and my own stories to be transformed into metaphors, abstractions, personified concepts, and motifs from a more objective perspective in the hopes of creating a performance script that was more universal in nature rather than one too autobiographical.

In Level 1 coding, the goal is to capture a datum’s primary content and essence (Saldaña, 2013). A dramaturgical coding system understands life as performance (Saldaña, 2013) where transcripts become monologues and dialogues, notes of events represent improvised scenes complete with stage directions, and artifacts and descriptions are inspiration for scenery, costumes, and props. The dramaturgical code utilizes terms and conventions from theatrical production analysis including: objectives; conflicts and obstacles; strategies, attitudes, and emotions toward the setting, others, and whatever is being confronted; and the subtext or the unspoken or implied thoughts and impressions. Dramaturgical coding is appropriate for performative autoethnographic research as it is well suited to exploring intrapersonal (thoughts

unique to the self) and interpersonal (relationships with others) participant experiences leading to arts-based presentational formats (Saldaña, 2013). Saldaña (2013) and Chang (2008) encourage the use of trust in self, observation, reasoning, and interpretation when coding visual, textual, and concrete data sources. I understand the coding processes to articulate the intuitive coding that all artists employ when they are creating. A formal code maybe just another way to organize and express the creative process. My Level 1 coding acts as an assurance that my epiphanies or insights into the issues of teacher stress and burnout are articulated into a performance language or script.

I coded my epiphanies and my reactions to my investigations of current literature (in Chapter Two) into two ways: through the elements of character analysis (Figure 17) and through theatre conventions (Figure 18). I placed all the categories for both analyses on a simple grid chart and then pulled key words, phrases, and images from the research literature and my personal epiphanies. I acknowledge that my Level One coding is reductionist, fragmented and wholly reflective of my personal needs of as an Artist-Teacher-Researcher. The numbers in parenthesis reflect the number of times each individual item was noted, either in the research literature or in my epiphanies.

Objectives	Obstacles	Subtext	Action Verbs
Work/life balance/health (7)	Teaching creates stress (22)	Alternate response to teacher wellness (2)	Engaging (7)
Engaging with students (3)	Work intensification (15)	Externally imposed educational policies (15)	Reflecting (12)
Teacher wellness (5)	Teacher burnout (27)	Exiting the teaching profession (4)	Working (9)
Professional identity (7)	Alienation (9)	Resiliency (8)	Imposing (7)
Sense of self (9)	Over work (16)	Intentions (5)	Coping (4)
Collaborative connections (4)	Lack of agency (17)	Patience (8)	Stressing (7)
Teaching is emotional work (9)	Emotional exhaustion (25)		Struggling (9)
Present experiencing (11)	Disillusioned (25)		Advocating (2)
Transformational change (5)	Myopic focus on day to day events (12)		Recovering (2)
Love (33)	Constant change (9)		Fixing (14)
Joy (22)	Challenging relationships (9)		Reflecting (10)
Theatrical story-telling (12)	Poor working conditions (12)		Opening in honesty (11)
	Anxiety (22)		Deconstructing (15)
	Imbalance between what is unrealistic and what needs to be done (20)		Creating (8)
	Teacher as individualist (9)		Eliminate (3)
	Lack of workplace flexibility (19)		
	Extra-curricular work requirements (17)		
	Accountability (11)		
	Under-appreciated (12)		

Figure 17: Level One coding using character analysis (the number in parentheses refers to the number of times the item was referenced in research literature or my epiphanies)

The first Level One code was a grid design utilizing character analysis. I identified the following theatrical terms as the categories for this analysis: objectives or one’s intention, obstacles in the way of intentions, subtext or what is not said but implied or hidden, and action verbs. The first heading in my Level One code using character analysis was *objectives*. Objectives are a theatrical term, identified by actors, as playable actions whose aim is to get what the

character wants in each scene. Action is personalized and repeatable. In the Level One coding, using character analysis, I scanned research literature and my own epiphanies for action words or actionable ideas and put in parentheses how many times the same action was noted. I repeated this exercise for *obstacles* or what prevents objectives from succeeding; *subtext* being the difference between what is said and what is left unsaid; and *action verbs*, again, a theatrical term used as a shortcut to the objective or what the character wants and how or if they are going to succeed.

I also created a second Level One code using headings taken from theatre conventions. Theatre conventions are “indicators of the way in which time, space, and presence can interact and be imaginatively shaped to create different kinds of meanings in theatre” (Neelands & Goode, 2000, p. 4). Theatre conventions come as close as any written and described form can to framing and defining aspects of the theatrical creative process. There is, of course, unlimited variance in how each convention is ultimately designed. I have chosen to make use of several theatre conventions that I know well and have used successfully throughout my career. These headings make up the categories for the theatrical conventions coding analysis: *monologues* (giving witness), *context* and/or narrative scenes, *soundscapes*, *tableau* (still narration), *sculpture* (physicalized emotion), *cross-cutting* (an editing devise), and although, not a convention per se, *mise en scène* or all the elements of technical theatre such as set, costume, prop, lighting and sound design. Using the top rated themes (those with a higher number reflecting the number of times the theme was found in research literature or my epiphanies), identified in the Level One coding of character analysis, I listed these themes and placed an X in the column of the appropriate theatre convention that could be used to transform the theme into a theatrical script.

Topics from investigations of current literature on teacher wellness and the field work epiphanies [subtext] Action Verbs (AV)	Monologues	Scenes	Soundscape	Tableau	Sculpture	X-cut	Mise en scène
Caritas [subtext: as alternate response to current teacher wellness rhetoric or resiliency] AV advocating	X			X	X	X	
Professional identities and Sense of self AV struggling	X	X				X	
Meditating in prayer AV reflecting and coping		X					
Present experiencing x cut with stress as abstract movement AV reflecting and coping					X	X	
Work intensification/overload movement resulting in isolation and alienation (imbalance) monologue AV opening in honesty	X		X	X	X		
Teacher burnout [subtext: exiting the teaching profession] AV deconstructing	X	X					
Lack of agency and under-appreciated [subtext: externally imposed educational policies] AV fixing, exploring, and creating		X					
Anxiety	X	X					
Disillusioned	X	X					
Accountability and constant change [subtext: does society value the teaching profession?] AV exploring	X	X				X	
Emotionally exhausted	X	X					
Polyphonic-interactive with live action			X				X
Autoethnographic [one woman show] Puppets-multiple characters Film-interactive with live action Photographs- multiple characters/collage/set design							X X X X

Figure 18: Level One coding using theatrical conventions

Once all data was coded I found that I did not require a formal second level of coding. Level Two coding is an opportunity for emergent codes to surface, to collapse, refine, expand, offer revision of first level codes, to fill in the gaps, or come “out-of-the-fog” (Chang, 2008, p. 121). As a playwright and theatre director I was able to discern Level Two insights without the formality of recoding. I embraced the process that Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2011) encourage, which suggests that the autoethnography researcher search for patterns of cultural experience and categories that may need redefining or relabeling. This searching is not a linear process (Chang,

2008; Saldaña, 2013) rather, categories overlap and one modification informs another; there is a dynamic relationship between data, labels, and classification choices. The analysis and interpretation of data encourages new ways of organizing the data, which in turn, refines the interpretation and analysis of the data collected.

Interpretation of data: Contextual analysis. Before I took the data into the theatre studio to become the inspiration for the autoethnographic performance, I conducted a contextual analysis to inform the themes of workplace stress, burnout, and healing through seeking wholeness as an artist-teacher. Contextual analysis is an autoethnographic strategy that shifts attention from the personal into the context of the identified culture (Chang, 2008). The practice describes a metaphorical zooming in and out from the personal to the cultural to attempt to “explain and interpret certain behaviours and events in connection with the sociocultural, political, economic, religious, historical, ideological, and geographic environment in which they took place and the data were recorded” (Chang, 2008, p. 136). Adopting Denzin’s (1997) approach, utilizing the multi-platform effect to narrate, contextualize, and expose, analysis turns the data into “evocative performances that have the ability to move audiences to reflective critical action and not just emotional catharsis” (p. 94). As Denzin expresses:

Performance texts unsettle the writer’s place in the text, freeing the text and the writer to become interactional productions. The performance text is the single, most powerful way, for ethnography to recover the meanings of lived experiences. The performed text is a lived experience in two senses. The performance doubles back on the experiences previously represented in the ethnographer’s text. It then re-presents those experiences as embodied performance to the audience (1997, p. 94-95)

The contextual analysis resulted in taking a personal narrative and distilling the story to its thematic essence so the human condition could be articulated symbolically, metaphorically,

or aesthetically. I took several themes into the theatre and created dramatic reflections or dialogue fragments that simultaneously reflected my personal understanding of the experience and the situation as understood within the culture of schooling. To keep the contextual analysis manageable, I stayed within the context of seeking renewal for an artist-teacher, struggling with burn out, teaching high school level theatre studies in an urban Western Canadian Catholic high school. During the contextual analysis, I decided to create within the dramatic presentational form of montage but I framed the theatre conventions within the setting of a short prayer meditation before afternoon classes. I found the coding system proved helpful in directing my creative process towards the most important issues instead of getting sidetracked, and I found it very easy to group ideas into theatre conventions. The key themes for the performance script also became clear through the coding system. Making use of coded data, though on the surface may sound restrictive, was in fact, extremely freeing and stimulating. The self-imposed boundaries offered creative opportunities with clear dramatic action.

Much like a visual artist who creates a series of sketches before committing paint to the final canvas, playwrights create *dialogue fragments* to experiment with character creation to find the voice of the characters and to hear what they have to say. Rather than interviewing each character individually, or constructing a series of character sketches, I was interested in the interconnected spaces of revelation available in the repartee of characters through their interaction with one another revealing character dynamics. This is rich fodder for the playwright.

Uta Hagen (1973), the late, influential Broadway star and acting coach, offers the playwright nine questions to explore when creating characters, which, are presented in Dialogue Fragment I. Her questions have the power to lead the playwright and the actor to action, which is the true difference between prose and plays: the embodied nature of cause and effect acted out on the stage. Some of the dialogue passages, in these dialogue fragments, became part of the autoethnographic script. Both Dialogue Fragment I and II (see Appendix A) are not finished

scripts, they are a place, as a playwright, through which I began to establish the range for the characters and to imagine how the final solo performance will be formatted. Excerpts from these Dialogue Fragments as well as a charted character sketch (see Figure 19) introduce each character. Please note the simple costume item that indicates each character. The solo actor will utilize these costume pieces when morphing or changing from one character to another.

Name of character	MAGGIE Superhero magpie of teacher wellness.	SECOND SELF An alter ego of Artist-Teacher.	CARITAS A personification of the concept.	ARTIST An exaggerated stereotype of an imaginative and creative person.	AWFUL THOUGHTS An amalgamation of the anti-public education stance.
Summary of character traits	A magpie, who oversees unwanted performative research responses and an impatient superhero who saves the ARTIST-TEACHER from herself.	The moderator, a gentler Maggie, a bit of a pleaser, and a reminder that the need for teacher wellness is real.	The voice of an alternate viewpoint to cynicism, disengagement, and entrenchment in issues of schooling.	A free spirit, a fantasy of a working artist.	A gruff critic, aggressively anti-public education, anti-union, and a neo-libertarian.
Choices made by solo performer to denote character	Wears a collar made of black, white, and blue feathers.	Wears a white scarf.	A voice, presented as a light shining through non-carcinogenetic theatre fog.	Wears an exquisite multi-hued scarf.	Wears a man's silk tie.

ANXIETY A personification of a symptom workplace burnout.	DISILLUSIONMENT A personification of a symptom workplace burnout.	EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION A personification of a symptom workplace burnout.
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<p>One of three symptoms of workplace burnout, she is unable to cope with any situation and over reacts and usually breaks down crying. She is jittery, prone to crying and/or freaking out.</p>	<p>One of the three symptoms of workplace burnout, she doesn't care about anything, is sharp-tongued, and cynical. She is spacey, withdrawn, disengaged, and body posture is slumped.</p>	<p>One of the symptoms of workplace burnout, she is emotionally unavailable and cannot do anything. She is twitchy, restless, and unsettled.</p>
<p>Uses a large black scarf as safety blanket that she wrings in her hands and holds to her face.</p>	<p>Drapes the large black scarf loosely around her neck so it hangs down in front on either side.</p>	<p>Wraps the large black scarf around and around her neck, then unwraps it and repeats this action.</p>

Figure 19: Character sketches for dialogue fragments

Excerpt from Dialogue Fragment I: Interviews

This dialogue fragment consists of interviews designed to develop the following characters of Maggie, the superhero magpie of teacher wellness, the alter-ego Second Self, the Artist, Awful Thoughts, Caritas, and the characters of teacher burnout: Disillusioned, Exhausted, and Anxious.

SETTING: Centre stage with chairs in a semi-circle.

AT RISE all but the teacher burnout characters have arrived and are settling into their chairs. The

INTERVIEWER is sitting in the middle chair.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you all so much for agreeing to meet with me...

AWFUL THOUGHTS: We agreed to this? I was told to show up.

ARTIST: Do you always do what you are told?

MAGGIE: There is still time to leave.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: Is this bird for real? A talking bird?

MAGGIE: I'm actually the star of this dissertation; a hermeneutic vehicle for contingent understandings that are situated in the lives, relationships, contexts, and histories of the Artist-Teacher and current educational culture. Moules (2002) suggests that you could think of me a mistress of creativity and invention, with the capacity to see things anew and whose power is in change, prediction, and interpretation.

ARTIST: (*Maggie and the Artist high five*) In your face Awful Thoughts. Nice referencing, the academic crowd are going to love you.

SECOND SELF: Everyone please! Sorry, interviewer, you were saying...

INTERVIEWER: ...that I thought I might guide this interview with Hagens's (1973) nine questions for creating character and let each of you have a go as you see fit.

The complete script of Dialogue Fragment I is available in Appendix A.

Excerpt from Dialogue Fragment II: Into the light

This dialogue fragment experiments with various theatre conventions and continues to develop the following characters: Maggie, the superhero magpie of teacher wellness, the alter-ego Second Self, the Artist, Awful Thoughts, Caritas, and the characters of teacher burnout: Disillusioned, Exhausted, and Anxious.

SETTING: a fine arts classroom. Upstage on a platform is a teacher's desk behind it an office chair.

AT RISE an ARTIST-TEACHER, struggling with burnout, enters the classroom upright, indicates closing the door and leans against it for a second, making a decision she deliberately walks to her desk and sits down. Rolling back her shoulders and audibly exhaling and inhaling she settles into prayer meditation.

ARTIST-TEACHER: (*Looking at her watch*) 10 minutes until class starts, perfect... (*starts meditation music on her computer and closes her eyes*)... just follow the breath...inhale...exhale.

(The characters that live in the mind of the ARTIST-TEACHER enter up centre of the desk, behind and to the left and right of the meditating ARTIST-TEACHER and freeze in a tableau. Each character becomes animated as they speak and moves around the desk to centre stage.)

SECOND SELF: We, the characters of this autoethnographic performance, are behind every word the Artist-Teacher utters. Some of us are on the tip of her tongue, subverting her natural reticence while others filter her thoughts leaving so much unsaid. We are in each exhale that speaks to truth and power no matter how ignored she feels or how much she despairs because of unlivable educational workplace conditions. We are metaphors, super-heroes, and personified concepts. This is the Artist (*moves centre*), who steps up with idea after idea pleading to be heard, while Awful Thoughts (*moves centre*) rings in her ears, pronouncing and scratching like a broken record, all kinds of propaganda created to get the Artist-Teacher to second-guess herself.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: (*Interrupting*) Yeah, we are all in here together all right. If I weren't here, it would be all basking in the sunshine, breathing deeply, and wasting time. The Artist-Teacher does get paid for her job. I don't need to see my taxes being spent on non-essential luxuries. The more time I spend in here with all of you the more convinced I am that a moratorium on arts-based research is warranted. (*Taunts DISILLUSIONED TEACHER*) You know teachers are just professional, over-paid babysitters caring for children until they are old enough to enter the workforce.

DISILLUSIONED TEACHER: (*Moves centre*) I feel myself emptying and my heart hardens. I honestly don't care. My work...all the demands. What is it all for?

EXHAUSTED TEACHER: (*Moves centre*) I have no energy to smile, no energy to care, and yet I am twitchy, restless, and unsettled.

ANXIOUS TEACHER: (*Stays upstage*) I can't do this: not any more...don't make me go back.

SECOND SELF: Welcome to my world. I am your tour guide during this prayer mediation into the mind of a fine arts teacher. I am her Second Self or the Other I. As the alter ego of the Artist-Teacher I act as a bit of moderator. I am gentle soul, a bit lost in the world, a bit of a pleaser, and not sure of my role in this academic work except in the moments when a reminder is needed that teacher wellness is real and the Artist-Teacher struggles with it every day. We are all here to articulate her understanding of the teaching profession within her own context and the greater culture of education the only way she knows how: the time has come for her research to be discussed and it is through us—a polyphonic theatrical presentation. You just heard some voices, which, I suspect, if you are a teacher struggling with stress or burnout, you will recognize. You have already heard Awful Thoughts, who says things that, as a 28-year veteran of the teaching profession, make my blood boil even if her words do have the sting of truth.

