

# International Journal of Education & the Arts

## Editors

Terry Barrett  
Ohio State University

Peter Webster  
University of Southern California

Eeva Anttila  
University of the Arts Helsinki

Brad Haseman  
Queensland University of Technology

<http://www.ijea.org/>

ISSN: 1529-8094

---

Volume 17 Number 15

May 16, 2016

## Video-Sharing Website Writing as Identity Performance: Heuristic Inquiry into Experiencing Personally Meaningful Music

Justin Nicholes  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania, USA

Citation: Nicholes, J. (2016). Video-Sharing website writing as identity performance: Heuristic inquiry into experiencing personally meaningful music. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 17(15). Retrieved from <http://www.ijea.org/v17n15/>.

### Abstract

Enacting heuristic phenomenological inquiry, this article explores the experience of watching a video of a live show of what was personally meaningful music for the researcher. In this study, personally meaningful music, defined as music integral to adolescent identity construction, was sung by and conveyed through the online *discoursal self* (Ivanič, 1998), or performed stage persona, of Mina Caputo, a transgender woman in the alternative-metal band Life of Agony. Data included a one-hour video of a live show and online comments. Data analysis involved heuristic and arts-based elements, involving explication of qualities of Mina Caputo's discoursal self, explication of themes in online comments, and creative syntheses of data into found poetry and flash fiction. General results include the majority of comments posted online representing identity performances that challenged dominant practices and discourses regarding transgender possibilities for selfhood. Results also describe how the

experience of heuristic inquiry itself represented a process toward internal growth for the researcher. This paper presents a methodology useful for self-discovery related to the central phenomenon, provides empirical data of online transgender performance, and explores video-sharing website writing as identity performance.

### **Introduction and Statement of Topic and Question**

When I was twenty, I sang in an alternative-metal band. We had minor success, playing in local bars and clubs in Cleveland and closer to home in the late 90s, culminating in our recording an album at an indie studio and dissolving when I went off to graduate school at Kent State University. After music, I wrote fiction in my spare time, lots of it if not the commercially successful kind, which led to my publishing a couple of literary novels in indie presses, publishing a number of short stories at literary presses, editing professionally at literary presses and magazines, and even earning a few Pushcart Prize nominations along the way. This brief background is meant to convey that my personal experience with art, ranging from alternative metal to literary writing, has played a part in my engagement with the present topic. The focus of this paper is profoundly important to me and my life and is therefore fitting to be explored through heuristic research (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985; Moustakas, 1990). In this paper, I present my exploration and, ultimately, my creative synthesis of the experience of watching a video of Mina Caputo, the transgender-woman lead singer of the alternative metal band Life of Agony, performing music I consider to be personally meaningful.

A series of memories for me involves my adolescent self clashing with adult figures who were understandably worried about the kind of music toward which I and a number of my friends gravitated. Life of Agony's debut album, after all, was entitled *River Runs Red* and, as a concept album, thematically slashed, riffed, and bellowed its way through the story of a young man whose tragic week and home experience correlated with his contemplating and finally attempting suicide. It was the 1990s, the era of suicide metal and parental worry, of songs and images that seemed, to outsiders, to glamorize suicide and death. Once, after a classmate in eleventh-grade art class brought in a cassette tape of Life of Agony to listen to during the hour period, the art teacher had turned off the music, telling us that our tastes in music eventually changed as we grew older, that our whole perspective and view of life transformed. Still, though I had gone nearly fifteen years without listening to Life of Agony, I, one day, found myself remembering and even yearning for those songs from art class and my adolescence.

When I looked up the band I remembered from art class as a high schooler, I discovered that the singer of Life of Agony, Keith Caputo, had become Mina Caputo (Figure 1). While I am still moved by the music of Life of Agony and consider it to be profoundly personally

meaningful art, Mina Caputo's change confronted me with issues I had never considered before. While I celebrated Mina's art, I still had to come to grips with what impact, if any, Mina had on how I now experienced music of an intensely significant, developmental period of my life.



Figure 1. Mina Caputo. Image by Justin Nicholes.

Meanwhile, transgender issues have urgent social relevance. In addition to U.S. national news reporting on one transgender teen's online plea for social change after her suicide (Granderson, 2015), a recent grounded-theory study by Levitt and Ippolito (2014) named self-isolation amid social taunts, feelings of ignoring of one's true self, and the danger of isolation amid stares as, among other factors, experiences that impact transgender people. In light of local and global discrimination and violence resulting from "reality enforcement"—a particular type of transphobia brought about when people construe a mismatch between one's private genitalia and one's public gender presentation (Bettcher, 2014, p. 392)—the issue of perceived and real discrimination on the basis of transgender identity deserves sustained attention. In addition, technology-mediated performances of identity offer rich sources of data useful for an exploration of how transgender performance can put into possibly worldwide circulation importantly humanizing discourses that can "contribute to changing the possibilities for self-hood available in the future" (Ivanič, 1998, p. 28). In my use of the term *discourses*, I draw on Fairclough (2006), who used the following definition:

Epistemologically, discourses are abstract entities (elements of orders of discourse [newly but mutably structured combinations of discourses, genres, and styles] within networks of social practices [...]) which are established on the basis of repetition and recurrence over time and in diverse social sites, but ontologically they appear in the concrete form of particular texts. (p. 41)

Rawson and Williams (2014), investigating the narrative of the term *transgender* itself in texts, concluded that “The rhetorical landscape of transgender is still developing, still demanding further research” (p. 6). Studies such as the aforementioned, as well as the one to be presented here, can contribute to the fields of composition, rhetoric, and applied linguistics by exploring how writing, here and in public comments on publically shared videos, represents discourses that operate situationally within social practices and impact ways people talk, think, and act. Such studies that investigate personal understanding of transgender issues can also powerfully contribute to personal growth along my own life journey, of which the music of Life of Agony and the voice of Mina Caputo are personally meaningful parts.

The central phenomenon of concern in this paper is the experience of watching a video of what, to myself as the researcher, is personally meaningful music. This music is sung by and conveyed through the *discoursal self* (Ivanič, 1998) of Mina Caputo, a transgender woman, who is the lead singer of the recently reunited alternative-metal band Life of Agony. The following heuristic research question guided my study:

*What is the experience of watching a video of Mina Caputo’s discoursal self performing personally meaningful music?*

As is a convention in heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990), I will now define key words in my heuristic research question.

