

Generating Self: Catechizations in Poetry

Geração de si mesmo: catequeses na poesia

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Abstract:

In this paper, the authors illustrate how creatives might use a specific aspect of Sameshima's *Parallaxic Praxis Model*, the *Catechization Process*. They outline the procedural steps and possibilities of *catechization*, a process Sameshima has co-developed to advance meaning and creativity generation in research. The process benefits creatives in multiple fields and can be applied wherever investigations take place through arts-making. In this explication, the authors share seven response poems created in the *Catechization Process* to theorize the imaginative space of producing knowledge through research. When researchers can imagine themselves as creatives and experiment with more strategies for generating new ideas, their work will open novel possibilities for understanding.

Key words:

Poetic inquiry; Parallaxic praxis. Catechization process. Arts integrated research; Creativity propulsion

Resumo:

Neste artigo, os autores ilustram como os sujeitos criativos podem usar um aspecto específico do modelo *Praxis Parallaxic* da Pauline Sameshima, o "Processo de Catequização". Eles descrevem os passos processuais e as possibilidades de catequese, um processo que a Sameshima desenvolveu para promover o significado e a geração de criatividade na pesquisa. O processo beneficia sujeitos criativos em vários campos e pode ser aplicado sempre que as investigações ocorrem por meio da criação em artes. Nesta explicação, os autores compartilham sete poemas de resposta criados no Processo de Catequização para teorizar o espaço imaginativo de produzir conhecimento por meio da investigação. Quando pesquisadores podem se imaginar como sujeitos criativos e experimentam mais estratégias para gerar novas ideias, seu trabalho abre novas possibilidades de compreensão.

Palavras chave:

Pesquisa poética; Parallaxic praxis; Processo de catequização; Pesquisa integrada em artes; Propulsão de criatividade

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Catechizations in Poetry

With a foundational position that creativity can be learned, Sternberg, Kaufman, and Pretz (2001; 2002; 2003) have synthesized a vast literature on creativity and developed eight creativity propulsion strategies. Creativity propulsion recognizes that some activities are high yield and therefore worth engaging in. In considering creativity pedagogy, Sternberg et al. start with generating a creative outlook, and the technique they advance for this is *Conceptual Replication*, which means repetition with a variation. An example might be students rewriting parts of the lyrics to a song. The other propulsion strategies include: *Redefinition* – overlaying an idea in a different context; *Forward Incrementation* – developing the next step in a sequence; *Advance Forward Incrementation* – making a significant leap in a forward direction; *Redirection* – redirecting the field to a new way of thinking; *Regressive Redirection* – uptaking a discarded idea; *Reinitiation* – starting the field again; and *Synthesis* – collating divergent ideas.

Similar to Sternberg et al.'s, (2002) creativity propulsion theories is Sameshima's *Parallaxic Praxis Model* (Sameshima&Vandermause, 2008), which provides consistent language for understanding how creatives work and advance knowledge. *The Parallaxic Praxis Model* enables interdisciplinary teams to frame their arts-integrated research methods and better articulate their creative processes of making. *The Parallaxic Praxis Model* was first developed in a methamphetamine addiction study by an interdisciplinary team of researchers at Washington State University in 2007 (Sameshima, Vandermause, Chalmers, & Gabriel, 2009). The model has since been used in various disciplines and for a range of research projects. For example: HIV research (Defechereux, 2017), violence against women (Maarhuis, 2016), Aboriginal mental health care (Saunders 2015); learner-centred pedagogy (Ingalls Vanada, 2017); cervical cancer screening (Sameshima et al., 2017); dementia studies (Wiersma et al., 2016); identity studies (Stock et al., 2016), and technology (Marino et al, 2008). The model is research/researcher centered, leveraging the researchers' personal strengths and talents.

Bringing together the languages, purposes, and philosophical underpinning of the *Parallaxic Praxis Model* and *Creativity Propulsion Theories*, in this paper, the authors

used the propulsion theories of *Redefinition*, *Forward Incrementation*, *Advance Forward Incrementation*, and *Redirection* to define the processes within the model. By employing these propulsion theories, they achieved a more robust understanding of the Parallaxic Praxis Model (Sameshima&Vandermause, 2008) and specifically how the Catechization Process (Maarhuis, Sameshima, Chalykoff, 2014; Sameshima&Maarhuis, 2013) within the model might be used in research contexts where the data to be analyzed are multiple, varied, fragmented, and rendered via disparate creative traditions and discourses.



Figure 1. Nuno Scarf 1.