The complete script of Dialogue Fragment II is available in Appendix A.

3.3 Concluding Thoughts on Performative Autoethnographic Methodology and Methods

Returning to Saldaña's (2005) call for entertainment, the pressure and assumption is that the quality of the art piece in performative autoethnography be of a high standard; that it not just regurgitate didactic academic discourse or rely on glib, slick production effects with little depth or rigorous thought. The process of identifying and coding epiphanies from my personal experiences and reactions to researched literature on teacher wellness has resulted in

an autoethnographic script. In Chapter Four, the written script is presented; along with a discussion of the creative process used to produce it and a detailed look at subsequent emergent themes that occurred during the rehearsal phase, of preparing the script for performance.

Before Words: Inside an Exhale**Scene iii**

SETTING: this vignette is a puppet play. The characters are stick puppets. Each puppet has a body shape that reflects their personality but each one has my face on it in an expression that is appropriate for each character. Using a puppet stage, the performer will be hidden and a Velcro® strip allows the puppets to be stuck on to the frame of the puppet stage. Puppet conventions suggest that the puppet moving, is the one speaking, as the actor adopts a voice to suit each character. For the character of the ARTIST-TEACHER, the actor will rise up and speak to the puppets directly with her face filling the frame of the puppet stage.

AT RISE a production meeting is just about to start before, yet another, rehearsal of the performative autoethnographic script. ALL enter except MAGGIE.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: All I said was: Wow, how hard can it be to get your cues? You only have two lines!

ANXIETY: I just can't stand all this pressure. Stop fussing me. I'm in a fragile state.

SECOND SELF: Stop being such a bully!

ARTIST: Yeah, back off Awful Thoughts. She's fragile.

ARTIST-TEACHER: Please, can I get everyone's attention? I did some rewrites from the notes I made on the last rehearsal?

MAGGIE: *(bursts in, laden with take-out coffee)* Here I am darlings! Traffic was crazy!

DISILLUSIONED: Can't you fly? I thought you were a superhero magpie?

EMOTIONALLY EXHAUSTED: Ignore her. Did you get the coffee?

MAGGIE, SUPERHERO MAGPIE OF TEACHER WELLNESS: Starbucks© for everyone. They put your names on all the cups.

(The actor as the ARTIST-TEACHER sticks a small cup on to each of the puppets as the characters thank MAGGIE.)

ARTIST-TEACHER: If I could get you all to sit down. And really, we have a perfectly good coffee-maker back stage...and I just bought cream this morning. As I was saying there are a few changes I would like to discuss...

MAGGIE: *(ignoring the ARTIST-TEACHER says to ANXIETY)* I got you some calming tea. It just might help you to remember your TWO LINES!

AWFUL THOUGHTS: That's what I said!

ANXIETY: Now both of you are picking on me. *(spills the tea as she starts to cry)*

SECOND SELF: Careful you'll hurt yourself. *(helps ANXIETY clean up)* See what you have done? You both should be ashamed of yourselves.

(MAGGIE and AWFUL THOUGHTS move away from SECOND SELF and the spilled tea).

ARTIST-TEACHER: *(Pops up to hand out the new scripts by sticking tiny booklets on to each puppet)* There are just a couple of pages of new ideas...

ARTIST: Hey, cool you actually rewrote the ending. I wasn't sure that the Teacher could make it without me but really does Maggie have to drop me right back into everything?

DISSILLUSIONED: WELL, I SEEM TO HAVE BEEN DROPPED RIGHT OFF THE PAGE! I have no lines at all, in fact, you wrote the three of us completely out of the script! Really! In a

dissertation about teacher wellness you condensed emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and workplace disillusionment all into the character of the Teacher? Thanks for nothing!

ANXIETY: *(Stops crying)* What? No more lines? No more rehearsals? Perfect by me.

EMOTIONALLY EXHAUSTED: I've been rejected...again? *(The actor as the ARTIST-TEACHER rises up to explain the changes).*

AWFUL THOUGHTS: Well, at least I'm still in this play.

MAGGIE: *(to the ARTIST-TEACHER)* Are you sure you thought through these changes? You are going to be in big trouble, if their union hears about the emotional abuse you caused them, by writing them out of the script.

ARTIST-TEACHER: There is no union for characters that live in my head! And a rewrite is not emotional abuse. It's called editing. *(The actor stays in the frame).*

SECOND SELF: So, after everything I've done for you I'm gone, with one quick tap of the delete key. Fine, stay with your magpie. No one is going to understand why you used a stupid bird in the first place. *(ARTIST-TEACHER starts to explain)* And you can save your explanation of Maggie, as a hermeneutic vehicle for contingent understandings that are situated in the lives, relationships, contexts, and histories of the Artist-Teacher and current educational culture, for your disseration defence. Good luck with that!

MAGGIE: I am also a mistress of creativity and invention with the capacity to see things anew and whose power is in change, prediction, and interpretation.

SECOND SELF: You are nothing but a bossy, loud, know-it all...

MAGGIE: At least I'm not a self-important, alter ego who took over...

SECOND SELF: ...self-important? Took over? Really! Bring it on birdbrain!

(MAGGIE and SECOND SELF start to tussle and ANXIETY, EMOTIONALLY EXHAUSTED, and DISSILLUSIONED get caught up in the fray).

ANXIETY: Stop! Just stop! I need to get out of here.

EMOTIONALLY EXHAUSTED: I do not want to have any part of this research if this is how the symptoms of teacher workplace burnout are treated.

DISSILLUSIONED: I just knew nothing would come of all this research.

CARITAS: Please, please stop arguing... ladies...corvidae!

SECOND SELF: (turning on CARITAS) And you...you...you are choking me with your non-carcinogenic theatre fog and I can't believe she gave you the role of hero or heroine or whatever pronoun one uses for a talking concept...

MAGGIE: (interrupting) ...umm...if you actually read this dissertation...it's clear that I save the day.

SECOND SELF: Someone shut that bird up or I will!

AWFUL THOUGHTS: Who needs Netflix© this is better than anything I could download.

(The upset puppets end up exiting the scene by falling out of the puppet frame: some in front some behind. The ARTIST-TEACHER is left in the frame gently hitting her head repeatedly against the top rail).

ARTIST-TEACHER: I could have done a conventional qualitative study. I could have interviewed a few drama teachers about working conditions, but no, no, I had to be an arts-

based researcher. I had to create a performative autoethnographic script, with a cast of characters, who are stuck in my head. Out, damned characters! Out, I say! (*Blackout*).

Chapter 4: The Performance Script

Johnny Saldaña (2005) describes a theatrical performance created from ethnographic material as an artistically composed arrangement of qualitative data using drama literacy conventions. The theatre practitioner has an infinite collection of theatrical devices available to them to portray a story for the stage. Each theatrical device provides a unique dramatic structure which influences how the scene is set up and how involved the audience will be reflecting the nature of text. Dramatic forms may be created by combined hybrid, polyphonic, and multi-layered narratives featuring juxtaposition and metaphor. The data dictates the form: a monologue, for example, can reveal a personal confession in a very intimate manner, while reader's theatre can distance the material allowing for reflective commentary—it just depends on what effect is wanted. Saldaña (2005) simplifies the endless permeations of theatrical choices bluntly expressing that:

Theatre's primary goal is to entertain—to entertain ideas as it entertains its spectators. With ethnographic performance, then, comes the responsibility to create an entertainingly informative experience for an audience, one that is ethically sound, intellectually rich, and emotionally evocative. Ethnotheatre reveals a living culture through its character-participants, and if successful, the audience learns about their world and what it is like to live it. (p. 14)

Denzin (2014) concurs that the goal of an autoethnographic performance is not to produce standard social science research; rather, autoethnographic performance aspires to create a performance text that moves others to ethical and reflective action. This makes performative autoethnography difficult to judge by traditional positivist criteria. Criteria can be a double-edged sword. It can be immensely helpful, as a portal into a standard for excellence, (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Denzin, 2014; Ellis, 2004; Norris, 2011) and it can strangle creativity,

innovation, and imagination. Language can fail us, at times, when we try to critique a piece of art. Barone and Eisner (2012) caution that criteria, to be applied to any artwork, should be guided by the features of the work itself. Autoethnography is more than art; embedded within autoethnographic performance considerations is a moral and ethical responsibility to the individual honouring the context of the researched culture. Researchers (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Denzin, 2014; Ellis, 2004; Norris, 2011) have created rich conversations as they challenge themselves to articulate evaluative criteria for performative autoethnography.

Tom Barone and Elliot Eisner (2012) insist that arts-based research (e.g. through autoethnography) should get to the heart of the social issue being explored and illustrate a significant social commentary. There is a need for significance, ethical considerations, and reflexivity ensuring the researcher is cognizant of their responsibility to the greater story honouring the political within the personal narrative. Ellis (2004) brings the political to the personal, asking why and how the work is compelling to the audience, while Denzin (2014) calls for meaning in the lived experience. Educational arts-based research is challenged to move beyond the personal and conduct an analysis of the data, in such a way, as to come to a place of truth and resonance, taking into account multiple voices and perspectives.

Poiesis, etymologically Greek for the act of making or producing, when used as a criteria component, requires that performative autoethnography or any arts-based research actually produces a work of art rather than discussing art already created. Barone and Eisner (2012) expect an actual piece of art that considers the created art form holistically. Ellis (2004) and Denzin (2014) look for artful, embodied engagement from the artist-researcher.

Researchers who approach performative autoethnography as a methodology should strive to achieve a balance between the aesthetic, the political, the personal, and the public; stressing the need for the personal to reflect the political/public, while insisting that good art is good

research, capable of generating verisimilitude and significant reflections, while juggling issues of power, gender, and privilege. Public positioning (Norris, 2011) challenges the research to be evocative and elicit a response from the audience. This is a crucial element; for, if the final presentation is too self-centered, too cut off, not accessible, or vague the audience is alienated. Without a way into the art, all insight and connection is lost and engaged conversation is in danger of being circumvented or one sided, effectively muzzling the audience. I sincerely believe that performative autoethnographic research must aspire to connect with the audience in some way: to aim to evoke a response or reflection that may lead to critical action, to heal, or enhance future life experiences with increased understanding.

In this chapter, I present the full script, for my autoethnographic performance, entitled: *A Meditation on Caritas and Teaching the Dramatic Arts: A Re(act)ion to Teacher Wellness* in script and performance [[hyperlink here](#)] formats. My performative autoethnographic self-study, inspired by my epiphanies and current academic research, explores the major themes of this dissertation: fine arts teacher identity and the negotiation between the needs of the artist and those of the educator; teacher wellness beyond stress reduction; and an interruption to the discourse on current educational workplace conditions through caritas. I conclude this chapter with a brief discussion I am calling an *approaching*, a word that resonates the elusiveness and the difficulty, in being definitive when writing about the theatrical creative process.

4.1 The Script: A Meditation on Caritas—A Re(act)ion to Teacher Wellness

My autoethnographic performance is written as a one-person show. Traditionally, solo performance style relies on theatre conventions and actor choices to stimulate the audience, to engage their imagination, as the performer morphs from one character and setting to another. Morphing is the physical and vocal transformation that an actor employs when quickly changing from one character to another. To aid in audience recognition of characters, signature costume

pieces, (a black sweater for the artist, a black and white top for the teacher, and a feather collar for Maggie), voices, and body positions or physical habits are used to differentiate one character from another. These characters, all aspects of my inner dialogue and reflections on teacher wellness, are not statues or frozen but rather move within the restrictions of their characteristic behaviour. To ease understanding and increase enjoyment for those reading the following script, I will describe each character first and I will include directing notation, in italics and within parentheses, so a full stage picture can be created in the mind's eye of the reader.

I have also created a video presentation of the following play script. The video is offered as a visual aid and insight into character presentation. The visual image can be a powerful catalyst for evoking a visceral or affective response to the material presented in a scripted form. Theatre, performed live or captured on video, can act as a shortcut to the emotional reality of the viewer; a way to enter into the story, living it the way the researcher has experienced it and can “communicate [to the viewer] richly, creatively, and bravely as possible the essence of the experience” (Ely, 1996, p. 169). It is my hope, that this video presentation, brings my research to life through a different way of approaching the material. I can imagine adapting smaller segments of the play script and/or video into a presentational format suitable for a lecture or a workshop on teacher wellness or high school redesign. I believe moments of great personal risk, speaking out to power, and articulating a lived experience offers a space for important conversations to emerge. This reflective quality, possible through the embodied wisdom of performance, is available not only for the performer but for the audience member as well.

Click (or copy and paste) the link to view the video of *Meditation on Caritas—A Re(act)ion to Teacher Wellness* <https://doi.org/10.7939/R3WS8HZ2M>

DRAMATIS PERSONAE (in order of appearance)

TEACHER: a veteran teacher experimenting with a new choice of self-identity, namely, that she is a fine arts teacher who creates artistic opportunities for her students, rather, than an artist-teacher, creating and teaching, within the schooling workplace. This character is a fractured part of a whole person. Recently, the ARTIST-TEACHER admitted defeat and stopped trying, after 28 years, to identify as both an artist and a teacher. When the actor morphs into this character, she breathes in the mantle of teacher, and grows into a smiling, confident, in-control educator, bubbling with ideas and care for her students, a stance, which is masking burnout and workplace identity issues.

ARTIST: this is a fractured character. With the TEACHER experimenting with no longer trying to live as an artist, within an educational setting, the ARTIST is on her own, living a long-dreamed of existence of enough time to think, dream, and create. This is not a perfect life or a stereotype; there is no guarantee that making something from nothing is easy, but it is a state of being, she longed to do, her whole life.

ARTIST-TEACHER: when the actor morphs into the ARTIST-TEACHER, elements of both the ARTST and the TEACHER are evident in the physical and vocal characterization choices. This re-construction of an identity reflects a recommitment to caritas and saying yes to life. The ARTST, TEACHER and ARTIST-TEACHER, all wear the same sweater, as ultimately, they are the same person.

MAGGIE, THE SUPER HERO MAGPIE OF TEACHER WELLNESS: is a hermeneutic vehicle, for contingent understandings that are situated in the lives, relationships, contexts, and histories of the Artist-Teacher and current schooling culture. This character also keeps all the characters in check, through a trickster sensibility, that works to keep self-disillusionment to a minimum. Maggie, is presented by the actor, wearing a costume piece of a white, black, and blue feather

collar or as a disembodied voice, in theatrical terms, a voice over (VO), a recorded voice played over a sound system.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: is another disembodied voice or, in theatrical terms, a voice over (VO), a recorded voice played over a sound system. Awful Thoughts is a composite character, representing the views of market-driven, neoliberal initiatives, and campaigns for accountability and efficiency in education. This character is wary of change and spews hurtful, unsubstantiated, unfair, and frankly unhelpful stereotypical comments about teaching and teachers.

CARITAS: is also a disembodied voice, which appears as theatre fog, illuminated through a low angle theatre spotlight. Caritas represents a humanizing and welcoming “way of educating for life and for all” (Groome, 1998, p. 14) that prioritizes the wellbeing of students and teachers over efficiency and accountability.

A KEY PROP: The chains of over working, over-caring, over-investing are a paper prop, made with found materials, that represent the conditions that caused the Artist-Teacher to struggle with the symptoms of workplace burnout.

SETTING: a theatre stage with a teacher’s desk containing the chains of over-working, over-investing, and over-caring in the drawer and a chair placed behind it, are down left. A small black rostrum block is up right. Behind the box are the feather collar that MAGGIE will wear and a copy of this dissertation.

AT RISE the TEACHER enters up left and crosses down to the desk and sits. Rolling back her shoulders and audibly exhaling and then inhaling she settles into a prayer meditation.

TEACHER: *(Looking at her watch) 10 minutes until class starts, perfect... (Starts soft music on her computer and closes her eyes).*

SOUNDSCAPE OF PRAYER MEDITATION THOUGHTS: I feel myself emptying and my heart hardens. I honestly don't care. This work, all these demands, seems like it's all for nothing. I have no energy to smile, no energy to care, and yet I am twitchy, restless, and unsettled. I can't do this, not any more...don't make me go back.

(Stage lights slowly cross fade: dimming on the desk and slowly illuminating the box, bathing stage right with a soft light tinged with green. The soundscape [pre-recorded voices mixed with the sound effect of wind through trees] is heard through the theatre's sound system as the actor crosses to the box and sits as she morphs into the ARTIST).

ARTIST: I feel myself expanding, easing into this new freedom. I can't believe I actually have space and time to dream and...(sound of a magpie's squawk interrupting and stopping the sound of the trees). What the hell? *(jumps up)* Maggie? How did you find me? What are you doing here?