### **Discoursal Self**

For Ivanič (1998), who used the term to explore discoursal identity construction in writing, “discoursal self” is the impression—often multiple, sometimes contradictory—which [writers] consciously or unconsciously convey of themselves” (p. 25). Ivanič (1998) both drew on and purposefully departed from Goffman’s (1959/1990) dramaturgical metaphor of identity performance, noting that Goffman’s metaphor remained open to criticism on the basis of seeming to imply an actor in control of her performance. The social constructionist perspective for which Ivanič was aiming positioned identity as more socially contestable. Still, Goffman’s work, as it is to Ivanič’s, remains essential to my paper’s conceptual

framework. In this paper, although I expand on Ivanič's conception by applying the term *discoursal self* to also cover technology-mediated on-stage performance, I also reference Goffman's (1959/1990) position that one's discoursal identity, or performance of a *character*, reflects the performer's perception of societal norms—so that a person's performance of a character will “tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society, more so, in fact, than does [the person's] behaviour as a whole” (p. 23). What we experience, then, is not Mina Caputo but rather Mina Caputo's discoursal self, her performance consciously or unconsciously, bodily and vocally conveyed in a video of a live show, whose meaning I myself participate in constructing, and whose instantiation on stage I consider here to represent an argument whose result is to expand future possibilities for selfhood. In addition, in my discussion of comments anonymously left as replies to Mina Caputo's performance online, I also use the term *discoursal self* to clarify that I am analyzing the fleeting sense these posters published of themselves in a particular text, in a particular context, at a particular moment, online. It is considered a threshold concept in the field of composition and writing studies, and therefore widely accepted as something those in the field *know*, that “writing enacts and creates identities and ideologies” (Scott, 2015, p. 48). Again, in my use of Ivanič's term, I once again mean to reference how Ivanič herself was informed by Goffman's position that such comments reflect what commenters see as possible positions to take in expressing their discoursal identity in writing. As Goffman (1959/1990) wrote, “To the degree that a performance highlights the common official values of the society in which it occurs, we may look upon it [...] as an expressive rejuvenation and reaffirmation of the moral values of the society” (p. 23). What is “normal,” however, is up for grabs—contestable space.

The importance of using Ivanič's (1998) terms also emerges from a consideration of her book's principal argument: “Writing is an act of identity in which people align themselves with socio-culturally shaped possibilities for self-hood, playing their part in reproducing or challenging dominant practices and discourses, and the values, beliefs and interests which they embody” (p. 32). Though I was not aware of this upon beginning this study, my faithful adherence to the processes and phases of heuristic research as described by Moustakas (1990), which I will detail in full below, has led to my gradual conclusion that the experience of Mina Caputo's discoursal self online, while she performed what I consider to be personally meaningful music, presents a challenge for viewers to take inventory of their own values, beliefs, and interests. This personal inventory-taking may result in viewers' own discoursal self performances in writing—with mine appearing here in this paper, and with anonymous posters' discoursal selves appearing on YouTube comment boxes. Importantly, Ivanič's (1998) Goffman-informed theory reminds us that what we perform in our writing is not ourselves; instead, “they are instantiations and recombinations of possibilities for self-hood which are available in the wider social context in which [we] are writing” (p. 30). For Ivanič,

it is through individuals choosing to resist reproductions of dominant practices together that can expand future ways of being in the world. In carrying out a disciplined, systematic exploration of this central phenomenon, I have sought to enact a social constructivist philosophy concerned with social justice.

### **Performance**

The word *performance* in my heuristic research question is also purposefully used here in relation to the perspective on identity and gender I am drawing on. Identity in this paper follows Butler's (1990) lead in emphasizing the importance of performativity in creating an appearance of identity substance. Butler (1990) has pointed out the way repetition of performances has naturalized inequity:

That the power regimes of heterosexism and phallogocentrism seek to augment themselves through a constant repetition of their logic, their metaphysic, and their naturalized ontologies does not imply that repetition itself ought to be stopped—as if it could be. If repetition is bound to persist as the mechanism of the cultural reproduction of identities, then the crucial question emerges: What kind of subversive repetition might call into question the regulatory practice of identity itself? (p. 32)

Butler (1990) has importantly argued that “The univocity of sex, the internal coherence of gender, and the binary framework for both sex and gender” represent “regulatory fictions that consolidate and naturalize the convergent power regimes of masculine and heterosexist oppression” (p. 33). This paper interrogates the “fiction” of the “binary framework” by a systematic research method that investigated myself as well as others on the topic of gender performance related to what, to me, is personally meaningful music. Mina Caputo herself has referred to life as a man in the heavy-metal scene as “torture” as she had to “play this male role” (“Life of Agony singer Mina Caputo,” 2013). This paper importantly attempts to use a theoretical orientation to account for gender as performance, and for Mina Caputo's current performance of gender as being one she prefers and may see as more accurately reflecting an internal sense of self.

### **Personally Meaningful Music**

Finally, *personally meaningful music* as used in my heuristic research question refers to music experienced especially in our adolescence. In this sense, what is personally meaningful music may differ for every individual. In arguing for psychology of music's importance for developmental psychology of adolescence, Miranda (2013) wrote that “Music is [adolescents'] soundtrack during this intense developmental period” and “can influence at

least seven major areas of development: aesthetics; identity; socialisation; emotion regulation and coping; personality and motivation; gender roles; and positive youth development” (pp. 10-11). The underpinning assumption is that the timing of music in our adolescence is advantageous for that music’s becoming an essential part of how we see ourselves internally and how we perform and construct our identities externally.

### **Methods to Answer the Research Question**

I attempted to answer my heuristic research question in two ways. First, it was answered through my moving through the phases (Initial Engagement, Immersion, Incubation, Illumination, Explication, Creative Synthesis) and the processes (Identification With the Focus of Inquiry, Self-Dialogue, Tacit Knowing, Intuition, Indwelling, Focusing, Internal Frame of Reference) of heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990). In this paper’s case, this involved self-dialogue interviews, an explication of key themes that I located in relation to the video, and an explication of key themes that I located in comments viewers left online about the video. Research on YouTube comments has suggested that most people who respond to videos do so reactively, not engaging in dialogue, and rarely commenting on a comment (Walther, DeAndrea, Kim, & Anthony, 2010). In addition, work on YouTube comments has suggested that, with such a wide variety of content available, viewers typically seek out content with which they are likely to agree (Sunstein, 2009) rather than content they wish to critique or react to negatively. In a study that explored the usual characteristics of YouTube commenters, Thelwall, Sud, and Vis (2010) concluded that YouTube users who looked up music videos were likely seeking to be “passively entertained” rather than to be engaged in debate (p. 626). In analysis of YouTube commenters and perceptions of social affiliation in relation to a video’s perceived central message, Walther et al. (2010) have further discussed that, theoretically, “YouTube commenters may be experienced by viewers as peers, especially when there is no visually identifying information about commenters that would suggest otherwise” (p. 472). Based on this aforementioned work, it is reasonable to take a position that commenters on the YouTube video analyzed in this paper sought out the video of Mina Caputo and *Life of Agony* because they, too, shared some experience with the music of *Life of Agony*. Although anonymous, these commenters are therefore argued to qualify as participants in my, the researcher’s, exploration of the experience of watching Mina Caputo perform on stage as the lead singer of *Life of Agony*.