This research project began when Pauline created a nuno wet felted scarf for Sean as part of a reparative research investigation (Sameshima&Slingerland, 2015). The scarf-making project grew from Pauline's collaborative-poetry writing investigation with Sean and another poet, John Guiney Yallop (Sameshima, in review). She created a scarf for each poet in preparation for co-writing with each of them. Through making, she sought to better understand her conceptions of their poetic voices and styles. Then, using the scarf as a prompt, Sean was asked to consider the seven catechization categories: Mimesis, Poiesis, Palimpsest, Intertextuality, Antiphona, Sorites, and Aporia (definitions provided below).

Thinking through how creativity propulsion and parallaxic practice inform one another, first, in the making of the scarf, Pauline redefined the data, the scarf being a

material creation of them, as such her making/investigation of data can be understood as a *Redefinition* creativity propulsion strategy. Second, Pauline and Sean then used the *Forward Incrementation* propulsion strategy – which involves inventing, altering, and/or employing a new step in a sequence. In this case, Sameshima’s Catechization Process (Maarhuis, Sameshima, Chalykoff, 2014; Sameshima&Maarhuis, 2013) served as the next step in the sequence, and Sean’s response poetry is the rendering that resulted from that step. As a new rendering of the data and an illustration of the Catechization Process, Pauline and Sean see both the *Redirection* propulsion strategy and the *Advance Forward Incrementation* propulsion strategy at work; in redirection the field is oriented to a new way of thinking (changing modalities from textile to poetry); and in *Advance Forward Incrementation* there is a significant leap forward in theorizing, positioning, and pedagogy. This progression can be seen as:

Our Process

Creativity Propulsion Strategy

Scarf making (redefine data from thought to textile) ∪[∩] Redefinition Strategy

Catechization Questioning (inventing/altering) ∪[∩] Forward Incrementation

Poem making (textile to poetry/theorizing) ∪[∩] Redirection & Advance Forward
Incrementation

For those who analyze multi modal or non-text based work, the guided dialogue of the Catechization Process enables participants and researchers to trouble their ontological suppositions and rethink the genesis of their findings; in traditional qualitative work, for example, there is a looking back orientation, while in post-qualitative work researchers look forward to the not yet. The philosophical differences of these contrasting ways of seeing are vast, so orienting research one way or the other is never easy. Located in the post-qualitative paradigm, Sean and Pauline’s research is illustrative of a not-yet orientation. Because there are few examples that describe exactly how not-yet data analysis is done, the detailed account that follows will help those who employ art-making in their research better articulate and justify their methodologies.

To that end, in the *Parallaxic Praxis Model*, procedurally, the researchers transmediate data (interview transcripts, journal entries, numerical data, etc.) into artworks (material artefacts, poems, stories, etc.) as a way to trouble conventional ways of coding and to

include alternate semantic fields to frame the data. These renderings are then used to provoke discussions and new ideas through a guided questioning analysis technique called the *Catechization Process*. This paper presents the Catechization response of the participant (Sean), after the researcher (Pauline) created a nuno wet felted scarf for him as part of a reparative research investigation. The use of reparative research (returning created artefacts to the data contributors) and the act of making as theorizing mediator is part of the Parallaxic Praxis model. The scarf-making process was used to investigate the building-blocks of Sean's poetry, his humour, playfulness, word play, and joy that evidenced itself through his collections. Pauline also used the scarf-making to query her perceptions of his navigation between the private and public, concealment and revelation, surrender and acceptance, nostalgia and wanderlust, and other wanderings from reading his poetry.

As previously introduced, in the Parallaxic Praxis model, artworks (artefacts) are made as translations of the original data as a means to reveal, convey, or inform researcher investigations. The Catechization Process is an analysis process whereby researchers use the artworks (transmediated data) as prompts in dialogic situations to generate new knowledge. To catechize is “to question or examine closely or methodically; to teach or examine by means of questions and answers; to put questions to (someone)” (Farlex Dictionary, 2017). Understood in terms of Sternberg et al.'s, (2002) creativity propulsion theories, the making of the scarf or material creation of the investigation of data is a *Redefinition* creativity propulsion strategy. This is followed by the *Forward Incrementation* propulsion strategy – taking the next step in the sequence (beginning the Catechization Process), the *Redirection* propulsion strategy – redirecting the field to a new way of thinking (changing modalities from textile to poetry), and *Advance Forward Incrementation* propulsion strategy – to take a significant leap forward. Using the scarf as a prompt, Sean wrote poetry that was constrained by and elicited from the catechization categories: Mimesis, Poiesis, Palimpsest, Intertextuality, Antiphona, Sorites, and Aporia. The poems below are what he has written in response to the scarf; he also used the catechization categories as nucleate pivots to illustrate how these categories are a means of creativity propulsion.