(MAGGIE is heard as a disembodied voice, or Voice Over (VO) in this scene. This is a theatre convention allowing the actor to talk and respond to another character on the stage.)

MAGGIE, SUPERHERO MAGPIE OF TEACHER WELLNESS (VO): You can run but you can't hide. The Artist-Teacher asked me to look for you.

ARTIST: Don't call her that not any more. She...she...is a teacher. A teacher in the fine arts who makes many creative decisions every day, but don't add the label of artist to her...not any more.

MAGGIE (VO): You two have a falling out? What? Over artistic differences? Come on spill?

ARTIST: No, not a quarrel, more like a shift, a change, I'm walking out on to a new path and I'm not going back *(sits on box)*.

MAGGIE (VO): So, who is to blame for this idea of a brave new solo adventure?

ARTIST: There is no one to blame. Or blame the institute of schooling for all the good that will do. Or blame working while struggling with workplace burnout (*MAGGIE squawks*). Ok...if I'm being honest...we did it to ourselves: the artist and teacher.

MAGGIE (VO): Correct me if I am wrong, but I thought you two were the same person: two halves of the whole. I did mention, at the beginning of this dissertation, that identifying too closely to each other could feel a bit suffocating, a singular identity, with no room to become anyone else but I thought your recent choice of dividing the artist and the teacher with a hyphen was a good comprise; an opening to other hyphens like researcher or whatever you fancied but still parts of a healthy whole.

ARTIST: Maggie, we were the parts of a whole, for a long time, but overwhelming and constant workplace stress has stretched us to this breaking point and we found ourselves, in a moment of clarity, in our drama classroom...

MAGGIE (VO): ...a scene in the classroom...I didn't know about some scene in the classroom. The Artist-Teacher, sorry the Teacher told me that the last time the two of you were together she just let you go? How? Why?

(The lights cross fade; illuminating the desk area and going dark on the black box as the ARTIST crosses to the desk.)

ARTIST: We were in the classroom. *(Throughout the following lines the ARTIST wraps the key prop around and around her body)* We were strung out from yet another long teaching day. Everything felt out of control. The chains of overworking, over investing, and over caring were especially heavy, being weighted down, by our struggle with workplace burnout and anxiety. We were wound up in all of it and started our usual assent out of workplace disillusionment and

emotional exhaustion by *(ARTIST moves up onto the desk, acting out the metaphorical climb out of the pit of overworking and into the light of wellness, dragging the chains behind her)* reminding ourselves, that it is the work we do with our students that really matters, when suddenly, the Artist-Teacher looks at me...*(ARTIST morphs into the ARTIST-TEACHER by switching positions on the desk and changing physical gestures and vocal choices.)*

ARTIST-TEACHER: I can't keep doing this. I really, really can't. I won't. *(Getting angry)* All of this is too much to drag along...to keep inside...all this *(tries to pull the chain off and fails)* I don't care. I don't care about all of this anymore. I don't need any of this. I just want out. *(Upset and defeated)* I admit I brought much of this on myself. I wanted to be the best, wanting to be known as one of those teachers who care, a super educator. Why did I live and work like this? I bought into such a false expectation...*(scoffing)* hero-teacher...being all things to everyone. I wanted to be a teacher who worked as long as it took, to do everything perfectly. I thought being the first in the building and the last to leave was a badge of honour. I was wrong...so wrong...so very wrong. I forgot my purpose, for what life is really about...for joy, for beauty, for play and laughter. *(looking to her left where the ARTIST was)* I straggled ...you ...my artist, through self-importance. Adding the title of artist to my career as a teacher made me...*(ashamed)* made me...special. I'm just as bad as everyone else who subjugates art for their own means. I'm so sorry. Look, please go; I know you have wanted to leave for a really long time...just go. I can carry all *(motions to the chain/rope)* this... it's of my own making anyway...time to own up, don't you think?

(The actor, morphs back into the ARTIST, takes on the same physical and vocal characteristics as before, and moves to the stage left side of the desk.)

ARTIST: In that moment I... I just looked at her ...*(the ARTIST slips out of the chains and climbs off the desk)* said thank you and just left. *(The ARTIST takes a deep breath in, on the*

exhale a smile of relief spreads across her face. A strong center top light is illuminated with a soundscape of teen voices creating drama projects laughing and talking over each other plays over the theatre's sound system. The ARTIST looks at the place where the now TEACHER would have been left standing on the desk.) Go on. You're right. You don't need me pulling at you too. Go on, do what we always do: recommit to them...our students. *(The theatre lights cross fade; illuminating the box and dim on the teacher's desk. The soundscape also fades from the sound of the students to the rustle of leaves in the wind as the ARTIST returns to her area.)* And then I just walked away. I came here and she started a new school year without me.

(The ARTIST sits on the box enjoying the forest. Suddenly she acts like she is being pushed off the box and as she spins off she dons the feather collar that represents MAGGIE. She morphs into the SUPER HERO MAGPIE OF TEACHER WELLNESS and sits on the box, this time as MAGGIE, with her legs stretched out in front of her, she picks up this dissertation from behind the box.)

MAGGIE: Look, I'm not entirely certain that this solo artist thing is going to help anyone. To not put too fine a point on things, but don't you consider yourself a Catholic educator? *(rifling through the dissertation)* What happened to your plan to teach, according to Groome's (1998) call to a humanizing and welcoming, and I quote "way of educating for life and for all" found on page 14 of his ground breaking book on Catholic education? *(The ARTIST rolls her eyes, remembering that MAGGIE is all too familiar with the research in this dissertation, having ripped up most of it!)* Come on, what would Jesus do? What about your commitment to those who suffer? Exactly, how is this split between you and the Teacher a good choice?

(MAGGIE stands and motions to the box and turns her back to the audience as the actor morphs back into the ARTIST taking off the feather collar and placing it and the dissertation behind the box as she sits.)

ARTIST: I just want to be free of the knots and tangles that keep showing up in my art. Please, don't trap me again. I just want to be left alone, to create something that isn't restrained by budgets, policies, and schedules. I'm scared that I am losing my voice. I can't hear the whispers of my own heart. *(Standing, face tilted up toward the light)* How many years have I yearned to sit in the fall and let the sun pull me from myself? Straining toward what ought to be...And yet the spent leaves of every autumn rustled a lament: stay close to yourself...change the way the past lives in you. I didn't listen. I muzzled and squashed the seeping acedia. Colours dulled and vines of melancholy snared me from the clouds. How many years have I dwelt in the shadows of discontent? Of pretending all was great! How long has that painted on smile twisted my pain into false happiness? Is not one moment too long? Straining toward what ought to be my work begins inside...

(A theatre light pops on. It is a low-angle spotlight aimed stage up left to down right and there is a fog.)

CARITAS (VO): ...caritas.

ARTIST: Maggie, what's going on? Whose voice was that?

MAGGIE (VO): This is my friend Caritas.

ARTIST: What? Where are you Maggie? I thought you were behind me?

MAGGIE (VO): Keep up with the plot, little daydreamer. I'm up here now, in this non-carcinogenetic theatre fog illuminated through a low angle theatre spotlight, hanging out with Caritas.

CARITAS (VO): I reside in an open heart.

MAGGIE (VO): I thought if you could embrace caritas, you know, open your heart, you could untangle those knots you keep creating and be the strength that the teacher needs to teach well, while besieged with workplace burnout.

CARITAS (VO): I am at the heart of all things. Trust in me for I am the true Way. I am the still centre; always available to you...

ARTIST: *(Sitting on box and interrupting)* ...and that's just the problem I have no still centre when I am in the classroom with the teacher. *(Stands, enacts, and repeats a stylized series of movements that mimic teaching through actions: writing on board, talking and pointing to the board, smiling, nodding, typing on computer, clapping. Each time the sequence is repeated the ARTIST moves faster and faster. The following lines of dialogue are delivered quickly matching the actions.)* Teaching is all action, all the time, nothing but going and doing: the tyranny of busyness. I have lost touch with my nature: the artist's unique tendency toward introspection. With the teacher, I have spent every waking moment in busyness and the pressure to produce, with never enough time for the process *(moves to sit on the box)*. Just leave me alone Maggie. Go away and take Caritas with you.

MAGGIE (VO): Sorry, but I can't just let you walk away. I'm not saying returning to the classroom is going to be easy, but with caritas at your core, instead of resentment, you can approach those moments in the void with understanding.

CARITAS (VO): Maybe the Artist needs an example? Something to convince her that she is needed by the Teacher even if it doesn't feel like it at times.

MAGGIE (VO): What a great idea! Here we go!

(The ARTIST starts spinning as the light illuminating the black box fades out and the stage is lit only by the low-angle spotlight representing CARITAS.)

ARTIST: Maggie! Maggie, what are you doing? Help! Help me! I'm being kidnaped by a magpie.

(The ARTIST has morphed into the TEACHER and is slumped and still, sitting on the floor leaning on the front of the desk down centre.)

MAGGIE (VO): Like anyone is going to believe you! Don't worry; it's for your own good.

ARTIST (VO): What am I doing up here? Why am I here, in this haze, with you and Caritas?

(Coughs) It's a bit smoky up here.

MAGGIE (VO): Suck it up princess! This is theatre fog not smoke.

ARTIST (VO): Ok, sorry. *(A top light illuminates the TEACHER curled up leaning against the teacher desk)* What is the Teacher doing down there? Did she drop something?

MAGGIE (VO): Watch and learn.

CARITAS (VO): Open your heart to me and (re)act.

AWFUL THOUGHTS (VO): Who cares if you've lost your voice. No one listens to teachers. You have no real power and no agency to make change happen anyway.

ARTIST (VO): *(Confused)* Who is speaking now, Maggie?

MAGGIE (VO): That is Awful Thoughts. She enjoys bombarding the Teacher with reminders of how public school teaching can be an unlivable occupation.

(Each time AWFUL THOUGHTS speaks the TEACHER reacts as if she is fending off a poke or a push.)

AWFUL THOUGHTS (VO): Alberta has the highest paid teachers in Canada. What more do you need? Take care of yourself, deal with your own stress, and do your job.

ARTIST (VO): Hey, you! Back off. Alberta teachers also work, on average, ten extra hours every week and have the least amount of workplace flexibility and agency of all other knowledge-based professionals.

AWFUL THOUGHTS (VO): Mind your own business. This is my battle with that burnt out teacher down there. I've almost got her convinced she needs a stress leave.

ARTIST (VO): A stress leave? She's never talked about a stress leave. Why is she just sitting there? Fight back!

CARITAS (VO): Artist, can't you see what leaving the teacher has done? At least with you, by her side, she is graced with art's ability to create anew. Your creative sensitivity gave her strength.

ARTIST (VO): Education is no place for an artist.

CARITAS (VO): And the void is no place for a teacher.

AWFUL THOUGHTS (VO): Fundamental change to education is too costly. It's not my fault that capitalism supplants mmm...everything else! You are on the losing side. Time to admit it, just do your job, and stop complaining.

ARTIST (VO): (to AWFUL THOUGHTS) Hey, stop picking on her! (to MAGGIE) Okay Maggie, work your magic and put me back in the classroom just before I walked out. I just can't stand this anymore.

AWFUL THOUGHTS (VO): Don't think for a second that I'm going away. Hey, Artist! This isn't going to work...whatever you think you're going to do?

(The TEACHER starts spinning and morphs into the ARTIST.)

ARTIST: Thanks Maggie, and now I'm here (*walking around the desk, touching the chains on the desk*). The very place I thought I had left for good. I have no idea how this is going to work?

(*Resigned, the ARTIST climbs back on the desk wrapping herself in the chains.*)

Rewind, here we go (speaking to the TEACHER as before) In that moment, when she offered me a chance to go I just looked at her and said thank you...thank you but my place is here with you. Art has a role to play in change and so does (*looking up*) caritas. Maybe, we can try to live in some kind of balance, to help us, with our workplace burn out issues. (*Starts to climb off the desk and picks up the chains and put them back in the drawer and moves to sit in the chair*) but there are going to be some changes around here. We are going for a walk right after work, before heading home, and I need time in my studio everyday (*reacts, as the teacher is about to interrupt*). No! No! No, more over-investing. We are going to live in balance, right? (*Looking up*) It's a start, Maggie.

AWFUL THOUGHTS (VO): How is a walk going to fix education? You are an idiot, Artist-Teacher, listening to a yappy bird and thinking caritas is going to make a difference to my neo-libertarian pals and our stripped down, utilitarian, big-picture plans. I think you've missed the point, Artist-Teacher.

MAGGIE (VO): No Awful Thoughts, the Artist-Teacher is living the point, in all its messy reality. A walk, taking the time to create, and encouraging students to find their voice through the arts, will generate opportunities to advocate for change in education. Recommitting to teaching, through caritas, will provide all the strength the Artist-Teacher needs. See, Artist-Teacher, with me in charge, everything falls into place. (*MAGGIE lets out a loud magpie squawk*).

ARTIST-TEACHER: Don't push it, Maggie. Balancing is a new re(act)ion for us and caritas requires a moment-by-moment commitment (*begins prayer meditation*).

CARITAS: But that is true for life itself—a moment-by-moment commitment—saying yes, and yes, and yes, again and again.

SOUNDSCAPE OF PRAYER MEDITATION THOUGHTS: I feel myself emptying and my heart hardens. I honestly don't care...no...no...change the future...I care...I do care...I've always cared...don't make me go back...but I am back...yes...yes...yes. (*The voices trail off but a sound effect of the wind in trees continues*).

(*The bell for class change rings. The ARTIST-TEACHER rises, and with a sigh and a smile, crosses up left, opens the door of her classroom, and greets her students*).

4.2 Approaching: Composing an Autoethnographic Performance Script

Spry (2011) creates autoethnographic performances using a formula where performance choices are made by combining external elements—the voice, body, and acting space with the internal elements—how the text is communicated through thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and emotions. Whether one is a theatre practitioner, high school drama teacher, or performative autoethnographer performance choices should be, according to Spry, purposeful, intentional, clear, specifically expressed, and open to re-expression through the creative process. As Spry notes, “performance choices must be felt inside to be manifested outside” or manifesting the inner personal story into a public performance thereby creating entertaining and provocative theatre (2011, p. 195). In autoethnographic performative research, performance choices must balance with the criteria for sound and rigorous autoethnography. Performative autoethnography is a vehicle for moving self-disclosure into the complex concessions of meaning-making with the political and social context of the story.

Autoethnographic performance has the added pressure of addressing the intention of being epistemologically generative for the audience viewing the production, to provide insight

for living. My approach to autoethnographic performance is that of a localized global critique (Spry, 2011). It was important to me to create a clear connection between the personal stories and context of teaching in the fine arts, to influences of globalization on educational workplace conditions; moving from large impersonal concepts to the specific day-to-day realities of the embodiment of those same concepts. I want to embrace Denzin's (2006) radical and critical pedagogy of hope and identity and call into question performance ideas marked as normative, which restrict and belay alternative ways of being. I wrote my script as a form of activism or outreach to connect with the audience—to offer an account of my understandings of reality as a catalyst for audience members to reflect upon their lives and experiences.

When composing for the stage, there are myriad of ways to organize the structure of the drama (Denzin, 2014; Neelands & Goode, 2000; Saldaña, 2005; Spry, 2011). Composing for an autoethnographic performance has several unique considerations. One leading researchers in autoethnographic performance, American professor and performer Tami Spry, offers a step-by-step procedure that is recursive and nonlinear that includes a critical self-reflection, which I believe is similar to Chang's (2008) epiphanies and Saldaña's (2005) process for dramaturgical coding. I used Spry's mind mapping technique to create characters. Using Hagen's (1973) nine questions for character development, I wrote a series of writing fragments, which became dialogue clusters and eventually fully developed scenes. I would call Spry's thick description activity, choosing a theatrical convention, as a vessel to hold conversation fragments. I followed this process of writing fragments, grouping the fragments into clusters, and experimenting with theatre conventions, while, at the same time, remaining open to the emergent voices and insights of the characters, as they interacted with each other, on the page and stage.

As plainly as I can articulate, I crafted the characters as a personified and complex construction of myself as a persona that I sought to embody in performance. This is self-created from the courage to be vulnerable to critical reflection (Spry, 2011) and is at once me and not me.

This self is multi-dimensional and fragmented, which works to my advantage as an autoethnographic researcher, allowing various characters to be created and explored. This is the Performative-I disposition or a version of myself created through the theory and methodological praxis of autoethnography: epiphanies and coding, writing fragmented conversations, creating metaphors and constructed characters structured through theatre conventions.

By way of example, the Disillusioned, Exhausted, and Anxious Teachers all reflect current research on teacher burnout and educational workplace stress. These character composites also reflect my own personal struggles with burnout. I created a set of collage characters to locate the intersections of lived experiences and larger social issues (Spry, 2011). The burnt out teachers, as characters, were enhanced as I experienced them performativity, during rehearsal, where the feeling and sensing home of my being or the vulnerability of my body to move in space and time as an Other was played out.