Second, my heuristic research question was answered through my creative synthesis of the experience in the form of art, in this case a found poem consisting mostly of anonymous posters’ comments and a work of flash fiction to synthesize the entire experience. As I will detail later, arts-based research has the potential to offer readers a unique chance to embody a

central phenomenon through art (Hanauer, 2001) for themselves, as opposed to a more distanced exposure of data through more expository presentation.

In the following section, I review relevant literature to further justify the carrying out of my study. In the review, I make the case that room exists for this heuristic study as a methodological precedent as well as an enactment of social justice.

## **Review of the Literature**

### **(Trans)Gender Performance**

Among the papers already considered as relevant to this current study, Cook and Hasmath (2014) drew on Butler's reference to "parodic styles" (Butler, 1990, p. 188) in analyzing whether online gender performances could denaturalize heterosexual norms. Through critical discourse analysis of Facebook pages, Cook and Hasmath (2014) concluded that repetition of an originally vicious word, for them the word "slut," was unable to gain subversive momentum capable of resisting heteronormative connotations (pp. 984-985). Several elements of the Facebook page meant to enact resistance and inclusiveness actually ended up undercutting original, emancipatory aims: "rather than decentering the primary role gender played in determining how subjects could self-identify, it structured various dimensions of subjects' identities into a hierarchy topped by gender" (Cook & Hasmath, 2014, p. 986). Still, the online environment, for Cook and Hasmath, held "subversive potential" worthy of further exploration (p. 990).

Similarly, but on the topic of transgender oppression, Bettcher (2014) has written about struggles against pervasive heteronormative discourses, making her feel "problematically positioned with respect to the binary" (p. 384). For Bettcher (2014), "This was a horrible feeling: what made me feel *well* was being recognized as a woman" (p. 384). Bettcher has discussed the need for a theory that blends oppression on sexist and transphobic terms, but that also resists a beyond-the-binary theory of trans resistance, in order to imagine "worlds in which there exist different, resistant gender practices" (p. 403). Regarding transgender identity in cyberspace, Marciano (2014) helps me explain how my current paper contributes to ongoing opposition to the foundation of reality enforcement that Bettcher referred to.

Marciano (2014) has pointed out the importance of cyberspace for many transgender-identifying people, writing that transgender-identifying people often have much experience in expressing transgender identities online, since offline they may feel subject to reality enforcement and attendant injustices. This paper, in exploring the experience of Mina Caputo's discursive self online, means to add to the work needed to stretch meanings of



gender terms and possibilities. Legitimizing Mina Caputo's womanhood through the experience explored and published here may offer further support through its humanizing philosophy of social constructivism.

### **Arts-Based Research and (Trans)Gender Studies**

The ultimately humanizing ethos that underpins the heuristic, arts-based components of my research project respond to previous research on transgender issues, which has all too often tended to pathologize (Zitz, Burns, & Tacconelli, 2014). In response, Zitz, Burns, and Tacconelli (2014) have used and expressed support for qualitative approaches that include creative methodologies. The aim of heuristic research fundamentally centers on understanding, and on embodying, and requires deep engagement with an experience the researcher has personally experienced and profoundly cares about (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985; Moustakas, 1990). According to Moustakas (1990), "From the beginning and throughout an investigation, heuristic research involves self-search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery; the research question and the methodology flow out of inner awareness, meaning, and inspiration" (p. 11). Heuristic research also naturally fits arts-based inquiry in its final phase of "creative synthesis" (Moustakas, 1990, pp. 31-32). According to Finley (2014), arts-based research may draw on "literary writing, music, performance, dance, visual art, film, and other media during all phases of social research, including data collection, analysis, interpretation, and representation" (p. 532). Such artistic imaginings have implications for resistance and social justice. In presenting activities graduate students undertook in a class on arts-based research, Osei-Kofi (2013) stressed the possibly emancipatory benefits resulting from artistic exploration of social issues. In addition, in specifically blending heuristic research (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985; Moustakas, 1990) with music and visual arts, Schenstead (2012) presented conclusions in text and art that illustrated virtues of arts-based reflexivity on music therapy and her own flute playing. Schenstead's findings and illuminations proved profoundly, personally meaningful, and the description of her study has provided a precedent whose lead my study follows in its also including first-person self-study that blends heuristic and arts-based dimensions.

### **Music and Adolescent Development**

Finally, this present study adds to research involving the relationship between music and adolescent development. Miranda's (2013) literature-review argument highlighted evidence of heavy metal music having correlated in past studies with externalization of "problem" behaviors during adolescence (p. 15), but not in problem-behavior internalization, such as that of anxiety or depression (p. 16). Miranda also argued that heavy metal had not been convincingly linked to being a *cause* of self-harm but rather probably more so to vulnerability.

This final detail may be important here since Life of Agony qualifies as alternative (heavy) metal music, and the band's debut album, *River Runs Red*, was a concept album dealing with stressors seemingly positioned as contributors to an attempt of self harm. Along these same lines, a recent grounded theory study that involved forty teenagers in Australia focused on the central phenomenon of positive descriptions of music-listening experiences and found something similar (McFerran & Saarikallio, 2014). Through interviews, McFerran and Saarikallio (2014) discovered that participants tended to report focusing on the benefits of music as a coping aid rather than on negative consequences, and that although mentally healthy adolescents reported being aware of the consequences of music listening that could increase feelings of depression or sadness, young people with lower measurements of mental health "tended to describe themselves as being under the influence of music, and continued to use ineffective music strategies despite negative consequences" (p. 94). Still, other evidence exists to suggest that adolescents' listening to music has benefits overall. In a study by Ter Bogt, Mulder, Raaijmakers, and Gabhainn (2011), participants who reported music being central to their lives, and to feeling anger and sadness while listening to music, were not necessarily prone to internalizing distress: "all people [in the study] who were being moved by music, used it for mood enhancement and often coping, but the High-Involved group seemed to benefit most from music's capacity to enliven and enlighten life" (p. 160). Listening to music, then, was not found to necessarily impact adolescents negatively; rather, highly involved listeners reported a rewarding, enriching experience.

### **How the Present Study Fits In With Existing Literature**

To summarize, my study contributes to the literature considered above in three main ways: (a) by presenting a methodology uniquely useful for self-discovery when experiencing personally meaningful music, defined here as music the researcher (myself) and co-participants (those who commented on Mina Caputo's YouTube video) may have gravitated toward in adolescence, through online video of live shows; (b) by providing further empirical data in the discussion of online identity performance and gender; and (c) by enacting a social constructivist philosophy related to transgender issues.