Mimesis

In looking at the scarf, in what ways does the scarf echo or mirror your thinking?

Originally a Greek word, it has been used in aesthetic or artistic theory to refer to the attempt to imitate or reproduce reality since Plato and Aristotle. “Mimesis” is derived

from the Greek verb mimeisthai, which means “to imitate” and which itself comes

frommimos, meaning "mime." The English word mime also descends from "mimos" as do "mimic" and "mimicry.

(Merriam-Webster, 2017)

That's a Great Scarf. Thank you.

Yes, I have a shelf in my closet
for scarves, and this one refuses
to settle there, invisible with the others,
laid out in a schedule to match
my suits of various winter shades: black,
charcoal, obsidian, sable,
and a navy, that, I admit, is basically black.
The way this one curves under
my jacket collar is wild and unexpected.

I have walked office towers at night,
carrying the allegorical stones in my briefcase
whilst I search hallways for more impressive
doors to glue my name and title to,
mostly failing to get a wider window
designed specially for the view.
Can you see me there, leveraging my knee
into a crevice of another promotion,
daring to tenure myself? This one

wants to go out into the world,
stretching its merino wool along my neck,
floating in a light gesture, an arc flush on skin,
settling warm, untroubled, nuzzled under my chin
and close to mind, crowds out thoughts
other than itself, released after months
of incubation, as if, wrapped around me,
what was once utterly invisible
becomes a shower of meteors,

flashes of light seeds of other stars
within them. Maybe, I even realize
it would be okay to take the elevator down.
waving good luck to those who notice
subtle changes in my wardrobe.



Figure 2. Nuno Scarf 2.

What do you notice about the scarf in this moment?

Poïesis (Ancient Greek: ποιησις) is etymologically derived from the ancient Greek term ποιέω, which means “to make”. This word, the root of our modern “poetry”, was first a verb, an action that transforms and continues the world. . . . Heidegger refers to it as a ‘bringing-forth’ (phusis as emergence), using this term in its widest sense. He explained poiesis as the blooming of the blossom.

(Wikipedia, 2017)

Is Faith

Is faith a door
or window, both
can be open, closed,
go fuzzy
with old growth
new spores
of moss, morning
promises broken
open in rain.

On the back
of my bathroom door
are two pegs,
what is the other
one for? Through
the kitchen window
two squirrels chase
each other along
theneighbour’s eaves.

Maybe faith is
the hinge that squeaks
in the middle
of the night
while I’m trying
to sleep?

Palimpsest

In terms of your life as a teacher, researcher,
creative,

what traces come though the scarf for
you? What are the under layers?

A parchment or the like from which writing has been partially or completely erased to make room for another text (Dictionary.com, 2017). Writing material (as a parchment or tablet) used one or more times after earlier writing has been erased; something having usually diverse layers or aspects apparent beneath the surface

(Merriam-Webster, 2017)

The New Door

The old douglas held,
among the fir trees, leaning

not yet broken, last night’s
spring storm exceeding

Environment Canada’s warning,
to find a shelter,

maybe even go to church,
if it had a good supply

of candles, cans,
and answered prayers.

In little more than an hour
everything lasting wasn’t

the horizon miles and miles
of fallen. As he walked

the lost greeted him,
among them, the douglas fir,

even now offering its trunk
for the new door.

Intertextuality

How does the scarf work in combination with your ideas to generate a new text?

The complex interrelationship between a text and other texts taken as basic to the creation or interpretation of the text

(Merriam-Webster, 2017)

The interrelationship between texts, especially works of literature; the way that similar or related texts influence, reflect, or differ from each other: the intertextuality between two novels with the same setting.

(Dictionary.com, 2017)

Trapping Air

I make the same mistake
curving this scarf around my neck

too tightly, not wanting any skin
to be exposed. When winter

begins to green, I learn
how to trap the air in loose layers,

folding in my own heat
against another freeze.

To be fair, it is not my only mistake,
an upturned kayak

testifies of my negligence
to an ancient, underwater tribe

that has survived the worst
for millions of years. Everything

that has sunk to their depths
is an ornament of joy, a life vest

that keeps them from floating
to a dangerous surface.

Antiphona

In what ways do the materials, processes, or commonalities teach?

From the root, antiphon: a verse or song to be chanted or sung in response; a psalm, hymn, or prayer sung in alternate parts; a verse or a series of verses sung as a prelude or conclusion.

(Dictionary.com, 2017)

Items Regifted or Returned

Bugs Bunny tie,
Mickey Mouse hat,
purple dinosaur socks
take one snap
then send it all back.