Later refinements resulted in the three characters: Disillusioned, Exhausted, and Anxious amalgamated into the more complex character of the Artist-Teacher. This is the autoethnographer's work of articulating experience through language, then the language turns back upon itself changing, redefining, breaking, and remaking one's understanding of the negotiation between self, Other, and the context within the transformative experience of theatre meaning-making. Essentially, I am creating versions of myself, objectively and subjectively, while simultaneously word-smithing and editing dialogue and making directing and design choices. This begins to outline the complex dance that the Performative-I disposition demands from the autoethnographic performance practitioner.

I created dialogue by playing the character and waiting to record what they had to say. I chose theatre conventions or the "indicators of the way in which time, space, and presence can interact and be imaginatively shaped to create different kinds of meanings in theatre" with a

director/designer sensibility (Needlands & Goode, 2000, p. 4). As a director, I am most interested in telling an entertaining story, which responds to our basic human need, to interpret and express the world through symbolic form. A designer compliments directorial choices; employing elements of line, colour, texture and the technical theatre considerations of set, costume, lighting, and sound design. I was making choices for maximum effect within the capabilities of my production expectations. Foremost in my deliberation on which theatre convention to employ was the assumption that, as with all art forms, the experience of theatre is distinguished from real-life experience by the conscious application of form to meaning in order to engage both the intellect and the emotions in a representation of meaning. In theatre, meanings, social codes, and interactions are represented, shaped, and crafted through the conventions of dramatic activity (Needlands & Goode, 2000). Theatre conventions are whatever forms the playwright creates, but several have been labeled and explained by Jonathan Needlands and Tony Goode (2000) and I will reference their explanations for the specific theatre conventions I chose to create within my autoethnographic performance script.

In the script, written for this dissertation, I included the theatre convention of *Giving Witness* (Needlands & Goode, 2000, p. 78) or a monologue that is, in effect, a highly subjective account from a single character's point of view on two occasions for two different reasons. The monologue of the Artist is a platform for the first tentative expressions of her thoughts and concerns, as she embarks solo, for the first time. The monologue from the Artist-Teacher is a vehicle for sharing deep insights and uses the theatre convention, *Giving Witness*, to highlight and make the character important and someone for the audience to notice.

The theatre convention of *Cross-cutting* (Needlands & Goode, 2000, p. 54) is an extremely useful device for discovering new meaning through intercutting, combining, and the juxtaposition of the action and dialogue of two or more scenes. Moving between the Artist-Teacher, trying to pray in her classroom before her next class, and the world of swirling thoughts

and characters of the unsettled mind, becomes an articulation of a dramatic expression of prayer meditation. Returning to the Artist-Teacher reminds the audience that all the other characters are, indeed, part of one main character. Cross-cutting makes it easy to transition to the more ritualized *Metamorphosis* (Needlands & Goode, 2000, p. 62) theatre convention, used in the moment when the artist and teacher identities split. The teacher's desk becomes, as if in a dream, a mountain to climb with the theatre spotlight taking on the qualities of transformation, redemption, and renewal. The found materials substitute for ropes and chains or key props; technical elements that have transformed into representations of something else.

A one actor show must be written in such a way as to accommodate the practical transitions that will be required when one actor plays several characters; all plays need to consider transitions such as the time needed to make costume or set changes. My autoethnographic play is simultaneously set in the artist-teacher's classroom and in her mind so she must be present in some form at all times. I employed a polyphonic, multi-track soundscape to create interplay between the characters' voices and still and moving photography and video intercut with staged moments to create multiple locations. As my performative autoethnographic play is not only presented in script form but as a video link, I have altered my production choices from a live performed show to a hybrid, relying more on video than I would, if the performance was live on a stage. Rather than just filming a stage performance I am enhancing the production, so a storyboard, used to plan and track all the video shots required for the film portion of this performance script, was created and followed. Theatre presentations are driven by a production concept, which addresses every detail from the colour of paper clips that make up the Artist-Teacher's artifact chain to the placement of teacher desk. This is the heavy work of being a playwright/director/actor; everything accounted for and planned out.

Theatre making must remain flexible and open to changes that occur, from a pure and authentic place, during the rehearsal process. In this aspect, theatre for research mirrors a

model of transpersonal drama therapy, another powerful intervention that allows expression through the acting out of thoughtful re-imagining of life events (Johnson, 1982). Transpersonal drama therapy understands that the challenges in one's life can be viewed within the context of a larger identity individually and within the greater consciousness of humanity (Linden, 2009).

Defined through transpersonal psychology, this form of drama therapy understands the spiritual aspects of human experience. It addresses attention to experiences, which transcend connection with a greater whole. One of the basic tenets of transpersonal drama therapy shifts the identity from a limited sense of self to a more essential or authentic self, through imaginative role-play and embodied truths, which are revealed through enacting emotional moments (Linden, 2009). Kinesthetic, visual, and auditory senses are used as tools to access feedback from the body. Crucial to transpersonal drama therapy, Linden (2009) insists, is the embracing of wholeness, moving to a place where the theatrical choices are informed not just by the mind but also intuitively originating from the body and soul. What particularly resonates is that transpersonal drama therapy encourages work with archetypal motifs. Working within stories, images, and grand themes offers opportunities to connect to a wider narrative, lifting the ordinary out of the rutted gutter and onto centre stage for greater examination and eventual healing and transformation. Transpersonal drama therapy (Linden, 2009) reminds the performer that balance in receptive and expressive energies, one's inner masculine and feminine perception, spirit and matter, transcendence and immanence all work together to facilitate healing and self-understanding.

To my surprise, I encountered several emergent insights that subsequently influenced my autoethnographic performance, and my understanding of teacher identity and the resulting consequences for wellness, moments that could be identified as transpersonal dramatic insights. I understand my world through, what Sean Wiebe and Celeste Snowber (2011) describe, as being *from* and *with* "the senses in connection to embodied knowing" (p. 102). The self-discovery

work of autoethnography places the researcher in a process of self-negotiation, the trying on and being a body of words. In this linguistic body, there will be parts that fit like a glove and parts that tear at the seams and parts that simply require alteration for the hearts and hands that made them (Spry, 2011). The moment of performing reflects my reality, as it bounces back, through the senses, to add a depth of understanding to my written discourse on teacher wellness. This is Spry's (2011) manifestation of the textualized body: a writing process, a synergistic transference from the Performative-I disposition to the performing persona, where no hierarchy exists between researching and the body, writing and the page, and performing and the stage.

It was working, in this process that I just described, that I was confronted with the issue of teacher identity and its relationship to wellness for fine arts teachers. Finally, I understood Maggie's prophecy from *Before Words: Inside an Exhale Scene Prologue* that I might want to change how I identify with the term Artist-Teacher and its predecessor artisTeacher. This moment in the rehearsal process was a shock of insight, with ripples, that are still resonating even after I altered the last few moments of the performative autoethnographic scr

4.4 Concluding Thoughts on the Autoethnographic Script and the Process of Theatre-Making

The artist character, in the autoethnographic script, longs for her own "embodied and experiential wisdom" to be recognized and honoured as a legitimate way of being (Seidel, 2006, p. 1902). This echoes the investigations into the issues of teacher wellness expressed in Chapter Two. Teachers, also, long to be heard, respected, and acknowledged that, if they are asking for help, it is because the need is real and immediate. Through the manifestation of the textualized body, I confronted the issue of teacher identity and its relationship to wellness for fine arts teachers. I have found the entire process of performative autoethnography to be a compassionate space, allowing new parts of myself to unfold and flourish, embracing

discernment in a creatively enriching space of sanctuary. Dwelling, in such a state, offers clarity of understanding and many of my long held views have transformed. A healthy reworking of teacher identity is only part of issue of teacher wellness. Teachers can go a long way to changing how they approach the profession, but a renewed and robust approach to teaching, that disregards historic over-working and a culture of isolation, is still only resiliency. Teachers can have a renewed self-impression, but if the work environment does not change, then little has been achieved. Redesigning the educational workplace, honouring true wellness, is what is required for healing to take place, for teachers and their students.

The goal of this dissertation was to allow emerging ideas, on fine arts teacher wellness, a place to percolate. Chapter five is a discussion of how emerging concepts, afforded through arts-based research, inform the advancement of a passage to wellness. To review, three questions were presented, in chapter one, to guide this research to greater understanding:

What insights emerge, about teacher workplace stress and burnout, when a Catholic Christian artist-teacher creates a performative autoethnographic study?

What new understandings emerge, though an arts-based inquiry, into fine arts teacher professional development opportunities?

What are possible interruptions, in the current discourse on high school redesign that, could address teacher wellness?

This final chapter offers, not only a discussion of these questions, but challenges how to frame the emerging ideas and the caritas message so as to incite discourse rather than dismissal.

Before Words: Inside an Exhale**Epilogue**

SETTING: a drama classroom

AT RISE the ARTIST-TEACHER stands with her hand on the closed door of her classroom.

MAGGIE, THE SUPERHERO MAGPIE OF TEACHER WELLNESS (as a voice over or VO):

What are you waiting for? The bell will ring in two minutes. Shouldn't you be out in the hall greeting your students and welcoming them to a new school year?

ARTIST-TEACHER: *(Hesitating)* I...I...I don't think...I don't think I have enough left to do this job.

MAGGIE (VO): Listen, I get that you are still struggling with workplace burnout and there is no cure for that, except to take yourself away from the situation. Do you want to move to Finland and work in their public education system? If you lived and worked there, you would have an opportunity to move into an administrative or a pedagogical advisory role and get a change from 28 years in the classroom. *(ARTIST-TEACHER sighs, reacting to MAGGIE'S unhelpful idea)* I know, not my best suggestion. I'm just going to say one more thing before I shove you out that door: all anyone can do is live one moment at a time. Let go of your need to tightly control the future and try to say yes to caritas, again, and again, and again. Recite for me, one more time, your teacher's creed for wellness.

ARTIST-TEACHER: *(takes a deep breath in and on the exhale begins, trying to convince herself as much as MAGGIE).*

I believe in honouring and attending to students, especially, as they emerge as student-artists.

I believe in respecting the artistic process. I will reclaim the time needed for the creative process and re-design my commitment to the workload of extra-curricular activities.

I believe in accepting responsibility for my wellness needs. I will re-define myself as a teacher and activate my personal agency to advocate for my needs.

I believe in the dual, but fragile, nature of the artist-teacher identity. I respect that both the artist and the teacher need equal professional development opportunities in order to thrive.

I believe in diplomacy. I will participate in current high school redesign initiatives. I will encourage the inclusion of options that address teacher wellness.

I believe in teaching in caritas. I will commit to caritas and love others as I am loved. I am not naïve to the difficulty of living in caritas, at all times, but I believe that each moment is an invitation to try.

MAGGIE (VO): Good. You have loads of practical advice for yourself. Your creed is something to hold on to when things get tough. Gotta go.

ARTIST-TEACHER: Why are you going?

MAGGIE (VO): You don't need me anymore. This dissertation is finished and you will be busy teaching, so my work here is over! Trust your creed. *(Nodding her head the ARTIST-TEACHER turns to greet and welcome her students into their classroom.)*

Chapter 5: A Creed for Teacher Wellness

One of the most critical factors, for success in the classroom, is a teacher's commitment to the work of schooling (Day & Gu, 2010). To recommit to my vocation and sustain, in my heart, "the dynamic and complex process" of being a teacher, I have created a creed for teacher wellness (Leggo & Irwin, 2013, p. 5). A creed, in the Catholic Christian tradition, is a list of the central definitions of beliefs for our faith, but "a creed needs interpretation" so that the intended meaning is expressed and made actionable (Chilson, 1987, p. 203). Creeds are not static, rather they are ways of being and guide behaviour. Leggo and Irwin (2013) encourage pre-service teachers to create a creed for their imminent career. They understand a creed, as a dwelling place for "what I have given my heart to" (Leggo & Irwin, 2013, p. 6). My creed goes some way to articulating what I wish to follow; a series of beliefs, the emerging ideas and subsequent actions, generated through my performative autoethnographic research process, as presented in this dissertation. I have created six descriptions of teacher wellness that I believe will sustain me as I a teacher, determined to teach in caritas while struggling with workplace burnout. In the following, I unravel each verse of my teacher's creed for wellness and place it in the context of current schooling discourse.

I believe in honouring and attending to students, especially, as they emerge as student-artists.

In all subjects, perhaps, especially in the fine arts, students need role models that demonstrate a way of being in the world that mirrors how a student may want to live. It is important for young student-artists to see their fine arts teacher as an adult living and being in the world, and as an artist. It is an enormous challenge for educators to maintain a level of wellness, to be effective as a teacher and a role model, when many workplace conditions are working in opposition. In Alberta, "creative practice[s]" in schooling and curriculum delivery is one aspect of high school redesign that may encourage young artist-students to thrive (Fijal,

2016, p. 191). Increased flexibility for learning could create an atmosphere of respect for approaching curriculum from an artistic stance. Movement in this direction may prevent artist-students, from feeling the isolation and disconnection that some artist-teachers experience in current schooling praxis.

I believe in respecting the artistic process. I will reclaim the time needed for the creative process and re-design my commitment to the workload of extra-curricular activities.

I believe my performative autoethnographic self-study has identified the need for additional research on teacher extra-curricular duties. In Alberta, there is inconsistency and confusion between various collective bargaining agreements and provincial teacher union guidelines regarding the expectation of unpaid work (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2013). The difficulty rests in too many stakeholders insisting on the status quo to fulfill their own agendas such as utilizing extra-curricular events as a way to promote a school for student recruitment. Such appropriation of extra-curricular events muddies the issue of teachers working unpaid extra hours, making it difficult to tease out, administrations' resistance to change. I am not suggesting that extra-curricular activities, like competitive sports and major theatre productions, are not needed. On the contrary, they are a perfect adjunct to the curriculum, offering unique opportunities for students, but the current arrangement is unsustainable and contributes to teacher workplace stress and burnout (Brown & Roloff, 2011).

I am advocating for a radical rethink in how teachers are employed. Legitimizing extra-curricular activities would give teachers the option to choose to work outside of the regular teaching day as paid coaches or artistic directors of music or theatre productions. In current conversations on education redesign, government education departments are embracing flexibility regarding the time needed to earn a credit in any given subject (Fijal, 2016) so is it really such a large step to open for discussion the issue of unpaid extra-curricular duties? Of

course, it is an issue of money but is the current situation justifiable? Is it ethical for school districts to burden new young teachers, just learning the complexities of being a teacher, with extra unpaid duties or insisting that experienced teachers take on extra-curricular commitments or face repercussions to future teaching assignments? My questions are based on anecdotal incidents from my own experience. Further investigation is warranted into the continuation of the current practice of not compensating teachers for programs, which Fijal (2016) praises for building relationships between students and teachers that involve “shared agency in learning” (p. 190). I believe that if there are to be changes in expectations for teachers regarding extra-curricular activities, they will happen through high school redesign’s interest in tapping into the amazing learning opportunities afford to students through extra-curricular situations.

I believe in accepting responsibility for my wellness needs. I will re-define myself as a teacher and activate my personal agency to advocate for my needs.

Perhaps one of the most humbling insights to emerge from my research was how very responsible I am for my own wellness as a teacher. I agree with Smith (2006) that it takes courage and diligence to accept personal responsibility for one’s unhealthy actions or disconnectedness and acknowledge one’s actions as a contributing factor in the larger issue of teacher wellness. It sounds absurd, as it should have been so obvious, but in my own defense, having spent 28 years in an institutional setting, I was lulled into believing I was a helpless cog in a machine that kept rolling out day, after semester, after year never taking into account that I was the problem. I confessed, in chapter three, that I rarely took the time or, indeed, have the time, even now, to reflect on one project before moving on to the next. It is not easy to find the emotional distance from over-working to see what is really happening, as there are insidious pressures, from colleagues and traditional expectations, to maintain the façade of the independent and self-sufficient teacher (Britzman, 1986). The culture of teaching has invested so much in various illusions that support teacher-as-hero or teacher-as-an-independent-agent

that sometimes we seem wedded to illusion as a way of survival (Britzman, 1986; Palmer, 1990). These illusions serve a societal function, retarding meaningful reforms that risk addressing the need to support teachers (Palmer, 1990, 2007; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Smith, 2014). I will, humbly take the advice of Brown and Roloff (2011), articulated in chapter two, which encourages personal agency for teachers to be their own advocates in issues of work overload, time management, and work/life balance and change how I approach my teaching assignments.