### **Methodology**

This section details how I prepared to conduct the study, how I collected data, and how I organized, analyzed, and synthesized that data.

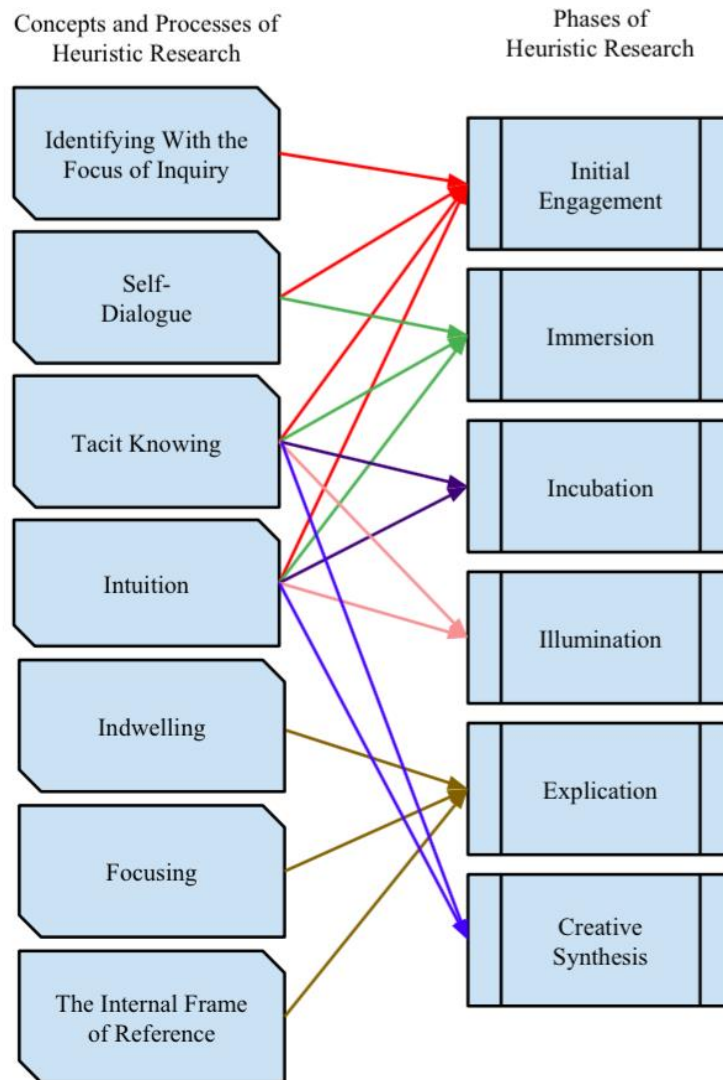


Figure 2. Concepts, processes, and phases of heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990).

Figure 2 provides a visualization of the phases of heuristic research as detailed by Moustakas (1990). Although my aim was to adhere to this path toward valid heuristic conclusions, I do not mean to imply that mine was an exemplary one or that the research method can be simplified so easily. Maybe the most important dimension of heuristic research is that, actually, it is impossible to mark a clear beginning or ending. My interest in this question began long before any formal Initial Engagement, and though I have concluded my creative synthesis at the time of publication of this paper, a part of me is still undergoing Immersion, Incubation, and Illumination, and my interest in this question is not yet quenched. Still, for the sake of explaining my study's *validity* as understood under a qualitative paradigm as "trustworthiness, rigor, and quality" (Golafshani, 2003, p. 604), I detail my journey here.

The phase of Initial Engagement began with an hour-long self-dialogue after I had watched and thought about the one-hour video of what is supposed to be the first live show with Mina Caputo as the singer of *Life of Agony*. Moustakas (1990) wrote that “the process of self-dialogue makes possible the derivation of a body of scientific knowledge that is useful” and that “In self-dialogue, one faces oneself and must be honest with oneself in one’s experience relevant to the question” (p. 17). In conducting the self-dialogue, I wrote rapidly, sometimes branching off into new topics seemingly irrelevant to the question posed. The idea was to elicit thoughts I could repeatedly revisit as my journey continued and as I delved into others’ online experiences of Mina Caputo’s discursive self.

The second phase, Immersion, involved my “enter[ing] fully into life with others wherever the theme [was] being expressed or talked about” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 28). This involved my collecting comments left on YouTube videos from 2014 shows of Mina Caputo. I did not seek to quantify or code data, only considered online comments as a casual YouTube consumer. I also visited Mina Caputo’s website (<http://www.minacaputo.com/>), Facebook page, and Twitter account. These sites led me to read and experience multimedia news and performances that Mina Caputo’s website linked me to. Overall, I was immersing myself for hours online into Mina Caputo’s online identity, constructed by her own social-media sites as well as by comments and articles by others. After Immersion, I spontaneously initiated another self-dialogue, asking for any amendments to earlier thoughts or so-far unarticulated conclusions about the experience of Mina Caputo’s online discursive self.

Moustakas (1990) described the third phase of heuristic research, Incubation, as one in which “the researcher retreats from the intense, concentrated focus on the question” (p. 28). Here, I let the processes of “tacit knowing” and “intuition” work beyond my conscious awareness to expand and clarify my understanding.

In the fourth stage, Illumination, I experienced a “breakthrough into conscious awareness of qualities and a clustering of qualities into themes inherent in the question” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 29). This stage requires the researcher to forgo conscious attempts to isolate themes; instead, I sketched ideas and attempted to let my mind link dimensions from the theoretical framework guiding my definition of terms. During this stage, I transitioned toward being able to explicate aspects of the experience.

In the fifth stage, known as Explication, I began to “fully examine what ha[d] awakened in consciousness” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 31). I uploaded the self-dialogues to NVivo for Mac Version 10.1.3, which facilitated my exploring of themes. In this stage, it is important to understand one’s own self and thoughts about the experience to facilitate the understanding of others’ experiences (Moustakas, 1990, p. 31). After coding self-dialogues, I then turned to

anonymous posts left about Mina Caputo's performance online. I went through the data using NVivo coding software and was able to stabilize themes, which fell according to Ivanič's (1998) theory of writer identity, namely into posts that (a) *reproduced* dominant practices and discourses related to transgender performance or (b) *challenged* such dominant practices and discourses. These two umbrella themes were made up of codes that exemplified variations on one of these two themes. The coding of anonymous posts was checked for inter-rater reliability, or the extent to which codes were recognized by more than only one researcher. My partner researcher, who had experience in the field of composition and applied linguistics, looked through ten percent of the total data. The result was an inter-rater reliability score of 0.88.