Sheepskin vest,
long underwear, overalls,
too itchy, too warm,
too lumberjack.

Bic pen, Bic lighter,
Bic shaver, Bic chocolate,
Bic backpack.
Hasn't anyone heard of Swiss?

Wool scarf. Wait.
I think I'd like that.

Sorites

What themes appear to be significant?
Are there specific quotes or ideas that
come to mind?

A form of argument having several premises and one conclusion, capable of being resolved into a chain of syllogisms, the conclusion of each of which is a premise of the next.

(Dictionary.com, 2017)

The Third Adam

“I decided to paint the image of a locomotive ...In order for its mystery to be evoked”

(Rene Magritte, 1988, p. 135)

If you had to make a man
out of three objects,
I would start with the chimney
its mantle already a suitable waist
to hold up whatever body
might be placed on top.

Coming down from the mantle
are the wide legs,
on either side, like pilings
driven into the ground,
his feet unseen, unmoved
and skeptical. Between them,
where a fire might be lit,
is the charring and residue of history.

With only a clock
and a mirror to choose from
as the last two objects,
the careful reader will intuit
that the man being made is more
a projection of the creator.

The trouble is the mirror belongs nowhere,
who would dare lean in to kiss lips
that pouted and pursed
in sequence to one's own?
And who would have a heart
made of mimicry, a soldier
encouraged in his pursuit,
his aim only as the other does,
obedient to a fault,
changeless and void.

At last the dice are thrown

and the clock is chosen as the head
so that the man's thoughts
will be consumed with time,
a pitiable end to an exercise
in signification.

And what if there were a pity,
if, in the looking on,
an unbridgeable gap did not separate
the gazer from the gaze,
and, instead, there was a language
where he might say you belong to me.

Ah, shame I cannot create
such a garden for you and I,
in belonging longing is lost
in possessives, and language slips
into the chimney, choking itself
with smoke for lack of kindling.

What is, is only smoke after all,
the heralding of a fire,
that never quite arrives.
Here, let us use a fourth object
in our image of the ideal man,
let there be a locomotive
shooting out from his legs
offering pleasure as distraction
from what would be a pitiable life.

Aporia

Are there challenges that come to mind?
What puzzles you?

How might ideas play against one
another?

*The expression of a simulated or real doubt,
as about where to begin or what to do or say;
a difficulty encountered in establishing the
theoretical truth of a proposition, created by the
presence of evidence both for and against it.*

(Dictionary.com, 2017)

Prometheus Lights a Marlboro

From ankle to chin it's cold.
He stoops to light a fire
but is not a natural Prometheus,
so drapes a scarf around his neck
like a shawl, waiting
for the wood to catch.

Going back to bed,
would recover the warmth
not yet drained from his blankets,
the alternating smell of sweat
and cleanliness, but here he is,
a part of the tedium.

The only way to endure
is to make lists
the day made less pointless
in increments, 30 minute habits
forged into a fist, a stone,
a paper weight,
a thing to hold down time.

His heart wrenched
in nostalgia, by a fire
swapping stories in an old Western
a six shooter the solution
to any conflict he might have had,

playacting scenes
of a forgotten violence, sanity,
as real as Marlboro Man.

He is trying to grow old gently
or not gently, mostly confusing
them in the early light,
lightheaded, the panic of being
lost in the lonely hallways
of memory, himself. These flames
finally leaping about
a temporary indulgence
to fill existential space.

What do these responses mean? Sean Explains

Mimesis: In this category, in "That's a Great Scarf. Thank you," I addressed the scarf as a tangible object. It was a gift, and so I used first-person, wanting to tell the story of my experience with wardrobes. In 25 years of education, the dark suit, at least in the employment contexts that I have worked in, is still the gold standard for professionalism. In the political games of public and policy significance, the dark suit holds the same weight as large-scale quantitative data.

Poiesis: The poem, "Is Faith," extends my first response. As such, there is no direct mention of the scarf. Instead, I wanted to explore the idea that changing one's wardrobe is not necessarily about clothes, though changing one's clothes is sometimes the invitation to change one's

thinking as well. With Pauline's prompt to respond with my own making, I introduce the imagery of windows and doors. What I find intriguing with windows and doors is that they are sometimes, conventionally, seen as opposites, and yet *both* are thresholds to a new space.

Palimpsest: In "The New Door," the challenge was adding an additional layer of text, a layer that might have existed before the poem, "Is Faith." Keeping with the imagery of windows and doors, one thing that I discovered in the writing process was the word *offering*. In the context of research, particularly when working with human participants, I seek experiences that are absorbing, enough so that I lose track of time, or lose myself in the process. When I write I want to discover something that I did not know before, that I did not know existed within me.