I am convinced that teacher wellness will come to mean very little if it does not result in a better learning environment and experience for students. A teacher, engaged, rested, and rational is more likely to embrace a “being approach to teaching” which, opens a commitment to reflection on the “ethical imperative of teaching,” designed to help teachers stay aware of their behaviour and monitor their actions (Falkenberg, 2016, p. 10). This ability to reflect on one’s personal behaviour is a very important skill for wellness maintenance. It allows the teacher to self-analyze their effectiveness and highlight areas for improvement. Falkenberg (2016) suggests attention to inner experiences is available through mindfulness. The role that mindful attention can play in teacher wellness has emerged as an area I have identify for myself as a Catholic educator as needing further investigation and research, as I go forward in my passage to wellness. Perhaps, if I had been more attuned to my inner life, I may not have been so blind to my issues of over-committing and over-working (Brown & Roloff, 2011). Falkenberg’s (2016) understanding of the difference between teachers’ living their vocation as *teaching as doing* rather than *being* resonates with Britzman’s (1986) condemnation of teacher-as-hero and the traditional ways teachers, like me, were educated 30 years ago. In retrospect, I see that my whole career focused on *doing* and not *being*. Would my career have unfolded the same way, resulting in crushing workplace burnout, if I had approached my work from an attentive and mindful perspective of being a teacher rather than doing the work of a teacher? Is there an intersection, between an Eastern wisdom understanding of being (Eppert, Vokey, Nguyen, & Bai,

2015; Falkenberg, 2016) and a Catholic education perspective, which could act as a change agent for teacher wellness education?

I believe in the duel, but fragile, nature of the artist-teacher identity. I respect, that both the artist and the teacher need equal professional development opportunities in order to thrive.

As a fine arts teacher, I am very frustrated with current professional development opportunities. It has been my experience that little choice is offered for professional development and what is offered either expedites new technology or is a top-down initiative to be implemented. Teachers are required to devise their own professional development plan every year, which sounds more promising than it is, as no time-in-lieu is offered for follow up, making these plans more work to an already extended workday. In 28 years I have been excused, from required teacher-focused professional development sessions on only two occasions, to pursue enhancement of my theatre skills. All the insights on teacher identity, as discussed in chapters one and four, have highlighted how unbalanced and precarious my duel-role identity is and has been for years. I see no other way to hold this fragile relationship together except through a daily commitment to an equal partnership between the artist and educator. Is this sustainable? I really do not know as I have come to recognize that the push and pull, between the artist and teacher, is a major source of my teacher workplace burnout.

I worry for the future of artist-teachers and other duel identity educators. Professional development does not seem to be on the agenda for education redesign. Provincial teachers unions are negotiating for teachers to have professional status, similar lawyers and doctors, responsible to a code of conduct enforced by teachers rather than governments (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). The hope of professional status is that professional development will be more relevant to teachers, granting them autonomy in deciding what professional development they actually need. I find it very frustrating that the practice of professional development, which

could offer real support for a healthy teacher identity, falls short of the theory. One of the saddest stories I know is about a young junior high drama teacher, less than five years in the profession, who told me she did not want to work for an organization (school district) that did not respect her professional needs or even seem interested in investing in her. She left teaching to pursue a career in psychology.

I believe in diplomacy. I will participate in current high school redesign initiatives available for teachers. I will encourage the inclusion of options that address teacher wellness.

Society's confidence in education is chipped away every time restructurings are introduced (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Smith, 2014). Forever trying something new suggests that there is something fundamentally wrong with how education is currently understood. Much of the focus of past reforms in education (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009) has been on professional capital or how teachers do their work. New initiatives, which are often under-researched and prematurely introduced, have relied upon accidental, singular, and largely unreplicable efforts at improvements or market-driven solutions guided by technocratic top down approaches. Andy Hargreaves and Dennis Shirley (2009) and David Smith (2014) offer an alternative to improving student learning: leverage the power of teachers' professional capital, in the context of the school system, through democracy and professionalism, rather than, through bureaucracy and the market. The creation of communities of practice and learning and teachers' active engagement in the larger school community, is essential for fostering social capital by bringing the power and the reinvestment back to the expertise of highly trained and actively trusted professional teachers. In the rush to reform education, a simple truth has been forgotten: reform will never be achieved if we fail to cherish and challenge, but rather continue to demean and dishearten teachers (Palmer, 2007). Since the collapse of global markets in 2008, marking the end of legitimacy for neoliberalism, the times are auspicious for re-theorizing public policy including education (Smith, 2014). Perhaps, it is also time to re-imagine teacher wellness. Now

is a turning point in history, a time for more connection to and interdependence with the rest of the world financially, politically, and culturally (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Smith, 2014). For too long greed and caprice have held education hostage, undermining the ability of creativity and innovation to address diversity (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). The age of diverting attention away from difficult conversations of change, through an over-focusing on autocracy, technology, and social media distractions, needs to end (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009).

Who is listening to this message? Who is attending to these intelligent and thoughtful suggestions for change? One of the overwhelming reasons for pursuing my Education Doctorate was to articulate an intellectual response to the message of the status quo. In the past, I felt that I was doing myself a disservice speaking through emotion and experience, but neither am I sure speaking a clear and concise rebuttal will make any difference. I am not convinced that anyone is listening to the voices of teachers. However, that is not a reason to stop participating. It is more important than ever to be a part of the conversation for change.

I believe in caritas. I will commit to love others as I am loved. I am not naïve to the difficulty of living in caritas, at all times, but I believe that each moment is an invitation to try.

The last line in Mary Oliver's (1992) poem *The Summer Day*, "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" haunts me (p. 94). There is urgency in this poem that suggests that all things end and they end too soon. My performative autoethnographic research suggests answers to Oliver's provocative question and insights into my own desire to make teaching a livable experience (Smith, 2006). I recognize that a precious life is not one solely about me. A precious life is lived in caritas and I cannot experience caritas when I experience only the insecurity and futility of a small life. My real challenge is to move beyond my own renewal and enter Groome's (1998) call to caritas in action as a form of ethical agency that calls for a movement toward others and to work for more than my own self-interests.

As a Catholic educator, I accept Mulligan's (2006) challenge to embrace the "political dimension" of my faith (p. 261). This is a challenge, not only to mobilize teachers, "towards common strategies designed to protest government initiatives that threaten the true welfare of teachers and, therefore, of students" but also to see politics as an absolute foundation of the vocation of Catholic education (Mulligan, 2006, p. 261). Mulligan insists that as educators, "we model what we teach, we witness to the gospel of life and gospel of justice" (p. 262). Indifference to political questions and cynicism regarding the political process are among the great public temptations of our contemporary social and cultural life (Mulligan, 2006). As we share the responsibility to create a just society, teachers must overcome the temptations of indifference; this is what it means to accept the political aspect of the vocation of teaching. Moving to a life lived for the greater good is *caritas* in action: to love others as I am loved (Groome, 1998).

Embracing *caritas* is going to require a transformation in my approach to teaching in wellness. The challenge is twofold: a personal commitment to my own responsibility for my own wellness and an acceptance to the call for political action and caring for others—no more hiding behind institutionalism or waiting for change. Education redesign is set to transform education. There is so much good for students and teachers that could come from this reworking of education. As educators, we must be vigilant to ensure that this transformation is not hijacked by government agendas driven by business or any other interested parties, disconnected from the best interests of students and teachers. Transformation is radically unsettling as there is a pervasive preference for a static and predictable state (Rohr, 2003). Transformation involves accepting the difficult gifts of doubt, ambiguity, and alienation, which do not feel like gifts when first experienced. Rohr (2003) defines transformation as action that happens when something old falls apart. The pain of something old falling apart and the resulting chaos invites the soul to growth at a new and deeper level; it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to transformation's disconcerting reorientation.

I understand more clearly, because of my research into teacher wellness and the culture of education, that the transformation of systems is possible, but not without changing ourselves first. Without self-knowledge and personal change, we are in no good place to join the political battle against a dominant culture, which can be anti-personal, market driven, competitive, and soulless (Mulligan, 2006). My research has led me to a place where my understanding of teaching in caritas could serve as an interruption to current discourse on schooling re-design and teacher wellness. The following vignette is a rehearsal for such a real life encounter.

5.1 Learning My Lines: An Artist-Teacher's Rebuttal to Business as Usual

SETTING: a luxurious ancient roman bathing room

AT RISE provincial education department minions are all swarming around the EMPEROR OF EDUCATION, swathed in silk, longing on cushions, dangling his swollen feet in the bath, while being feed rich cakes soaked in goblets of sweet wine. Behind him are HENCHMEN in masks sporting their corporate affiliation on their silk ties. The ARTIST-TEACHER, chained, is brought in and pushed down onto her knees on the smooth marble tile in front of the EMPEROR OF EDUCATION.

A NOTE ABOUT THIS PRODUCTION: this is not a one-woman show produced on a minimal budget. I imagine this small scene as a professional production featuring Chris Potter (Tim Fleming on Heartland) as the Emperor and Hélèn Joy (Dr. Ogden on Murdock Mysteries) as the Artist-Teacher. A young actor, just graduated from the BFA acting program at the University of Alberta, could play the character of Maggie, the superhero magpie of teacher wellness.

EMPEROR: Do you know why you are here?

ARTIST-TEACHER: Not exactly, but I can guess your spies have heard my dissatisfaction with the teaching profession and my not-so-private opinions that you, and the corporate educational institute that owns you, are to blame for our dysfunctional education system.

EMPEROR: Spies, such an uncompromising word...so ugly. (*waves the cakes away and fastidiously licks his fingers*) You flatter yourself, no one is listening or cares, at all, about what you think or say. You do your job, that's all we ask, anything else you might say or do...we don't have time for. Honestly, you are not that important.

ARTIST-TEACHER: And yet I am here. I have interrupted your...cake break.

EMPEROR: Yes, and for the last time. I am tired of your complaining. You teach in the arts, correct? You have the facilities to produce theatre, correct.

ARTSIT-TEACHER: Yes, but my theatre is in desperate need of repairs and I do everything for our productions on my own time, as does every other fine arts educator or sports coach, who teaches full-time and participates in extracurricular activities. I am worn out and burnt out from a job that demands too much. I have no voice in how the school day is organized to optimize learning for students and...

EMPEROR: blah...blah...blah It's always the same with you teachers (mimicking) I want my voice heard...We work too hard...Boo Hoo. You've got the summers off don't you! My kids love band and volleyball. The school they go to has a full time conductor and a music teacher, one of them teaches the class and the other just focuses on the rehearsals for performances; the same with athletics. How are we going to win if our coach is teaching all day long?

ARTIST-TEACHER: That is all I am asking for: reasonable working hours that honour what it takes to produce art or coach sports. Please, just give those of us, in the public school system,

the resources and extra teachers to create real opportunity for all students to grow and thrive. It would be a start toward real change and maybe prevent teacher burnout.

EMPEROR: Well, my children go to a private school that I pay for—there is no way public tax money is going to pay for extra teachers and resources. We already pay the most per student in this country. I'm not going to take any more flak from those dicks at the Fraser Institute even if I do beat them on the golf links every Friday afternoon.

ARTIST-TEACHER: That's not good enough! You need to care about the big picture...all children...not just the rich and privileged. If the children of our society are not the priority then who is?

EMPEROR: You are so stupid. My department of education does not have some altruistic mission to improve society. This department is run by corporate interests, whichever, political party is in power. I get to be a highly paid director on their boards of governance when I leave public service and our business masters get a free ride on taxes and generous government contracts.

ARTIST-TEACHER: So as long as you and yours are looked after...

EMPEROR: That's the plan. Now what to do with you...What the hell! Who let this bird in here?

MAGGIE, SUPERHERO MAGPIE OF TEACHER WELLNESS swoops in, claws out and grabs the guard holding the ARTIST-TEACHER and throws the guard into the pool. Then, she walks on top of the food table trying tasty morsels and generally makes a mess.

EMPEROR: Get this bird out of here! (*The HENCHMEN hesitate. They really don't want to get their Armani suits wet. This is just the opening MAGGIE needs and she lifts up, flies, and lands on the lap of the EMPEROR digging her claws into him*).

EMPEROR: Ouch! Ouch! You're hurting me...get off...you stupid bird!

MAGGIE, SUPERHERO MAGPIE OF TEACHER WELLNESS: What did you call me? (*she digs her claws in deeper into his soft flesh*).

EMPEROR: Ohhhh...ok...ok...Super hero, magpie of the universe.

MAGGIE, SPERHERO OF TEACHER WELLNESS: Cool. Now look pal, you are going to release my dear Artist-Teacher and let her get back to work for a couple more years before she retires. You almost lost her and you are losing younger teachers every day. You may have things all your way right now but there is a grumbling, a movement, a chorus of voices from the void and one day you and your kind will be at the bottom of this pool and the children of this world will learn with teachers who are respected and honoured for their good work. (*To the ARTIST-TEACHER*) Are you ready to get out of here?

ARTIST-TEACHER: Almost. I just want to say that other countries do schooling differently. They are brave enough to abandon an educational model created in the interest and image of industrialization and honour, that to learn, students need to be aesthetically engaged. With their senses stimulated and resonating with the experience of the moment, students are awake to their true selves. But that does not happen if school is about conformity and standardization. Just get it out of your head that education can be as accountable as a factory; people are not machines. Why is this so difficult? Why am I pointing out what is so obvious?

EMPEROR: Look, hurry up and say what you want to say 'cause your super hero bird here is killing me. Seriously, I've heard all this before and from people more important than some almost-retired drama teacher.

MAGGIE, SUPERHERO MAGPIE OF TEACHER WELLNESS: Look pal, a little respect, is all that this Artist-Teacher is asking for. In case you actually don't know that that means, teachers

need to be empowered to do their jobs. Teachers facilitate learning. Teachers excite imagination and curiosity, so give them the power to make decisions about their own work. They are professionals not factory drones. Respect teachers for their ability to individualize learning by embracing a diverse and broad curriculum. Students need learning for its own sake and not just to prepare them for the workplace—a workplace, incidentally, that you can't predict or control.

ARTIST-TEACHER: Thanks, Maggie, I've got this. Stop telling us how to do our job and just find the funding for enough people to do the work properly. You are right; nothing I have said is new. Is it really too much to ask to change a system that is fundamentally wrong? I get that you are entrenched in all this, (*motioning to indicate the riches surrounding the Emperor and the powerful position afforded to him*) but this is just stuff. Children and their teachers are people of caritas; no amount of profit is more important or is going to change the key fact that education is about people. Open your heart, mind, and body to...

EMPEROR: Oh, here we go; I was wondering when you were going to get to the touchy-feel-me crap—fucking arts teachers.

ARTIST-TEACHER: It's touchy-feely. And, I will not be dismissed or muzzled. Not anymore. Unless you are some kind of cyborg, you live as we all live, in your body with your thoughts and emotions. You just said you golf on Fridays, right?

EMPEROR: Yeah, so what?

ARTIST-TEACHER: Think about when you are having a great game: You feel your feet firm and strong standing on the earth and your love and passion for the game surges through your whole body. Your determination and will to act is so strong every muscle and nerve ending are in sync. There is a smile on your face; you can't deny how wonderful it is to be golfing, to be

alive and in the focus zone. If needed, you could eloquently describe this experience, your voice confident because in that moment you understand your place in the world, a part of something bigger than you and yet a part of you.

MAGGIE, SUPERHERO MAGPIE OF TEACHER WELLNESS: In case you missed the analogy, what you experience golfing is what education should be, could be. Be brave big man and do the right thing. Ready toots? Let's hop!

ARTIST-TEACHER: Yes, Maggie let's go. I found the words and I said them and that's all I wanted to do.

With a great flourish of wings, MAGGIE, SUPERHERO OF TEACHER WELLNESS rises up grabbing the ARTIST-TEACHER and flies out of the open window. The EMPEROR is left rubbing his sore crotch while three department MINIONS, who filmed the encounter using their smartphones, send it out into the world via the Internet.

Throughout this dissertation, I have presented the voices of a chorus who chant for change in education. Theatre is my vehicle for transformation; through characters and theatrical ways of telling stories my voice has found its place. Caritas is at the foundation of all I believe about this messy world: emerging, interconnected, implicitly alive; and our eternal battle against fixed, static, isolated, grasping aloneness. Rather than an emphasis on closure and resolution, I suggest an opening, to a multitude of possibilities honouring tension, conflict, contention, complexity, and diversity, with a wide range of role models for boundless possibilities for living in the world. Acknowledging and celebrating diversity, communities are created where security, dignity, compassion, and care are all joyfully present (Leggo, 2007).

Education could be a call to help students recover the unity of their being and so it must also be for their teachers (Smith, 2012). Honest conversations, where caritas and student and teacher well-being support an honest redesign of education are happening in staffrooms and in

the halls of the academy (Berg & Seeber, 2016). The only danger is passivity that retards the development of the self and does nothing (Palmer, 1990). Now is the time to take the difficult passage that scales the heights of professional excellence and public democracy, a challenging path that can lead to excellence and integrity in learning and teaching (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). Living and teaching in caritas, learning, healing, and growing are all part of our one wild and precious existence; speaking, trying and re-trying, attending to, and changing is what I hope to do with my life as an artist and teacher.

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Appendix A: Fieldwork-Dialogue Fragments I and II

Dialogue Fragment I: Interviews

This dialogue consists of interviews with Maggie, the superhero magpie of teacher wellness, the alter-ego Second Self, the Artist, Awful Thoughts, Caritas, and the characters of teacher burnout: Disillusioned, Exhausted, and Anxious.