The final phase of heuristic research is known as Creative Synthesis (Moustakas, 1990). In this phase, after I had become fully familiar with all themes that I located in self-dialogue and video commentary data, I synthesized the experience into a found poem and into a piece of flash fiction. The found poem followed Prendergast's (2012) lead of artistically presenting findings in the form of a poem consisting entirely of others' words. My found poem contains one line from self-dialogue data, and the remainder comes from YouTube video comments. Finally, I synthesized the experience into a work of flash fiction. Though it does not have a fixed definition, flash fiction generally includes traditional elements of short stories, such as characters, conflict, setting, plot elements, and so on, but is condensed. The work of flash fiction to be presented as a synthesis of data here was limited to 250 words. Both literary works were meant not merely to present data but to present an experience representative of the central phenomenon.

### **Presentation and Analysis of Data**

My heuristic research question that guided this study asked, *What is the experience of watching a video of Mina Caputo's discursal self performing personally meaningful music?* This section includes data that answered this question. Specifically, I include here the following: (a) a composite description drawing on themes that I located in textual data; (b) creative synthesis in the form of a found poem consisting of verbatim material from the self-dialogues and online YouTube commentary for the video of Mina Caputo's first live show with Life of Agony; and, (c) creative synthesis in the form of a work of flash fiction that crystallizes the entire experience in under 250 words. Finally, I follow my presentation of data with analysis that links the composite description of textual data with poem and short-story data.

### Composite Description

Here, I present a composite description of textual data. The composite description presents themes that I located in self-dialogue and YouTube-comment data. Together, this data provides one angle to understand the experience of watching a video of Mina Caputo performing what, to myself as the researcher, was personally meaningful music.

First, Table 1 lists descriptions, examples, and number of references of codes in my self-dialogue exploration of the central phenomenon.

Table 1.

#### *Themes from Self-Dialogue Data*

Codes	Description	Example	References
Description of the Music	Explicit mention of the songs themselves or experience of the music in general.	“Anyway the hooks in the songs were really memorable and powerful.”	9
Mina’s Body	Reference to Mina’s body or body movement.	“I almost cried at the performance. I was moved, inspired, just so happy to see Mina Caputo on stage doing her thing, moving the way she moves, sort of like she was finally doing what she should always have done.”	7
Personally Meaningful Memories	Contextualization of the experience of LoA music in past.	“Anyway we were allowed to bring music, and one guy brought LoA and I just remember complete silence in the art room, working on some painting or clay work or something or other, and the album just unfolding.”	7
Others’ Gazes	Perception of Support or Criticism From Others	“Through Facebook, Twitter, websites, YouTube, and other avenues online, I came across so many sold out live shows recently. I mean, the crowd is going crazy”	6
Background	Exposition to contextualize previous or later comments.	“Caputo did not write all of the lyrics to many of the songs, I read online somewhere, so this is just what I am bringing the identity construction.”	4
New Feeling	Explicit mention of the songs’ messages feeling	“But about the music, it’s infused with different meaning, yeah. Like some of the	4

	slightly different with Mina as lead singer.	lyrics have different connotations to me now, different shades. In ‘Lost at 22,’ Mina sings, ‘shed my skin and start again.’”	
Inspiration of Performance	Explicit or implicit mention of Mina’s performance being inspirational.	“I think that’s the wonder of Mina Caputo of Life of Agony. How many of us maybe came back to this album after or during Mina’s transition? What I have undergone, my becoming less ignorant by exposure, has to have happened to others?”	3

This data, which facilitated creative synthesis, tellingly reflects that the most frequently appearing theme in the self-dialogue data concerned Description of the Music. In my self-dialogue exploration of the central phenomenon, I continually returned to the sensation of listening to the music. In particular, the hooks of the songs in *River Runs Red* had always stayed with me into my adulthood. They were easy to anticipate and seemed to welcome me to sing along—or, more accurately, to sometimes shout along. The title song of the album, “River Runs Red,” is also memorable and powerful partly because it follows one of three episodes, entitled “Monday,” “Thursday,” and “Friday,” that convey life events of a teenage boy in the music album. The episode “Monday” begins with the sound of a creaking door and a boy walking to his bedroom. A stepmother is shouting at the boy, telling him that he is late for dinner and that the school had called her on the phone to report that the boy had not gone to school that day. A sound of retreating footsteps tells listeners that the boy has gone upstairs, perhaps to his bedroom, where the stepmother’s shouts become muffled. The boy then switches on a telephone answering machine, which plays the recording of a girl, apparently the boy’s girlfriend, telling the boy that she no longer wishes to date him. After the machine switches off, we have a few moments of silence before the song “River Runs Red” begins. The way the song begins strongly contributes to the emotional impact, since it starts with the drummer striking cymbals to establish the fast-paced tempo. A four-count later, a guitar riff begins simultaneously with Mina Caputo’s shouting voice. The emotional impact of the album, then, and of its songs is connected with this storyline of a boy under stress and apparently feeling pain.

This storyline, which impacted how I still felt about the music as apparent in my self-dialogue data, reflects another theme that I located in my self-dialogue explorations. That is, Personally Meaningful Memories emerged from my rumination over the data. As I was growing up in a family in which my parents were moving toward divorce, and with a younger sibling who played music but who had already begun developing substance addictions that he still

struggles with all these years later, this sort of music that also seemed to emote a somewhat self-absorbed pain and, indeed, agony, was easy for me to relate to. Listening to the music was almost like expressing feelings I had also seemed to be feeling.

Another noteworthy theme that I located through my self-dialogue experience concerns Mina's Body. When I first began watching the video, showing Mina singing the songs that had always seemed personally relevant to me when I was young, I remember feeling some urge to cry in a sort of happiness. It seemed clear to me that Mina still felt strong emotion while singing these songs, but now her body's movement while performing the music also seemed like a kind of triumph. I had read about Mina leaving the band years earlier, and the difficulty some fans had given her by criticizing her need to transition to being a woman. Seeing her back on stage and moving and appearing as she wished was emotionally moving to me. It also signaled a kind of vulnerability to me, too. I recognized some impulse in myself to want to support Mina's performance—to affirm it in some way. I did not leave a YouTube comment, but that feeling was the principal motivation for this current research paper.

Finally, a significant theme that repeated itself in my self-dialogues concerned Others' Gazes. The YouTube video was taken from someone in the audience. This allows a view of the audience watching Mina Caputo and Life of Agony on stage. How audience members are reacting, then, seemed to make me aware that even my reaction to the performance was situated in social action. The audience that is observable in the video seems to show mixed feelings: While some audience members dance to the music in a mosh pit, or a circle of people who intentionally collide into other people, others seem to be standing and simply watching. That lack of movement from some audience members, to me, could almost look like disapproval. After all, Life of Agony seemed to be one of many music acts that evening, so that it was not clear if all audience members in the video had come to specifically see Mina Caputo and her band mates.