Intertextuality: It turns out that I actually don't know how to wear a scarf. This one seemed too short, then too long, then too stiff. I tried looping it, and making a single knot, and then just draping it over the back of my neck. For a while I stopped wearing it. It seemed destined to be one of those gifts that was beautiful but not all that practical. When Pauline taught me to wrap it loosely so that there would be airflow, it was so opposite to my expectations it was like being told that if I put on a life vest it would keep me safely underwater where I could live for thousands of years. Intertextuality is like the multiple ways that a scarf can be draped.

Antiphona: Christmases, birthdays, anniversaries. Are some people simply better than others at selecting the perfect gift? Recently, visiting my parents, I put on a pair of slippers that my brother had knit for me years ago. They fit perfectly. My feet are small and it is difficult to find slippers in a size 5. For years I've been looking for some black leather slippers that would go with my collection of suits. Just in case. I realized that what I've wanted all along were these slippers my brother knit. In their bright Hawaiian colors they went with everything. In the poem, "items regifted or returned" I found the prompt of antiphona difficult. While I set out to write a serious poem, a prayer, or something equivalent, what came out was playful and ironic. The effort hasn't been a complete loss, when it comes time to read this poem out loud, I will likely chant it.

Sorites: In the poem, "The Third Adam," there are a series of images that act like premises in the argument for the ideal man. When writing poems that belong in a series, I don't know in advance the imagery that will be carried forward from poem to poem. Because the scarf is the focus that I've been working with, if there has been any intention regarding an image that is carried forward, it has been to think about style and presentation of the body in relation to clothing. In this poem, language and

intentions slip into the chimney, and it is the imagery of fire that is carried forward.

Aporia: In the final poem of this series there is once again fire. It has been interesting to notice how the imagery of windows and doors has shifted to that of chimneys, smoke, and campfires. *Aporia* is the method of bringing these together to see what kind of meaning might be made from them. A dear friend of mine keeps a candle in the window. His door is always open.

Aporetic Openings

The word *aporia* is the closing catechization category and refers to an impasse, indecision, or particular point of doubt. It can also be imagined as a good way to keep a fire going when all the doors and windows appear closed. When encountering a wondering moment, a good idea is to dwell in the space, and to anticipate the possibilities of multiple solutions. We conclude with wonderings: How do the Catechizations serve to generate freedom yet within a frame? In our study of creativity theories for better understanding and theorizing processes for imagination and knowledge generation, we see the tension between freedom and rigidity as critical for growth to occur. The Catechization categories, while structured, provide intentional focus and supported growth. Closed doors and windows will direct the fire toward oxygen. A framework allows for concentrated energies to be funneled in a particular direction. A framework allows for a conceptual safety to explore freely.

How does the catechization process, using Sean's poem responses, lead to new learning? And what do all the poems mean in the context of knowledge generation? This paper began with Sternberg et al.'s (2001; 2002; 2003) eight creativity propulsion theories providing examples through the Parallaxic Praxis Model and Catechization Process. Sean offered a response poem to the scarf within each catechization category and subsequently provided an artist statement for each poem. "The assemblage of heterogeneous components" (Lee & Denshire, 2013: 222), what Sternberg et al., (2003) describe as the creativity propulsion theory of *Synthesis* – collating divergent ideas, is also supported by other post qualitative researchers as generative construction (Barad, 2009; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; O'Sullivan, 2006). "The 'emergence of the new' (MacLure, 2013: 659) is built on a base foundation that is not sequential unidirectional constructivism but multi-level, multi-planed, dimensional, and contingent on place, time, and histories (Sameshima, Wiebe and Hayes, in review). The poem responses, the very beauty of creative construction and generation of knowledge is the unknown.

As Pauline makes the scarf, she does not know exactly how the final product will look when the wool shrinks and crinkles the silk from the rolling and throwing process. As Sean begins his poems, he does not know where they will lead. When expectations for something powerful to sync, or merge into anticipated meaning are suspended, new possibilities arise.

The scarf Pauline makes helps to materialize how she conceives of Sean's poetry (see Sameshima, Miyakawa & Lockett, this issue). Her making and Sean's poetry are the symbolic interaction of self-construction and reconstruction (Denzin, 2002), the "reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience" (Dewey, 1916: 76). Through the Parallaxic Praxis Model and the Catechization Process, we demonstrate a means of self-learning and self-change that has the possibility of social change (Kumar, 2011). As researchers use the investigative renderings to prompt discussions, inspire ideas, and generate questions and trajectories, they are intentionally engaging in strategies for advancing possibilities of thinking differently and producing new knowledge.

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