SETTING: Centre stage with chairs in a semi-circle.

AT RISE all but the teacher burnout characters have arrived and are settling into their chairs. The INTERVIEWER is sitting in the middle chair.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you all so much for agreeing to meet with me...

AWFUL THOUGHTS: We agreed to this? I was told to show up.

ARTIST: Do you always do what you are told?

MAGGIE: There is still time to leave.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: Is this bird for real? A talking bird?

MAGGIE: I'm actually the star of this dissertation; a hermeneutic vehicle for contingent understandings that are situated in the lives, relationships, contexts, and histories of the Artist-Teacher and current educational culture. Moules (2002) suggests you think of me as a female Hermes, the trickster of ancient Greek myths, a mistress of creativity and invention with the capacity to see things anew, and whose power is in change, prediction, and interpretation.

ARTIST: (*Maggie and the Artist high five*) In your face Awful Thoughts. Nice referencing, the academic crowd are going to love you.

SECOND SELF: Everyone please! Sorry, interviewer, you were saying...

INTERVIEWER: ...that I thought I might guide this interview with Hagens's (1973) nine questions, for creating character, and let each of you have a go, as you see fit.

SECOND SELF: You seem to have forgotten to invite the disillusioned, the emotionally exhausted and the anxious teachers.

ARTIST: Oh, for God's sake, not those three.

MAGGIE: As a quiz of teachers they're real downers.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: And so full of themselves.

SECOND SELF: I'm sorry, their suffering is real and they don't need to be mocked by any of you.

INTERVIEWER: ...which is why I am interveiwing them separately from you four. Question one:
Who are you?

MAGGIE: Listen doll, I haven't any fancy charts like the Artist-Teacher. Really, she is really such an organizational freak! I mean, who puts their life into a timeline? Several timelines! I am a clever theatrical construct that pokes, prods, and discovers insights. I'm appropriately inappropriate. I say, what the Artist-Teacher, should say if she was being honest or would say if she wasn't so polite. She has bit her tongue, and not said what she thinks, so many times she has lost her voice and her ability to speak her truth. She is strangled by a code of conduct for teachers which, in my opinion, was created to silence the female voice; so many early pioneering women in this country were teachers controlled by all male boards of trustees. Trustee, I use that term loosely, as if I would trust the opinion of a bunch of Victorian-era men...What! Why are you looking at your watch? Oh...ok...and, in fact, how historical policy-making in education has subjugated the power of women is a great topic for another time.

Where was I? Ummm...yes... she has spoken the words of Artist-Teacher so often that she needs me to articulate what maybe unprofessional or un-teacher-like but still needs to be said. And, I call her out when she is deluding herself. Pass me that chocolate box, will ya, sweetie? She can't eat too many of these...bit of a weight issue but calories don't count for theatre conventions.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: Are all your answers going to be this long? Now, I am the voice no one likes to hear and I could care less. This isn't a personality contest. With all this bashing of the current reality in education someone needs to keep their eyes firmly on the bottom line and, in the case of these three, keep a firm grasp on reality.

ARTIST: Define reality? I function perfectly fine in a world of my own imagining. For years, decades, I have journeyed through the unexpected landscapes of breath and presence spinning suddenly recognizing myself in a creative process that transformed the personal to the very essence of understanding through theatrical play. I surrounded myself with dreamers and we danced in playgrounds of joy.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: What a load of crap.

SECOND SELF: Do you mind?

ARTIST: You are so rude.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: No, I'm not, not really. I just fail to see life the way you do. I don't understand you and that makes me suspicious and uncomfortable. My natural tendency is to dismiss anything I don't understand. Truthfully, I feel I may be missing out on something, every time you talk, but I console myself with the thought that if I can't understand it's not worth my time.

ARTIST: That makes me sad, but you're still an ass, and I blame you for many of the problems in schooling today.

SECOND SELF: So do I, but I admit to sometimes feeling that I am the maker of my own situation. Dr. David Smith (2006) calls on teachers to step up and draw attention to the disturbing, thoughtful, personal, and public role and responsibility that we have played in the very culture that is making teaching unsustainable. As the alter ego of the Artist-Teacher, I act as a bit of moderator to the chorus of voices that seem to be gathering. I am also much gentler than Maggie, a bit lost in the world, a bit of a pleaser, and not sure of my role in this academic work, except, in the moments when a reminder is needed that teacher wellness is real and the Artist-Teacher struggles with it every day.

INTERVIEWER: Ok, that introduces everyone rather nicely. Question two: **What time is it?**

AWFUL THOUGHTS: 10:13 am mountain standard time.

ARTIST: A time check? Really? It's time, (*glaring at Awful Thoughts*) to get to work and do what we have emerged to do: create some theatre!

MAGGIE: It is just the right time. If I hadn't intervened when I did she might be on a stress-leave or worse she may have quit the profession, though she can't afford not to teach, so she wouldn't have done that, but she certainly would be in a bad way; suffering with burnout, even more than she is, if I didn't show up and save the day.

SECOND SELF: Well said Maggie. We are all here to articulate the Artist-teacher's understanding of the teaching profession, within her own context and the greater culture of education, the only way she knows how: the time has come for her research to be discussed and it is through us—a polyphonic theatrical presentation.

INTERVIEWER: You might not like the next question either Awful Thoughts: **Where are you?**

MAGGIE: Let me answer this for all of us: we are behind every word the Artist-Teacher utters. Personally, I'm on the tip of her tongue. I subvert her natural reticence. I leave the filtering to Second Self. I am in each exhale that speaks to truth to her own power and no matter how ignored she feels or how much she despairs, with how unlivable, her workplace has become. *(Nodding to Artist)* Artist, steps up with idea after idea while Awful Thoughts, here, rings in her ears, pronouncing and scratching like a broken record all kinds of propaganda, created to get the Artist-Teacher to second-guess herself.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: Yeah, we are all in here together. If I weren't here it would be all basking in the sunshine, breathing deeply, and playing. The Artist-Teacher does get paid for her job. I don't need to see my taxes being spent on unrequired luxuries and the more time I spend in here with you all the more convinced I am that a moratorium on arts-based research is warranted.

INTERVIEWER: **What surrounds you?**

MAGGIE: Idiots, I am surrounded by idiots. Really, I only bother coming out when they do. When she is teaching in caritas and all is going as it should I take a nap or catch some rays. It is only when she steps out that classroom door or reads some ridiculous e-mail that I sit up and get involved. I peck away at that chain that surrounds the Artist-Teacher made from thoughtless policy and the over-accountability of current educational practice. I shred stuff but that doesn't make it go away, more's the pity!

AWFUL THOUGHTS: I thought there was something going on with my e-mails. I'm the one surrounded by idiots, inarticulate artsy-types who can't do their job without singing a song or drawing a cartoon.

ARTIST: They're called graphic novels and heads up, you are in an arts-based research dissertation, and this is as articulate as the performing arts get using just language. Words only go part of the way to informing the embodied story-telling that is theatre. I'm not surrounded by morons. The drama students, in the Artist-Teacher's classroom, are amazing glowing orbs of creativity and imagination. Even the ones who have almost stopped seeing, get caught in the swirl of play. Like Maggie said, it's only when I go outside the safe place of theatre that I see the world for how it is. I usually surround myself with Maggie or Second Self and find strength in their decisions, to be brave enough to walk out of a meeting or a professional development day when the conversation becomes soul destroying.

SECOND SELF: That is very kind of you Artist, to include me with your super hero maggie, but I admit, I think I fail you more often than I champion. You are constantly compromised with the work overload that takes time away from you or demands that you create only when it is convenient for the job. The chains that surround the Artist-Teacher bind me too. Sometimes, bound and blind I lose my way until, in the void of acedia, I am surrounded by lost opportunities for change and the status quo reinforced by initiatives instigated by Awful Thoughts.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: I'll just let Britzman and Dippo (2000) remind you that a caring community requires a willingness to explore the qualities of one's own responses to outside and inside dilemmas. Critical comments, like me, often have the sting of truth. Ideas that allow engagement with ethical questions need to be encouraged while suppressing crisis-driven mentality in order to illuminate and create, from a persistence of awful thoughts, a state of open-mindedness where exploring issues of workplace stress and teacher burn out can be taken seriously and honestly.

MAGGIE: That's quite a speech. Do you mean it?

AWFUL THOUGHTS: Honestly, no. But its good public relations to use words like caring and open-mindedness.

ARTIST: Just as I thought, we have to adjust to you. Of course you and your kind are the authors of the rhetoric of resiliency...

SECOND SELF: Artist, you promised not to get too involved in all of this. Don't get wound up.

INTERVIEWER: Maybe it's time for another question: **What are your given circumstances or why are you all here?**

MAGGIE: Boring question! Do your homework! Read chapters one and two of this dissertation, that's where you will find, very clearly laid out, the conditions for our existence, especially my being here. Next question? Give me that clipboard. (*Maggie yanks the clipboard away from the Interviewer*) **What is my relationship?** To whom? The Artist-Teacher? I love her. I could be nibbling away at road kill, like all the other magpies, but I choose to be her super hero because, between us, the kid needs help! She is an unlikely voice of dissent as she has played by the rules all these years, which is your fault Second Self! And, in fact, she has a bit of reputation of being someone administrators could count on to tow the line, but not anymore. I love watching their faces; whenever she follows the script I've written for her, their jaws drop, to hear their little minion, the Artist-teacher, articulately, intelligently, but precisely slash their ideas to shreds.

SECOND SELF AND ARTIST: (at the same time) I love her too.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: I could do without her.

INTERVIEWER: This next question will be different for each of you. Maggie, can I ask you to start: **What do you want?**

MAGGIE: mmm...I want a glass of Prosecco to go with these chocolates. Ok, yes, and I want to prevent any solipsism. It's tough, because the Artist-Teacher is going to perceive her reality through the lens of her understanding but as I so elegantly suggested in the prologue, she needs to drop the label of ArtisTeacher, which is going to help with self-truth issues. I try to prevent a narrow focus and keep the conversation moving away from the autobiographical and towards social commentary of change by challenging the Artist-Teacher. I'm not going to tiptoe around or skirt the issues, rather, I will be in her face, pushing for a deeper reading of her personal story within the greater context of education.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: I thought that was what I wanted to do? No Italian fizzy wine for me. I absolutely want to present, in a clear and unambiguous manner, my understanding of reality and my vision of education.

SECOND SELF: Thank you, I will have some Prosecco, good idea Maggie (*refereeing to the drink*). I want to act as an ambassador or translator. I'm striving for clarity and equity for all the voices in this dissertation.

ARTIST: Not me! I mean, I'll have some Prosecco, but I'm not interested in equity. My own embodied and experiential wisdom has been disregarded for long enough and I intend to create from my place as an artist (Siedel, 2006). I was a deeply engaged facilitator of the students' theatre-making but I want a compassionate space that allows new parts of me to unfold and old parts, that were cut off, to enter the stream of awareness and be included in creating the essence of health and healing for the empty and broken artist half of the Artist-Teacher. I need to dwell in a creatively enriching sanctuary. Snowber (2009) believes the best thing Artist-Teachers can do for their praxis is to stay keenly alive in the practice of living and being. I have rebounded and found life again though creating for the stage; my work, at its essence, "is the slow, laborious and painful mourning and letting go of self-attachment, of egoistic investments,"

resulting in “the interminable cultivation of an interconnected, contemplative, creative and fluid sensibility” (Eppert, 2009, p. 196). A delightful and deeply important element embodied in this process is that “engagement in creating is an act of manifesting faithful devotion to an ultimate reality” (Moon, 2001, p. 29). This honouring of the spiritual in theatre-making is very important to my professional work as a Catholic educator and a faith-filled person. It is refreshing to be able to pray and create without judgment. This dissertation as *temenos*, a sacred place that acts as a vessel of action has been especially powerful and disruptive; an environment allowing the complicated spirits of the creative process to work in their natural ways (McNiff, 2004). In the most positive manner possible, I have uprooted deep places and confronted fears. I have been disrupted and made stronger.

Second Self hugs the Artist while Maggie wraps her wings around both of them. Awful Thoughts looks confused.

ARTIST: I referred to quite a faculty of scholars just now, but their words resonate with me and I am too new at articulating what I want to be able to speak without the support from academic scholarship. They have articulated what I attempt to do or what I need to do if I am to be a theatre-artist.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you, that was a very interesting discussion. **What gets in the way of what you want?**

SECOND SELF: We kind of get in each other’s way, but we are strong enough to step aside when we are infringing on each other’s missions.

MAGGIE: The back and forth tug of the personal narrative and the current condition of the educational workplace. But, what really gets in the way, is the Artist-Teacher’s natural tendency

to want to fix problems. It's my job to keep asking questions and push for thoughtful discussions that do not so easily end in tidy solutions.

CARITAS *Voice Over (VO)*: Actually that is my job. Maggie, you are the fixer supreme. Your overwhelming desire to right all wrongs is what super-heroes do: fix the problems.

MAGGIE: Oh, there you are Caritas. Interviewer, this is Caritas, representing a humanizing and welcoming "way of educating for life and for all" (Groome, 1998, p. 14) that prioritizes the wellbeing of students and teachers over efficiency and accountability. Yup, you are so right...my bad! I fix while you keep open possibilities and highlight the growing chorus of voices demanding changes in schooling.

CARITAS: I am the Divine within all people. At the still centre, I radiate God's love and the call to love each other.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: I swear I don't know why I bother. So, it's both of you who keep messing about with my policies and keep asking more questions so we get bogged down in conversations. Bloody waste of time. I've always said the only thing wrong with education is educators, role and soul connections in the workplace, and annoying corvidae. And why are you late? Really interviewer, do we have to go through all the questions again?

INTERVIEWER: Welcome Caritas. I've never interviewed a dis-embodied voice before. Do you have a physical presence or are you just a collection of cool technical theatre effects. I love the smoke?

CARITAS: Actually, it's non-carcinogenetic theatre fog and I reside in the thoughts and actions of all who say yes to caritas.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: Hey, I thought we were keeping God out of this dissertation.

CARITAS: I am about seeing the truth in reality not religiosity. I seek, what Jesus called the kingdom of God, and most of us know as love (Rohr, 2003).

INTERVIEWER: I was just asking the other character what gets in the way of them fulfilling their goals. Would you like to answer that?

CARITAS: What has always been in my way is the factorization and commodification of education...

AWFUL THOUGHTS: *(interrupting)* Oh, here we go again...

CARITAS: ...and a blindness to what is missing, namely as McGilchrist (2009), acknowledges at the heart of education, are individuals — the changing, evolving, interconnected, implicit, and incarnate living beings in the context of the lived world. That is what gets in my way and what has created so much unnecessary student anxiety over high-stakes testing, a curricula skewed to accommodate accountability to the test instead of any real ability to differentiate learning, and an over-simplification of the issues of teacher wellness. What also gets in my way is a concerted effort, from the economic driven voices, to ignore any challenge to their version of reality.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: It's not my fault that we are better at getting our fragmented, recursive, and neatly packaged message out to the media. No one has time to listen to your thoughtful arguments; no one I know wants fundamental change to education, which will inevitably cost taxpayers more. It's not my fault that capitalism supplants...everything else! You teachers, like your modern conveniences, and your excellent wage, just as much as I do, so let's stop the hypocritical commentary.

(Caritas, Maggie, and the Artist are ironically clapping pissing off Awful Thoughts while Second Self looks on worried about what the interviewer must think of all of them)

MAGGIE: (*mockingly*) Well done AT. That pretty speech is exactly what Caritas is talking about.

ARTIST: Just because we have a different point of view doesn't mean we can't partake and celebrate in the good of our world. News alert Awful Thoughts people are capable of having complex and paradoxical relationships. Everything you say gets in the way of my goal as does a lack of time, over commitment of time and energy, working too hard, holding down two jobs...I could go on...

AWFUL THOUGHTS: Please don't! I'm still trying to figure out what a temenos is?

ARTIST: It is an intentional place; somewhere set aside, in my case, a space for creating for the stage.

SECOND SELF: And isn't a temenos what we are trying to create here where all voices have a chance to be heard. No one is particularly shy in this crowd but perhaps we should move on to your last question, interviewer?

INTERVIEWER: Ok, finally: **What do you do to get what you want?** I'm looking for verbs or action words.

MAGGIE: I rush in and save the day. I stick my beak in and pluck out what is most important and I throw out all the irrelevant nonsense that side tracks honest conversation and change. What about you Caritas?

CARITAS: I transform and begin anew when systems fall apart. I invite listening at a deep soul level while offering a disconcerting reorientation aimed at forging a new way. I lead the way, through the narrow gate, to life in caritas.