Table 2 continues my composite description of the experience of watching Mina Caputo perform what was, to me, personally meaningful music. However, here I worked with the help of a co-researcher, a PhD candidate with training in qualitative research and the coding of data. Together we analyzed and coded the YouTube comments that were publicly made under the video of Mina Caputo's first live show with the reunited Life of Agony. As mentioned earlier, this section of the textual data was checked for inter-rater reliability, or the extent to which codes were recognized by more than only one researcher. My partner researcher, who looked through ten percent of the total data, helped to establish an inter-rater reliability score of 0.88. This is a very good rating among qualitative researchers, meaning that we agreed on how data should be coded 88% of the time.



Table 2.

*Themes and Codes from Online Comments That Challenged or Reproduced Dominant Discourses on Gender*

THEMES Codes	Description	Example	References
CHALLENGE	--	--	82
Appraisal	Judging band's music or image as a brand and experience.	"Awesome performance. Still a big LOA fan. Heroin dreams and Hope are great songs"  "This band is fucking horrible..."	37
Mina/She	Referring to Mina as Mina; using she/her.	"Mina Caputo you are amazing and finding this video the other day made me so happy, your voice is beautiful and perfect Please tour the USA again with LOA~~~!!"	12
Future Tour	Expressing hope that LoA will tour again.	"Man i hope they are gonna do a tour!"	9
Mina's Change	Expressing happiness for Mina's coming out or existence.	"So cool to see this--Mina finally getting to really be herself on stage."  "gracias LIFE OF... por estar con el mundo"	9
Meaningful Music	Referencing having supported band since 90s.	"I seen LOA in like 89/90ish back when Break the Chains demo(still have the cassette) was all they had out they blew me away and ive made it to damn near every show they had in the DC area since..."	7
Voice	Appraising Mina's voice.	"so tight, her voice is still on point."	5
Mina's Sexuality	Describing Mina as Object of Desire or as Performing Sex.	"Great band. Mina is hot ..."  "Top!"	3
REPRODUCE	--	--	26

Keith/He	Referring to Mina as Keith; using he/him.	“his singing was always off..seen the band 20 times plus...keith (mina) is always in his own lil zone on stage.”	13
Binary	Calling names or insulting that references gender binary.	“I'm confused, I loved river runs red but Keith is a chick now?”  “Takes balls to get up there as Mina... then again, maybe not :)”	9
Incongruence	Complaining Mina does not fit LoA's sound, or band lost an edge.	“You have got to be kidding me. Mina's voice used to sound as strong a brick wall; now it's half-assed, spastic, and theatrical”	4

In accordance with Ivanič's (1998) Goffman-informed (1959/1990) theory of writer identity, two major themes arose from this YouTube data: (a) comments that challenged dominant discourses about transgender possibilities for selfhood, and (b) comments that reproduced dominant discourses about transgender possibilities. The somewhat bipolar result of coding the data reflects earlier research that has shown that often extreme views for or against messages make it into YouTube comments, so that “More informed, nuanced, or deliberative perspectives struggled for space” (Burgess & Green, 2013, p. 103).

Overall, instances of comments that challenged limitations on transgender possibilities for selfhood (87) outnumbered comments that reproduced such limiting discourses (26). Under the theme of *Comments that challenged dominant discourses about transgender possibilities for selfhood*, the most noteworthy themes were Appraisal and Mina/She. Appraisal covered any comment that judged the band or its image, either positively or negatively. Such comments were deemed to qualify as being comments that challenged discourses that limited transgender possibilities for selfhood because such comments operated under an assumption that being a transgender woman was a possibility for an alternative-metal band with roots in the 90s. The second noteworthy theme, Mina/She, qualified as challenging limitations to transgender selfhood by referring to Mina as Mina, or as a woman. Such use of language implied an acceptance of Mina's wish to transition to a woman, and be recognized as such, in society. Alternatively, the theme of Keith/He appeared under the theme of *Comments that reproduced dominant discourses about transgender possibilities*. In these cases, commenters refused to refer to Mina as Mina, or as a woman, by using the name Keith or the masculine personal pronouns *he*, *him*, or *his*.

To summarize the composite description, several noteworthy themes that I located through my self-dialogue sessions included Description of the Music, Personally Meaningful Memories, Mina's Body, and Others' Gazes. These themes, along with others, describe how I experienced the video of Mina Caputo performing what, to me, was personally meaningful music. Additionally, themes that I located in YouTube comment data included comments that challenged, or comments that reproduced, discourses that limit possibilities for transgender selfhood. While comments that challenged such limitations included Appraisal of the music and band in either positive or negative ways as well as language in the comments that referred to Mina as Mina, or with personal pronouns she, her, or hers, comments that reproduced such limitations included Keith/He, in which commenters refused to refer to Mina as a woman. These themes informed my creative synthesis of the experience of watching Mina Caputo perform personally meaningful music. My creative synthesis takes the forms of a found poem and a short story. These works of art follow now.

### **Creative Synthesis: A Found Poem**

I am realizing  
something about Mina  
that's unique

Mina is (great band) hot.  
so tight  
her voice is  
still on point  
i wish i could have been there

Set list anyone?

I used to  
listen to this record  
a lot and they sound  
so good  
so many years  
later

Keith  
Takes balls to get up  
there as Mina.  
a lesbian: she eats

pussy just like you  
sucks dick. chick  
prob got more pussy as  
a dude. I bet ya!  
women worship  
the rock cock  
Ffffffuck yeah

Mina  
Who gives a flying fuck if he is  
now a she  
fuck off  
He has always been  
That Mina  
has a wicked voice

I seen LOA  
in like 89/90ish back when  
Break the Chains demo  
(still have the cassette)  
was all they had out  
they blew me away  
since the early days. So cool to see this—  
Mina finally getting  
to really be

I seen LOA  
BRING IT  
TOUR IT  
THE WORLD NEEDS IT  
Fingers crossed

Mina is (great band) hot.  
so tight  
her voice is  
so many years later  
fucking awesome

Thanks for this  
typical metal stereotypes  
greatness

### **Creative Synthesis: Flash Fiction**

When I was seventeen a younger boy came to me. He was walking the hallways, and I was rinsing out beakers for the science teacher. The boy was getting picked on. They called him gay. He sensed they were going to jump him. He asked for my help, and I said, “let’s go right now I’ll help you.”

We walked down the hallway, stopped in the bathroom to smoke. With us squeezed into one stall, with our chests touching, bony ribs and black heavy-metal t-shirts, he fell into me, maybe dizzy from the smoke. A pearly scar wriggled along one of his collarbones, another along the cool arch of an eyebrow. I tried to inhale those cloves. Then when the lunch bell rang I sat across from the bully and tried to reason. He’s smaller than you. Doesn’t want to fight or anything. What’s the point? I think we even shook.

