

A Journal of Moment

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This tenth-anniversary volume is an occasion to read *A Journal of Critical Thinking and Writing* reflexively, by turning its focus on critical thinking and writing back on itself as an academic genre that organizes knowledge according to time. A journal assumes time to be a linear, unidirectional movement segmented into a past, which has already happened; a present, which is happening; and a future, which has yet to happen. This sequence is inscribed in a journal's paratextuality, such as a chronological division into annual volumes, which conforms reading to knowledge configured temporally: a *reference to* a text locates that text in the past; an *argument against* locates a text in the present; and *questions for further research* locate a text in the future. This commonplace notion of time informs a process of inquiry understandable across the disciplines, but it is also at odds with disciplinary theories of temporality.

Consider, for a moment, how the visual arts can realign perception with uncommon patterns of time. When this volume's cover image is viewed according to its title, *Counter-Curve* (see Figure 1), it creates a curvilinear motion that either quickens along contracting concentric circles or slows along expanding concentric circles. Each motion, as a counter-curve, implies the other, inverse motion, but the either/or structure of perception limits our awareness of time's bidirectionality, described by the image's artist, Dana Karwas (n.d.), as "a single moment curving infinitely around on itself" (para. 10). As a moment, time is undivided into past, present, and future. It is instead composed of recurrences that simultaneously spiral inwardly toward an infinitesimal center of nonrecurrence, a *point of origin*, and outwardly toward an infinite circumference that is the *end of time*. Because our perception can align with time's contraction or expansion, but not both at once, *Counter-Curve* can perhaps explain an otherwise paradoxical experience of the moment as ephemeral and durable.



Figure 1. Dana Karwas. *Counter-Curve*, 2021. Acrylic and volcanic pumice on wood panel. 60" diameter.

If the last ten years of *Double Helix* is telescoped to this swirl of time, then the practice of reading the journal changes. It locates one in the moment, a condition of "mindfulness" that Ellen Carillo (2016) has advocated for reading, in which one sustains attention to the text, undistracted by the past or the future, because, in this case, neither the past nor the future exists. A sequence of texts is thereby converted into an intertext, and a *reference to*, an *argument against*, and *questions for further research* become recurring features of intertextuality that advance an area of knowledge toward *pure originality* and *the completion of knowledge* as ideal and inverse limits of inquiry (see Figure 2).

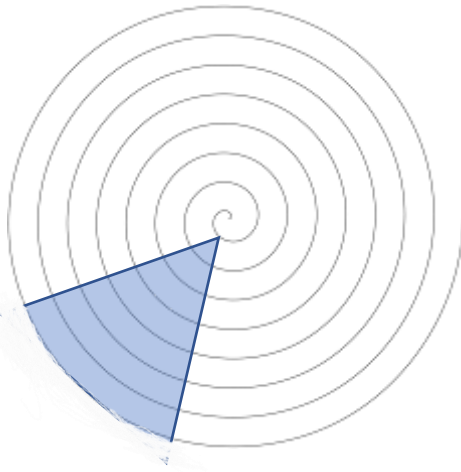


Figure 2. The shaded region represents an area of knowledge that advances toward *pure originality* (center) and *the completion of knowledge* (circumference) as ideal and inverse limits of inquiry.

Perhaps *Double Helix* will evolve into a *variant journal*, its paratextual elements continually rewritten to adapt reading to knowledge configured by such disciplinary theories of temporality. Reading *DH* would itself be an exercise in critical thinking, one that likely rehearses the experience of students who need to modify practices of reading to access unfamiliar conceptions of knowledge. Might such a change to the journal yield additional insights into critical thinking?

References

- Carillo, E. C. (2016). Creating mindful readers in first-year composition courses: A strategy to facilitate transfer. *Pedagogy*, 16(1), 9–23. <https://doi.org/10.1215/15314200-3158573>
- Karwas, D. (n.d.). What I'm working on. *Maquette*.