SECOND SELF: I listen and open space for multiple opinions to emerge. And I protect the privacy of the Artist-Teacher.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: I generate policy and report on how much better education is today. I collect data and draw my own conclusions. I call out time-wasting practices. I seek out and eliminate underperforming programs. I keep educators in line by robbing them of their agency. I offer resiliency as a solution to teacher wellness. I keep the wheels of industry rolling and big business happily supplied with workers.

ARTIST: I observe my world, watching and listening to the cadence of voices as much as the content of their speeches. I notice colour, and texture and light playing on a multitude of surfaces. I secretly imitate strangers by mimicking their walk or how they hold their face in repose or gesture with their arms. I try on accents and notice different ways to pronounce words. I reflect on all that I have seen and heard and felt and mix all this, with my own imagination, to create and design stories and mise en scène for the stage.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you all so much for your time and thoughtful answers to the nine questions Hagen (1973) devised to create characters. Now, if you will excuse me, I am going to interview the teachers of burnout. Thank you, so much, for waiting teachers of burnout, as you may have overheard, I'm basing my interviews on Uta Hagen's nine questions for building character. Question one: **Who are you?**

DISILLUSIONED: I feel myself emptying and my heart hardens. I honestly don't care. This work...all these demands...seems like it's all for nothing.

EXHAUSTED: I have no energy to smile, no energy to care, and yet I am twitchy, restless, and unsettled.

ANXIOUS: I can't do this not any more...don't make me go back.

INTERVIEWER: Sorry, sorry maybe we could start at the beginning. Which one of you is disillusioned and who is just exhausted? And you, just relax, if you can, no one is making you go

anywhere you don't want to go. Oh, Second Self, might I lean on your kindness...could you help me out?

SECOND SELF: Welcome to my world. I knew you would have trouble with these three. They are ok, when you get to know them. Mmm, some introductions are needed I suspect. The first character that spoke is the Disillusioned teacher: she depersonalizes or distances chronic overwhelming work situations that have contributed to her eroding sense of effectiveness. You met Exhausted next: more than being physically tired this is emotional depletion resulting from chronic overwhelming emotional demands and a systematic under-rewarding of personal effort, which reinforces feelings of worthlessness. And last up was Anxious: chronic stress to the point of panic from overworking in a profession that discourages agency and encourages resiliency without the power needed to make any real change.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: You know teachers are just professional babysitters caring for children until they are old enough to enter the workforce. You know I'm right, in some situations, with some students; teachers are just babysitting, waiting until students are mature enough to process the material.

SECOND SELF: Hey, I thought you left to go golfing?

DISILLUSIONED: My career is not about babysitting but opportunities and hope.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: Umm...truly some days, yes, it is! And it has contributed to the state you are in right now.

EXHAUSTED: Why bother trying to explain how we feel. You know there is an...awful thought, sitting out there smugly thinking that burnout is a joke and all will be ok with exercise and eating an apple.

ANXIOUS: Please! I just need time, some space, a moment without noise or interruption.

DISILLUSIONED: I just need to get through this interview.

CARITAS: I am Caritas and I reside at the core of all.

INTERVIEWER: What the hell or heaven is going on? Caritas...*(checking)* you are not on my list. *(Shows the clipboard to Caritas)*. I have interviewed all of you already.

MAGGIE: Hey, Caritas...there you are. I've been all over looking for you. AT what are you doing here? I thought you went to play poker with your mates. No, the memo was wrong. They didn't mean to call all the characters. Come on, the interviewer just wants the burnt out teachers. Sorry everyone! Carry on like we were never here!

EXHAUSTED: What the hell! I don't need caritas, really? While I wait and wait for educational change and the fine arts are continue to be marginalized, cut back, and dismissed. I know the difference that the arts make in the lives, in the souls, of students. Where is the caritas in so much extra work that I see more of other people's children than my own? Oh, I can't do this anymore. I can't fight. I can't speak in circles, around and around the same problems, only to come to no place of action, except the same pompous message, of disrespect with no recognition or respect.

ANXIOUS: Waiting and being patient strangled my voice. I am drowning here. I do not have time to be patient. If kindness is important where was it when the job overwhelmed me? Why is there no workplace flexibility to accommodate teachers at different points in their careers? This would make the job more livable. I patiently waited for a friendly, generous or considerate intervention when it was clear I was not coping and unable to even ask for the help I needed. Instead, I was chastised, like a child, for taking too many days off; the very days off I am entitled to take according to our negotiated contract.

DISILLIONED: But there is a problem; teachers who are patient with the teaching profession have only themselves to blame for making teaching an unlivable experience. It's complicity in complacency. Teachers complain about work overloads but is anything ever done about it? Why are we silent? Why do teachers not take a stand to create balance in the workplace? Why is there little challenge to institutional solutions to stress like resiliency and entrenched practices of a teacher's lack of agency and isolation and the effect all this has on teacher wellness? I used to offer so much of myself to my vocation; now I shut the classroom door and survive on the kindness of my students, when they can disconnect from their screens long enough, to connect with me.

SECOND SELF: The issues surrounding teacher wellness are fundamental and historical, woven into our global culture. Wellness is not just about eating healthy food or any other mental health way to cope with stress. Education is being asked to absorb the disconnection of families and care for all the needs of an every increasingly anxious student population with an overbearing accountability model, which isolates and alienates teachers. Wellness in education is not about fixing teachers; it is a call to nurture them, to support the heavy lifting they are doing for society.

INTERVIEWER: What is going on? What question are you answering? And why is the bird back with Caritas and I thought Awful Thoughts was rushing off to a meeting?

SECOND SELF: I don't think this bunch of characters is going to be able to follow your nine questions format. What do you really want to know about them that they haven't already expressed to you? (*Taking the Interviewer aside*) I know their answers seem hopeless and devoid of the joy of teaching but I will not change their message with platitudes. The voices of teachers discontented with education are too often ignored. The quick reaction from the neo-liberal accountability-obsessed taxpayer dismisses these complaints as coming from whining

and lazy teachers out to take advantage of an over-generous and union-driven public education system. It is hard for teachers, suffering from burnout, to see kindness or to be patient while facing the reality of our education system. They feel abandoned by their occupation and at the same time, deeply and personally responsible that they were not enough and failed to do the good work of teaching. Teachers are generally pleased with their choice of career, as it relates to working directly with children, who are willing to participate and learn, but outside forces often intervene to prevent teachers from performing their jobs. Teachers' professional judgment is undermined by external and imposed policies that deny teachers the opportunities to teach beyond what is mandated and to focus on the students in front of them in the classroom. The current teaching climate has become more complex. Teaching cannot be quarantined from the social context in which it is embedded. No amount of positive thinking can alter the effects on the profession of the profound decline in respect for and trust of those people who do the work of education. Working harder, or any other fashionable solution, cannot catch up to the societal changes that have profoundly influenced education. Increased governmental interference in the day-to-day operations of a school do nothing to alleviate society's perceptions that teaching is broken and that the answers must be imposed on those in the classroom who are identified as the problem.

DISILLUSIONED: Thank you, Second Self, those are the words, I searched for to answer the interviewer's questions, but I am rendered speechless, consumed with anger over the loss of a career that I loved.

EXHAUSTED: I know Caritas means well but when faced with the huge job of transforming the education system to truly address the issues of teachers wellness how can caritas be anything but empty words...very nice words, needed words...but do they have the power to get the job done? I'm too tired to take on this fight.

ANXIOUS: Everything is hopeless.

SECOND SELF: No, Anxious, caritas is part of a growing chorus of academics, from various faculties and interests who, with wisdom and experience are calling for major changes. This insistent chorus for change will eventually be too large to ignore. Of course, it all seems very hopeless right now but trust that the work of others will make a difference.

INTERVIEWER: Ok, thank you for your time. You have given my viewers much to think about.

In the following dialogue fragment I branched out and experimented with the issues of teacher wellness, in a scripted format, having now a solid grounding in the characters thanks to the revelations and subtleties observed when writing the previous script.

Dialogue Fragment II: Into the light

SETTING: a fine arts classroom. Upstage on a platform is a teacher's desk behind it an office chair.

AT RISE an ARTIST-TEACHER, struggling with burnout, enters the classroom upright, indicates closing the door and leans against it for a second, making a decision, she deliberately walks to her desk and sits down. Rolling back her shoulders and audibly exhaling and inhaling she settles down to meditate.

ARTIST-TEACHER: *(Looking at her watch)* 10 minutes until class starts, perfect... *(starts meditation music on her computer and closes her eyes)*... just follow the breath...inhale...exhale.

(The characters, which live in the mind of the ARTIST-TEACHER, enter up centre of the desk, behind and to the left and right of the meditating ARTIST-TEACHER and freeze in a tableau. Each character becomes animated as they speak and moves around the desk to centre stage.)

SECOND SELF: We, the characters of this autoethnographic performance, are behind every word the Artist-Teacher utters. Some of us, are on the tip of her tongue, subverting her natural reticence, while others filter her thoughts, leaving so much unsaid. We, are in each exhale, that speaks to truth and power, no matter how ignored she feels, or how much she despairs because of unlivable educational workplace conditions. We are metaphors, super-heroes, and personified concepts. This is the Artist (*moves centre*), who steps up with idea after idea pleading to be heard, while Awful Thoughts (*moves centre*) rings in her ears, pronouncing and scratching like a broken record, all kinds of propaganda created to get the Artist-Teacher to second-guess herself.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: (*Interrupting*) Yeah, we are all in here together all right. If I weren't here it would be all basking in the sunshine, breathing deeply, and wasting time. The Artist-Teacher does get paid for her job. I don't need to see my taxes being spent on non-essential luxuries. The more time I spend in here with all of you, the more convinced I am, that a moratorium on arts-based research is warranted. (*Taunts DISILLUSIONED TEACHER*) You know, teachers are just professional, over-paid babysitters caring for children until they are old enough to enter the workforce.

DISILLUSIONED TEACHER: (*Moves centre*) I feel myself emptying and my heart hardens. I honestly don't care. My work...all the demands. What is it all for?

EXHAUSTED TEACHER: (*Moves centre*) I have no energy to smile, no energy to care, and yet I am twitchy, restless, and unsettled.

ANXIOUS TEACHER: (*Stays upstage*) I can't do this, not any more...don't make me go back.

SECOND SELF: Welcome to my world. I am your tour guide during this mediation into the mind of a fine arts teacher. I am her Second Self or the Other I. As the alter ego of the Artist-Teacher

I act as a bit of moderator. I am gentle soul, a bit lost in the world, a bit of a pleaser, and not sure of my role in this academic work except in the moments when a reminder is needed that teacher wellness is real and the Artist-Teacher struggles with it every day. We are all here to articulate her understanding of the teaching profession, within her own context, and the greater culture of education, the only way she knows how: the time has come for her research to be discussed and it is through us—a polyphonic theatrical presentation. You just heard some voices, which, I suspect, if you are a teacher struggling with stress or burnout, you will recognize. You have already heard Awful Thoughts, who says things that, as a 28-year veteran of the teaching profession, make my blood boil even if her words do have the sting of truth.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: (*Interrupting, again*) I am the voice no one likes to hear and I could care less. This isn't a personality contest. With all this bashing of the current reality in education someone needs to keep their eyes on the bottom line and keep a firm grasp on reality.

ARTIST: Define reality?

SECOND SELF: May I present the Artist...

ARTIST: Thank you, Second Self. (*To AWFUL THOUGHTS*) I function perfectly fine in a world of my own imagining. For years, decades, I have journeyed through the unexpected landscapes of breath and presence, spinning, suddenly recognizing myself, in a creative process that transformed the personal, to the very essence of understanding, through theatrical play. I surrounded myself with dreamers and we danced in playgrounds of joy.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: What a load of crap.

SECOND SELF: Do you mind?

ARTIST: You are so rude.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: No, I'm not, not really. I just fail to see life the way you do and I don't understand you and that makes me suspicious and uncomfortable. My natural tendency is to dismiss anything I don't understand. Truthfully, I feel I may be missing out on something, every time you talk, but I console myself with the thought that if I can't understand it's not worth my time.

ARTIST: That makes me sad, but I blame your lack of imagination and fear of change, for many of the problems in education today.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: Oh, Yes...

SECOND SELF: (*Interveneing*) Before you two start something, we seem to have forgotten that we are not the only characters in this story: the Disillusioned, the Emotionally Exhausted, and the Anxious teachers are right there. (*motions to the three teachers*)

ARTIST: Oh, not those three, as a quiz of teachers they're real downers.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: And so full of themselves.

SECOND SELF: I'm sorry, their suffering is real and they don't need to be mocked by you two. This is the Disillusioned Teacher: she depersonalizes or distances chronic overwhelming work situations that have contributed to her eroding sense of effectiveness. Exhausted Teacher is next to her: more than being physically tired this is emotional depletion resulting from chronic, overwhelming emotional demands and a systematic under-rewarding of personal effort, which reinforces feelings of worthlessness. And up there is Anxious Teacher: chronic stress to the point of panic from overworking in a profession that discourages agency and encourages resiliency without the power needed to make any real change.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: *(Taunting)* You know I'm right, in some situations, with some students; teachers are just babysitting, waiting until those students are mature enough to process the material.

SECOND SELF: Yes, we heard you Awful Thoughts. I don't really think this is the appropriate time, but I admit to sometimes feeling that teachers are the makers of own situation. I feel the need to step up and draw attention to the disturbing, thoughtful, personal, and public role and responsibility that we all have played in the very culture that is making our profession unsustainable.

DISILLUSIONED TEACHER: *(Interrupting)* ...I may be disillusioned about all of this, but my career is not about babysitting but opportunities and hope.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: Umm...truly some days, yes, it is! And it has contributed to the state you are in right now.

(ANXIOUS TEACHER starts crying, DISILLUSIONED TEACHER gets in the face of AWFUL THOUGHTS, EXHAUSTED TEACHER starts to walk away while SECOND SELF tries to restore order by ushering AWFUL THOUGHTS to the side, away from the burnt out teachers)

ARTIST: Excuse me, *(pushing her way to centre stage)* but I need her full attention...now!
(performs monologue in a stylized but effective manner) How many years have I yearned to sit in the fall and let the sun pull me from myself? Straining toward what ought to be...And yet the spent leaves of every autumn rustled a lament: stay close to yourself...change the way the past lives in you. I didn't listen. I muzzled and squashed the seeping acedia. Colours dulled and vines of melancholy snared me from the clouds. How many years have I dwelt in the shadows of discontent? Of pretending all was great! How long has that painted on smile twisted my pain

into false happiness? Is not one moment too long? Straining toward what ought to be my work begins inside...

MAGGIE, SUPERHERO MAGPIE OF TEACHER WELLNESS: *(Entering)* What the hell is going on here? I leave for a few minutes to pick a couple of bottles of Prosecco and I come back to find everyone moaning about their workplace burnout issues and the bloody artist performing a monologue in the middle of a prayer meditation. Second Self, I left you in charge and you let the artist dwell in shadows of discontent, *(motions to the other characters who nod in agreement)* we all agreed: that part has just gotta go!

ARTIST: Damn it Maggie! You just wrecked my dramatic ending. How else am I going to get any attention around here? And tell me again, exactly why is there a superhero magpie in this dissertation...performance...about teacher wellness?

(MAGGIE moves center to a monologue spotlight)

MAGGIE: Actually, I am the star of this show. I've been here from the start of this dissertation. Think of me as a hermeneutic vehicle for contingent understandings that are situated in the lives, relationships, contexts, and histories of the Artist-Teacher and current educational culture. I am a female Hermes, the trickster of ancient Greek myths, a mistress of creativity and invention, with the capacity to see things anew, and whose power is in change, prediction, and interpretation *(moves back into the main scene as the spotlight fades)*.

SECOND SELF: There is no use yelling at me Maggie, I'm busy with Awful Thoughts, who is threatening to bring in statistics showing that Alberta teachers are the highest paid educators in Canada, which, apparently, should muzzle them from ever saying anything about their working conditions. She's upsetting everyone with several underfunded and poorly researched new initiatives. You are going to have to deal with the Artist yourself. *(MAGGIE glares at SECOND*

SELF who shrivels) Ok, ok...I'll see what I can do. (*Speaking to the ARTIST*) Honestly, the Artist-Teacher is not supposed to be listening to any of us, because, as Maggie said or did she squawk? (*Shooting metaphorical daggers at MAGGIE*) ...we are all in the middle of a prayer mediation...

ARTIST-TEACHER: (*Loudly breathes in and out disturbed by her thoughts and cutting off SECOND SELF mid sentence. She attempts to clear her mind while all the characters freeze waiting to see if the ARTIST-TEACHER can resettle. With another breath the ARTIST-TEACHER resumes her prayer meditation*).

MAGGIE: (*Beat. In a stage whisper, pointing at ARTIST*) For the record, that was your fault.