If vulnerability provokes bodily collisions—if vulnerability elicits love—then what to make of that sucker punch I caught in the hallway? The bully, face contorted, was striking out in the name of what used to be. Blood was metallic in my mouth.

If we are who we protect, then I still follow these scars.

### **Analysis of the Creative Synthesis**

As I argued for earlier, the presentation of data in literary-genre forms is justified in that artistic presentation of data invites readers to embody the experience that makes up this paper’s central phenomenon (Hanauer, 2001). In the poem presented above, every line came from the data collected during heuristic research. Lines are short and reflect coming from comments left on the publicly available YouTube video experienced in this study, or from my own self-dialogue exploration. The content of the poem begins with a more ruminating thought, which was from my self-dialogue data, on how I was coming to understand my reaction to Mina Caputo’s performance as a transgender woman. The remainder of the poem touches on comments that both challenge, or reproduce, discourses that limit transgender possibilities for selfhood. In a reflection of self-dialogue and especially of YouTube-comment data, I gave more space in the poem for lines that challenge than for lines that reproduce limiting discourses.

The short-story presented above creatively synthesizes the experience of watching Mina Caputo performing personally meaningful music by fictionalizing themes from self-dialogue and YouTube-comment data. The story, specifically, fictionalizes a situation that allowed me to explore the impulse I felt while watching Mina Caputo's performance online to want to support, even to protect, Mina Caputo from hostile gazes or actions. The first-person narrator/character, who himself gets attacked at the end, realizes that he is also implicated in a person's socially constructed gender identity. This feeling I had of wanting to support Mina's social performance as a woman may have resulted from a sense that the YouTube community, as evident in comments under the video, contained some hostile comments. This would reflect other literature on YouTube comments and how the valence of positive or negative comments may shape a person's reaction to a YouTube video (Walther et al., 2010). In trying to capture this situation in vivid prose loaded with concrete details, I aimed to allow readers to also feel and experience this along with me.

### **Summary of the Data**

As the found poetry and flash fiction express, the experience of the technology-mediated discursive self of Mina Caputo singing personally meaningful music involved a moment of recognition of what I first perceived, even for an almost imperceptible moment, as *vulnerability*. I sensed that it took bravery for Mina Caputo to perform as Mina with *Life of Agony*. This perception of vulnerability arose from a sense that society would give Mina Caputo a hard time. I sensed this because I embodied Mina Caputo's online image. I imagined Mina's appearance and movements on stage as comprising my own identity performance, and therefore made up the appearance of my identity substance.

This embodiment, I believe, leads to one of two principal responses in terms of what a viewer might write, through her or his own discursive self performance, in response to the video. Earlier research on YouTube comments related to music suggests that people watch YouTube music videos for passive entertainment and not for active debate (Thelwall, Sud, & Vis, 2010). Nonetheless, assuming that the viewer chooses to write at all, my conclusion is that she or he constructs a message that conveys her or his discursive self through writing that either reproduces or challenges dominant practices and discourses based on the viewer's perception of possibilities for transgender selfhood. Personally, however, the further I delved into Mina Caputo's online life, the more I realized that the technology-mediated identity of Mina Caputo existed beyond whatever I thought or felt about it. The music I remember from adolescence became enriched and took on new meaning, and the performance online was profoundly moving, even eliciting tears of inspiration. I then saw my worry was ultimately self-centered and self-serving. I realized that my worry ultimately grew out of heteronormative discourses that had been repeated so often, and so pervasively, that they had become normalized, though

not noticed before, even in myself. The final outcome, given this realization, was inner growth and the chance that this one viewer now has played a part in a paradigm shift that may expand transgender possibilities for selfhood.

### **Validation of Heuristic Research**

Moustakas (1990) has explained that only the primary researcher can answer the question, “Does the ultimate depiction of the experience derived from one’s own rigorous, exhaustive self-searching and from the explications of others present comprehensively, vividly, and accurately the meanings and essences of the experience?” (p. 32). My constantly returning to the data and faithful movement through the phases of heuristic inquiry give me confidence that the experience depicted here provides generalizability understood according to a qualitative paradigm.

### **Summary, Implications, and Conclusion**

In summary, this paper explored the heuristic research question, *What is the experience of watching a video of Mina Caputo’s discorsal self performing personally meaningful music?* I answered this question through creative syntheses in the form of a found poem consisting of verbatim material from the self-dialogues and online YouTube commentary for the video of Mina Caputo’s first live show with *Life of Agony*; I gathered phrases from the data and placed them together like a collage to create a poetic representation. I also answered my heuristic research question in the form of a work of flash fiction that crystallized the entire experience in under 250 words. This story specifically fictionalized the impulse I felt to want to support, or even to protect, Mina Caputo from hostile gazes. My enjoyment of her performance seemed to implicate me as partly responsible for standing up for what I found to be personally moving and important for my own life. Finally, a composite depiction drew on themes that I located in self-dialogue and video commentary data.

Analysis of the data suggested what viewing the video may foster in the viewer. As previous research on YouTube comments has suggested, the overall valence of positive or negative views about a central video influences how later commenters experience that video (Walther et al., 2010). This suggests that the experience of Mina Caputo’s discorsal self online, while she performed what I consider to be personally meaningful music, presents a challenge for viewers to take inventory of their own beliefs, values, and interests. This personal inventory-taking may result in viewers’ own discorsal self performances in writing—with mine appearing here in this paper, and with anonymous posters’ discorsal selves appearing on YouTube comment boxes.

In addition, this paper drew on earlier literature on the nature and characteristics of comments and commenters on YouTube to argue that it is reasonable to see YouTube commenters as co-researchers in an exploration of Mina Caputo's online performance. Specifically, work on YouTube comments has suggested that, with such a wide variety of content available, viewers typically seek out content with which they are likely to agree (Sunstein, 2009) rather than content they wish to critique or react to negatively. Theoretically, "YouTube commenters may be experienced by viewers as peers, especially when there is no visually identifying information about commenters that would suggest otherwise" (Walther et al., 2010, p. 472). Within the sample of online comments from what appeared to be fans of Life of Agony who found Mina Caputo's performance important enough for commentary, the majority challenged dominant discourses that limit transgender possibilities for selfhood. Analysis of data also conveyed that the experience may initiate internal growth and deepen the meaning of personally important music.

Though a wealth of work has explored transgender identity construction and personally meaningful music in adolescence, more work should heed my study's indication that expanding what seems normal in society may have much to do with *who* we have available as transgender role models, and what they mean to our own identity formation at an intensely important time in our lives. Future research might ask similar questions with focus groups in case-study designs. Phenomenological design might also begin tapping the experiences of others through lengthy interviews. Finally, arts-based approaches that crystallize the inspiration we feel for personally meaningful transgender performance may help disseminate sorely needed humanizing discourses to wider audiences.