ARTIST: You know I can't control the creative process and yet that is exactly what I have had to do all these years. It's not fair, why do I have to curb my creative ideas and thoughts until it is the "right" time? Don't blame me if one day you find me shriveled and dead because it wasn't the "right" time. (*Moves centre into the monologue spotlight. While talking, the ARTIST holds up large cards with the references written on them putting them one behind the other as she proceeds through her monologue*). My own embodied and experiential wisdom has been disregarded for long enough and I intend to create from my place as an artist (*card 1: Siedel, 2006*). I want a compassionate space that allows new parts of myself to unfold. I need to dwell in a creatively enriching sanctuary (*card 2: Snowber, 2009*). Which, at its essence, "is the slow, laborious, and painful mourning and letting go of self-attachment, of egoistic investments," resulting in "the interminable cultivation of an interconnected, contemplative, creative, and fluid sensibility" (*card 3: Eppert, 2009, p. 196*). Engaging in creating is an act of manifesting faithful devotion to an ultimate reality (*card 4: Moon, 2001*). Honouring the spiritual and the creative, this dissertation is a temenos, a sacred place that acts as a vessel of transformation especially powerful and disruptive (*card 5: McNiff, 2004*). I have uprooted deep places and confronted

fears. I have been disrupted and made stronger (*card 6: Richards, 1962 then moves back to the main scene as the spotlight fades*). I referred to quite a faculty of scholars just now, but their words resonate with me and I need the support from academic scholarship. They articulate what I am attempting to do, what I must do, if I am to live (*lifts up card 7: Palmer, 2007*) undivided no more.

EXHAUSTED TEACHER: Nice thoughts Artist. I understand how teacher identity plays a role in teacher wellness especially for Artist-Teachers. Are we all going to get that much time to express how we feel? Though I don't know why we would bother. You know, there is an...awful thought, sitting out there smuggling dismissing burnout, as an excuse for the weak or the lazy teachers who can't cut it in the profession. Burnout is continuous stress and glib solutions, like getting more exercise, and eating a healthy diet are insulting. Like we don't do that already.

ANXIOUS TEACHER: Please! I just need time, some space, and a moment without noise or interruption.

DISILLUSIONED TEACHER: Fuck! I just need to get through this autoethnographic performance.

SECOND SELF: I realize it's getting crowded in here. We are kind of getting in each other's way, but it as it seems that teacher wellness and teacher identity are connected... we did all promised to listen to each other, for the sake of the Artist-Teacher.

MAGGIE: I don't mind the back and forth tug of the personal narrative of teacher wellness and identity and the current condition of the educational workplace. What I am on the lookout for, other than some Belgium chocolates to go with this Prosecco, is the Artist-Teacher's natural tendency to want to fix problems. It's my job to keep asking questions and push for thoughtful discussions and not tidy solutions.

CARITAS Voice Over (VO): (*spotlight with theatre fog*) actually that is my job, Maggie, you are the fixer supremo. That is what super-heroes do: fix problems. It is my mandate to offer an interruption in the current discourse on teacher wellness and identity pushing for thoughtful discussions and imaginative offerings of change.

MAGGIE: Oh, there you are Caritas. Hey everyone, this is Caritas, representing a humanizing and welcoming “way of educating for life and for all” (Groome, 1998, p. 14) that prioritizes the wellbeing of students and teachers over efficiency and accountability. Yup, you are so right...my bad! I fix, while you hold safe, the growing chorus of voices offering change in education and the lives of students and their teachers.

CARITAS (VO): I am the Divine within all people. At the still centre, I radiate God’s love and the call to love each other.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: I swear I don’t know why I bother. So, it’s you who keeps messing about with my policies and asking questions so we get bogged down in conversations. Bloody waste of time. I’ve always said, the only thing wrong with schooling is educators. And now I have to waste my time with this, role and soul connections in the workplace nonsense, not to mention annoying corvidae.

SECOND SELF: Welcome Caritas. I’ve never met a Voice Over before. Do you have a physical presence or are you just a collection of cool technical theatre effects. I love the smoke.

CARITAS (VO): Actually, it’s non-carcinogenic theatre fog and I reside in the thoughts and actions of all who have said yes to the Divine within.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: Hey, I thought we were keeping spirituality out of this dissertation.

CARITAS (VO): I am about seeing the truth in reality not religiosity. Sorry Awful Thoughts but it's time to invite spirit back into educational discourse. Too long your competitive market-driven agenda has split students and teachers from their full authentic self. Relational trust between teachers and students suffers, every time; caritas is eroded, through disconnected and boneheaded 'bottom line' thinking.

SECOND SELF: We were just about to discuss what gets in the way of fulfilling our goals. What would you say...

CARITAS (VO): I would say what has always been in my way: the factorization and commodification of schooling...

AWFUL THOUGHTS: (*Interrupting*) Oh, here we go again...

CARITAS (VO): ...and a blindness to what is missing, an acknowledgment that, at the heart of schooling, are individuals—evolving, interconnected, implicit, and incarnate living beings. That is what gets in my way and what has created so much unnecessary student anxiety over high-stakes testing, a curricula skewed to accommodate accountability to the test instead of diverse and rich opportunities of differentiated learning, and an over simplification of the issues of teacher wellness. What also gets in my way is a concerted effort from the economy-driven voices to ignore any challenge to their version of reality.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: It's not my fault that we are better at getting our fragmented, recursive, and neatly packaged message out to the media. No one has time to listen to your thoughtful arguments; no one, I know, wants fundamental change to schooling, which, will inevitable cost taxpayers more. It's not my fault that capitalism supplanted...everything else! You teachers like your modern conveniences and your excellent wage, just as much as anyone, so let's stop the hypocritical commentary.

(CARITAS, MAGGIE, and the ARTIST are ironically clapping pissing off AWFUL THOUGHTS).

MAGGIE: *(Mockingly)* Well done AT, that pretty speech is exactly what Caritas is talking about.

ARTIST: Just because we have a different point of view doesn't mean that we cannot be compensated for our work and partake and celebrate in the good of our world. News alert Awful Thoughts: people are capable of having complex and paradoxical relationships. Everything that comes out of your mouth gets in the way of my creative goals as does a lack of time, working too hard, holding down two jobs, and constructs like Artist-Teacher. I...

AWFUL THOUGHTS: Stop talking! And stop using words to confuse me, like temenos, you are just showing off!

MAGGIE: No, Awful Thoughts, the time has come for you to stop, just step aside, shut up and listen. Take it away Caritas...

(Music is heard and The Caritas Show begins)

SHOW ANNOUNCER: Today on *The Caritas Show* three symptoms of workplace burnout in the teaching profession go head to head with the Awful Thoughts who want to suppress and deny their very existence. This story would have made the headlines if teachers have not been historically muzzled from speaking their truth to power. In a *Caritas* exclusive Second Self will defend the burnt out teachers from the dismissive Awful Thoughts.

(Soundscape of the spoof TV show starts: Stage manager: Let's do this. Good show everyone!

Caritas: Temenos is an intentional place... Stage manager: Here we go in 5- 4- 3... Caritas:

...somewhere set aside... Stage manager: ...2- 1 cameras rolling. Caritas: ...where all voices

have a chance to be heard and honoured. Studio audience: (chanting) Caritas, Caritas, Caritas.

Caritas steps out in front of live studio audience, who claps and cheers).

CARITAS: I want you to close your eyes and imagine repeated exposure to job-related stressors, a dislocation between what you are and what you have to do representing an erosion of values, dignity, spirit, and will, a malady that spreads gradually and continuously over time, drawing you into a downward spiral: this is educational workplace burnout. Open your eyes and meet my first three guests reacting to my suggestion that caritas is a needed addition to *(audience joins in)* teacher wellness. Let's listen.

EXHAUSTED TEACHER: What the hell! While I wait and wait for educational change and the fine arts continue to be marginalized, cut back, and dismissed. I know the difference that the arts make in the lives, in the souls, of students. Where is caritas, in so much extra work, that I see more of other people's children than my own? Oh, I can't do this anymore. I can't fight. I can't speak in circles, around and around the same problems, only to come to a place of no action except the same pompous message of disrespect, with no recognition or respect.

ANXIOUS TEACHER: My voice is straggled. I am drowning here. I do not have time for anything when this job is overwhelming me. Why is there no workplace flexibility to accommodate teachers at different points in their careers? This would make the job more livable. I waited for a friendly, generous or considerate intervention when it was clear I was not coping and unable to even ask for the help I needed. Instead, I was chastised, like a child, for taking too many days off; the very days off I am entitled to take, according to our negotiated contract.

DISILLUSIONED TEACHER: Teachers have only themselves to blame for making teaching an unlivable experience. It's complicity in complacency. Teachers complain about work overloads but is anything ever done about it? Why are we silent? Why do teachers not take a stand to create balance in the workplace? Why is there little challenge to institutional solutions to stress like resiliency and the entrenched practices of lack of agency and isolation and the effect all this

has on teacher wellness? I used to offer so much of myself to my vocation now I shut the classroom door.

CARITAS: The issues surrounding teacher wellness are fundamental and historical, woven into our globalized neoliberal culture. Wellness is not just about mental health ways to cope with stress. Education is being asked to absorb the disconnection of families and care for all the needs of an every increasingly anxious student population with an overbearing accountability model, which isolates and alienates teachers. To help me navigate teacher wellness we have Second Self, representing an alternative reaction, to Awful Thoughts. Welcome.

SECOND SELF: Thank you Caritas. Wellness in education is not about fixing teachers; it is a call to nurture them, to support the heavy lifting they are doing for our society. I know the answers you just heard, from the burnt out teachers, seem hopeless and devoid of the joy of teaching, but I will not weaken their uncomfortable messages with platitudes. The voice of teachers discontented with education is too often ignored and cruelly twisted and dismissed as coming from whining teachers out to take advantage of an over-generous, union-driven, and worker focused public education system.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: Alberta teachers are the highest paid teachers in our country, according to my pals at the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. We need to cut the cost of education without harming students.

SECOND SELF: Students will be harmed if we do nothing for their teachers who are suffering. It is hard for teachers, suffering from burnout, to hear your message, Caritas, while facing the reality of our school system. They feel abandoned by their occupation and at the same time, deeply and personally responsible; they were not enough and failed to do the good work of teaching. Teachers are generally pleased with their choice of career, as it relates to working

directly with students who are willing to participate and learn, but outside forces often intervene to prevent teachers from performing their jobs.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: Without strong, market-place driven policies our province would be bankrupt thanks to your educational transformations.

CARITAS: Oh, so it's education that's causing all our financial problems and here I thought our province was struggling under a global glut of oil and a dependence on a singular source for provincial revenue?

SECOND SELF: Teachers' professional judgment is undermined by external and imposed policies that deny teachers the opportunities to teach beyond what is mandated and restricts their ability to focus on the students in front of them in the classroom. Teaching cannot be quarantined from the social context in which it is embedded. Working harder cannot catch up to the societal changes that have profoundly influenced education.

AWFUL THOUGHTS: *(Begins to respond)* Alberta teachers are the highest paid in the country...

(AWFUL THOUGHTS is interrupted by the appearance of the teachers struggling with work place burnout. The audience applauds as the teachers stand alongside SECOND SELF).

DISILLUSIONED TEACHER: Thank you, Second Self, I am rendered speechless and consumed with anger over the loss of a career that I loved.

EXHAUSTED TEACHER: How can caritas be anything but empty words...very nice words, needed words...but do they have the power to get the job done? I'm too tired to take on this fight.

ANXIOUS TEACHER: Change is hopeless and it's never going to happen.

DISILLUSIONED TEACHER: How can a call to action make any difference in a school system that isn't interested in transformation?

MAGGIE: Hey, beak up... *(MAGGIE appears on set taking center stage while her super hero theme plays amid loud applause from the AUDIENCE).*

AUDIENCE: Don't you mean buck up...

MAGGIE: *(to the audience)* Thanks, you know that's what I mean! But, really, there is no need for this level of despair. I'll rush in and save the day. I'll stick my beak in and pluck out what is most important in any discussion and I'll throw out all the irrelevant nonsense that side tracks honest conversation and change. What about you, Caritas?

CARITAS: I offer a call for redesign and beginning anew when systems fall apart. I invite listening at a deep soul level while offering a disconcerting reorientation aimed at forging a new way. I lead the way through the narrow gate, to life.

SECOND SELF: See, burnout teachers, you are not alone. We are part of a growing chorus of academics and teachers from various faculties, schools, and interests who, with wisdom and experience, are calling for major changes in education. This insistent chorus for change will eventually be too large to ignore.

(AWFUL THOUGHTS glances off stage and immediately a team of accountants, publicity agents, and tax lawyers walk on stage to stand shoulder to shoulder with AWFUL THOUGHTS).

CARITAS: *(AUDIENCE begins to clap as show credits run)* Thank you to all of my guests. See you next time.

SHOW ANNOUNCER: Tomorrow on an all-new *Caritas* training pre-service teachers. *(Music fades).*

(A light slowly cross fades, illuminating the ARTIST-TEACHER. Painfully and slowly she pulls a mighty chain, made heavy with 28 years of over-caring, over-doing, and over-investing in the teaching profession and ropes of policies that have cut her off from her artistic self of out of her desk drawer and drapes herself with them. Climbing on top of her desk, as if climbing a mountain and dragging the chain/rope she stops, and turns to rest, facing the audience).

ARTIST-TEACHER: I can't keep doing this. I really, really can't. I won't. *(Getting angry)* All of this is too much to drag along...to keep inside...all this inside *(tries to pull the chain off and fails)* I don't care. I don't care about all of this anymore. I don't need any of this. I just want out. *(Upset and defeated)* I admit I brought much of this on myself wanting to be the best, wanting to be known as one of those teachers who care, a super educator. Why did I live and work like this? I bought into such a false expectation...hero-teacher...being all things to all people. I wanted to be a teacher who worked as long as it took, to do everything perfectly, I thought being the first in the building and the last to leave was a badge of honour. I was wrong...so wrong...so very wrong. I should have made more time for life, for joy, for beauty, for play, for laughter. I straggled my artistry through self-importance. Adding the title of artist to my career as a teacher made me...*(ashamed)* made me...special. I'm just as bad as everyone else who subjugates art for their own means. I'm so sorry. Look, please go I can carry all *(motions to the chain/rope)* this is of my own doing...time to own up, don't you think?

ARTIST: *(slips out of the bondage and down from the desk)* Thank you. *(Takes a deep breath in, on the exhale, a smile of release spreads across her face. A strong center top light is illuminated with a soundscape of teen voices creating drama projects laughing and talking over each other. The ARTIST looks at the TEACHER)* Go on, change the way the past lives in you...for them...the students and for yourself.

(Encouraged by the students' voices and the urgings of the ARTIST, the TEACHER loosens

the ropes of policies and lets fall most of the chains of her profession looking up in the light of transformation as joy spreads across her face.)

MAGGIE: What the hell are you doing on top of your desk with that stupid look on your face?

TEACHER: *(centre light out, the mood destroyed, TEACHER starts to climb down)* That is the second time you have wrecked my dramatic ending!

MAGGIE: Technically, I interrupted the Artist earlier. So, is this is how it's going to be...Artist and Teacher? Did cutting off those cords really made a difference?

TEACHER: Yes, I think by freeing the artist from the teacher there is a chance to be who I am as a creative and imaginative person...and...I am now able to approach my work as a teacher in the fine arts with more clarity and confidence avoiding the constructs that caused so much stress and resulting burnout. This is no place for an artist. Not full time anyways. My artist self needs to thrive beyond the classroom. I'm creative enough as an experienced fine arts teacher; my work will be fine. It's just too much to ask the Artist to negotiate through our educational quagmire day after day.

MAGGIE: So you've achieved some wholeness as a teacher and as an artist by weirdly separating? Good to know this dissertation hasn't been a complete bust. With a little less of these, *(picking up chains of overinvesting)* maybe you have carved yourself a little less stress, though; you have not done much for your workplace burn out. You are still tied to the conditions of schooling. In changing the things you have control over it seems to me you have unearthed a whole lot of ugly, rigid, embedded gung about schooling. What are you going to do about all that?

CARITAS: May I suggest...

MAGGIE: Look, Caritas, your message is a good one, I'll say nothing against it but how exactly is caritas going to give teachers agency, or lessen work intensification, or stop teacher burnout and early exiting of the profession?

TEACHER: Maggie, calm down. To transform schools into a livable experience we have to change our very society and that is only going to happen one choice at a time, one person at a time. Transitioning toward the light was my crossing point, my negotiated moment of emerging, my public acceptance of caritas as a way of being that I can incorporate into my teaching praxis; I have hope for my future as a teacher without comprising my artistic self. *(Moves to her chair and resumes her prayer meditation).*

MAGGIE: So, I'm not saving the world?

ARTIST: No, but you did save me.

TEACHER: *(Looking up)* And me! *(Moves her head down back to her meditation).*

AWFUL THOUGHTS: Not me. Stupid meddling magpie, don't think for a second your squawking is going to change anything.

MAGGIE: We'll just see about that...(lets out a loud squawk).

(The school bells rings and the TEACHER looks up smiling then moves from her desk and opens the classroom door welcoming the students. FREEZE.)