Moving through the phases of heuristic research, though modified as it was to accommodate my exploration of online comments, resulted in my becoming more aware of Mina Caputo the performer. The journey was a humanizing one, bringing me closer to my past, present, and future, as well as to others.

### References

- Bettcher, T. M. (2014). Trapped in the wrong theory: Rethinking trans oppression and resistance. *Signs*, 39(2), 383-406. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/310.1086/673088>
- Burgess, J., & Green, J. (2013). *YouTube: Online video and participatory culture*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity Press.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York, NY: Routledge.



- Cook, J., & Hasmath, R. (2014). The discursive construction and performance of gendered identity on social media. *Current Sociology*, 62(7), 975-993.  
doi:10.1177/0011392114550008
- Douglass, B. G., & Moustakas, C. (1985). Heuristic inquiry: The internal search to know. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 25(3), 39-55. doi:10.1177/0022167885253004
- Fairclough, N. (2006). *Language and globalization*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.
- Finley, S. (2014). An introduction to critical arts-based research: Demonstrating methodologies and practices of a radical ethical aesthetic. *Cultural Studies & Critical Methodologies*, 14(6), 531-532. doi:10.1177/1532708614548123
- Goffman, E. (1959/1990). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.
- Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4), 597-607. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR598-594/golafshani.pdf>
- Granderson, L. Z. (2015, January 3). Transgender teen's life mattered. *CNN International*. Retrieved from <http://edition.cnn.com/>
- Hanauer, D. I. (2001). The task of poetry reading and second language learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 22(3), 295-323.
- Ivanič, R. (1998). *Writing and identity: The discursive construction of identity in academic writing*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Levitt, H. M., & Ippolito, M. R. (2014). Being transgender: The experience of transgender identity development. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 61(12), 1727-1758.  
doi:10.1080/00918369.2014.951262
- Life of Agony singer Mina Caputo: "It was just torture for me to play this male role." (2013, May 25). *Blabbermouth.net*. Retrieved from <http://www.blabbermouth.net/>
- Marciano, A. (2014). Living the VirtuReal: Negotiating transgender identity in cyberspace. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 19(4), 824-838.  
doi:10.1111/jcc4.12081
- McFerran, K. S., & Saarikallio, S. (2014). Depending on music to feel better: Being conscious of responsibility when appropriating the power of music. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 41, 89-97. doi:10.1016/j.aip.2013.11.007
- Miranda, D. (2013). The role of music in adolescent development: Much more than the same old song. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 18(1), 5-22.

doi:10.1080/02673843.2011.650182

- Moustakas, C. (1990). *Heuristic research: Design, methodology, and applications*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Osei-Kofi, N. (2013). The emancipatory potential of arts-based research for social justice. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 46(1), 135-149. doi:10.1080/10665684.2013.750202
- Prendergast, M. (2012). Education and/as art: A found poetry suite. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 13(2), 1-18. Retrieved from <http://www.ijea.org/v13i12/>
- Rawson, K. J., & Williams, C. (2014). Transgender\*: The rhetorical landscape of a term. *Present Tense*, 3(2), 1-6. Retrieved from <http://www.presenttensejournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/2005/RawsonWilliams.pdf>
- Schenstead, A. R. (2012). The timelessness of arts-based research: Looking back upon a heuristic self-study and the arts-based reflexivity data analysis method. *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy*, 12(1). Retrieved from <https://normt.uib.no/index.php/voices/article/view/589/514>
- Scott, T. (2015). Writing enacts and creates identities and ideologies. In L. Adler-Kassner & E. Wardle (Eds.), *Naming what we know: Threshold concepts in writing studies* (pp. 48-50). Logan: Utah State University Press.
- Sunstein, C. R. (2009). *Republic.com 2.0*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Ter Bogt, T. F. M., Mulder, J., Raaijmakers, Q. A. W., & Gabhainn, S. N. (2011). Moved by music: A typology of music listeners. *Psychology of Music*, 39(2), 147-163. doi:10.1177/0305735610370223
- Thelwall, M., Sud, P., & Vis, F. (2010). Commenting on YouTube videos: From Guatemalan rock to El Big Bang. *Journal for the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 63(3), 616-629. doi:10.1002/asi.21679
- Walther, J. B., DeAndrea, D., Kim, J., & Anthony, J. C. (2010). The influence of online comments on perceptions of antimarijuana public service announcements on YouTube. *Human Communication Research*, 36, 469-492.
- Zitz, C., Burns, J., & Tacconelli, E. (2014). Trans men and friendships: A Foucauldian discourse analysis. *Feminism & Psychology*, 24(2), 216-237.

doi:10.1177/0959353514526224

**About the Author**

Author of literary novels *River Dragon Sky* (2012) and *Ash Dogs* (2008) as well as numerous short stories, **Justin Nicholes** is currently a PhD candidate in English (Composition and TESOL) at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. His research explores questions related to writing as identity performance and as a transformative experience for students in first-year composition as well as across the curriculum.

# International Journal of Education & the Arts

## Editors

**Eeva Anttila**  
University of the Arts Helsinki

**Terry Barrett**  
Ohio State University

**Brad Haseman**  
Queensland University of Technology

**Peter Webster**  
University of Southern California

**Managing Editor**  
**Christine Liao**  
University of North Carolina Wilmington

**Media Review Editor**  
**Christopher Schulte**  
Penn State University

## Associate Editors

**Kimber Andrews**  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

**Marissa McClure**  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

**Sven Bjerstedt**  
Lund University

**Kristine Sunday**  
Old Dominion University

**Deborah (Blair) VanderLinde**  
Oakland University

## Editorial Board

<b>Peter F. Abbs</b>	<b>University of Sussex, U.K.</b>
<b>Norman Denzin</b>	<b>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.</b>
<b>Kieran Egan</b>	<b>Simon Fraser University, Canada</b>
<b>Magne Espeland</b>	<b>Stord/Haugesund University College, Norway</b>
<b>Rita Irwin</b>	<b>University of British Columbia, Canada</b>
<b>Gary McPherson</b>	<b>University of Melbourne, Australia</b>
<b>Julian Sefton-Green</b>	<b>University of South Australia, Australia</b>
<b>Robert E. Stake</b>	<b>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.</b>
<b>Susan Stinson</b>	<b>University of North Carolina—Greensboro, U.S.A.</b>
<b>Graeme Sullivan</b>	<b>Pennsylvania State University, U.S.A.</b>
<b>Elizabeth (Beau) Valence</b>	<b>Indiana University, Bloomington, U.S.A.</b>
<b>Peter Webster</b>	<b>University of Southern California, U.S.A.</b>