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Embodying the Spiral:
A Critical Framework for Returning to the Body through Dance/Movement Therapy

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Abstract

Spirals are fundamental to human existence—present in natural geological forms, skeletal and muscular pathways, and developmental patterns. Characteristics of the spiral in relation to the body include: spatiotemporal nonlinearity, the embracing of polarities and dismantling of binaries, grounded curiosity, “contra-lateral connectivity” and multidimensional integration and transformation. Nonlinear and spiralic temporality have been continually embodied, recorded, and practiced transgenerationally in Black, Indigenous, and queer communities as a form of resurgence, resistance, self-expression, building community and being in the world. How can embodying the spiral be a radical resistance to systems of oppression that continually isolate and disconnect people from one another and their bodies, serving as a bridge between dance/movement therapy and activism? The spiral is a critical and embodied framework that can bring about collective transformation, liberation, and interconnectivity through dance/movement therapy.

Keywords: spiral, dance/movement therapy, nonlinear, polarities, transformation, contra lateral connectivity, activism

Acknowledgments



To Stella.

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Spirals are within Everything

You are standing in stillness. Feet spread and melding with the floor. Your eyes are closed in order to solely focus on the sense of touch—how your feet feel in contact with the ground, the air on your skin, the inherent motion within the stillness. A swaying sensation, front-back, side-to-side, almost circular, but not quite. If you listen closely, the motion is not only in the feet, but the legs, hips, torso, spine, and skull. This movement is irregular, continually changing in size, speed, emphasis, and dynamic. This movement is multidirectional and multidimensional, shifting between clockwise and counterclockwise, simultaneously existing within the vertical, horizontal, and sagittal planes.

There is no such thing as pure stillness. The earth is constantly in motion, all beings moving alongside it. The earth not only spins on its axis in the horizontal plane, but is simultaneously rotating, tilting, and shifting, forming an irregular, multidimensional “circular” movement— a spiralic motion (Ward, 2006). Bartenieff (1980) explains how the body is constantly moving in a three-dimensional process, one’s weight distributed in a continuous figure-eight motion, even when “standing still” (Bartenieff, 1980). There is a continual navigation of balance in order to “stand still” and move through space without falling down. Spiralic motions are present throughout, and essential to, the existence of the natural world. The spiral is found in the Milky Way, the eye of a storm, and the very structure of our DNA—the double helix (Ward, 2006). Ward (2006) explains how the protean spiral is nature’s preferred mode for efficiently transmitting energy, radiating outwards while simultaneously drawing in. The spiral is in the formation and growth of nautilus shells, sheep horns, elephant tusks, cat claws, bird beaks, and countless other natural forms.

A spiral is a line that continuously moves towards or away from its own center (Purce, 1974). The three primary types of spirals are the Archimedian spiral, logarithmic spiral, and helix configurations. The Archimedian spiral, also known as the arithmetic spiral, is made up of equidistant and constant coils and is often represented in a two-dimensional form as the coil of a snake or a labyrinth (Schneider, 1994). The helix is a three-dimensional spiral, which resembles a corkscrew or the two intertwined helices of the DNA molecule. The helix consistently twists along within the same diameter, taking on a vertical and economical trajectory, designed to achieve distinct, urgent tasks (Ward, 2006). On the other hand, the logarithmic spiral continually moves away from its point of origin, the distance between the coils always increasing or decreasing and moving in both vertical and horizontal directions. Its form is commonly found in nature, a well-known example being the shell of a nautilus (Schneider, 1994).

The spiral does not only exist in animals, plants, and natural occurrences, but is inherent in the formation of our human anatomy. The body develops following nature's spiral pathways; bone tissues spiral downward, allowing for the transference of weight towards the earth, and muscles wrap around bones in a spiralic motion (Hartley, 1995). The fibers within the heart's ventricles align in spiral patterns, resembling the twist of a screw, facilitating the muscular contraction that propels blood forward and sustains circulation. In the inner ear's intricate "labyrinth," resembling a coiled snail shell, resides the cochlea, responsible for analyzing frequencies. It comprises a spiral canal containing a smaller membranous passage, vital for auditory function (Ward, 2006). Xu et al. (2023) recently found that the brain has spiral wave patterns, explaining the spatiotemporal dynamics of human brain activity (Xu et al., 2023). They have discovered that these brain spirals are situated at the boundaries between various networks, responsible for coordinating activity flow and communication across networks. The brain spirals'

continuous, rotational motion allows for an evolving relationship between different networks across space and time in contrast to the previous belief that communication between various states were conducted through separate and sudden changes. The study's results indicate that brain spirals have a significant role in cognitive processing, specifically with language and memory tasks. Brain spirals are the transitional sources that enable brain cohesion and cognitive understanding (Xu et al., 2023). They may be responsible for coordinating communication between cognitive tasks and large-scale activities, ultimately integrating the mind and body.

Spirals are instinctual to humans' very existence: the beating of one's heart, skeletal and muscular pathways, and communication between mind and body (Hackney, 2002). The etymology of "spiral" comes from the Latin *spiralis* or *spira*, and the Greek *speira*, meaning "a winding, a coil, a twist" (Ward, 2006, p. 17). "Spiral" also comes from the Latin *spirare*, meaning "to breathe". The spiral is not only one of the most universal shapes found in the natural world, but is a symbolic motif present in the earliest records of art, dreams, folktales, mythology, and religion (Schneider, 1994). Spirals in nature, such as the shell of a nautilus and marine mollusks, are approximate to the golden ratio (1:1.618), which informed the geometry and construction of sacred sites, such as the Giza Pyramids and the Greek Parthenon (Ward, 2006). In Ancient Egyptian culture, the Golden Ratio was referred to as 'neb', signifying 'the spiraling force of the universe'. This term was integrated into the names of pharaohs and held sacred significance as one of the revered names associated with the Sphinx.

Ur-heptad, the earliest spiral known in the history of art, is drawn on a mammoth ivory at Mal'ta in Siberia (Ward, 2006). It is around 23,000 years old and connected with the bygone civilization of Shambhala. The spiral is drawn with seven turns, which in Europe and the Middle East is known as a seven-fold spiral, symbolizing primeval origins. The seven-fold spiral is also

a symbol for the Hopi Tribe, one of the oldest living cultures in documented history, who have been located in what is now referred to as northeastern Arizona since the twelfth century (Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, 2024). The Hopi people created petroglyphs on canyon walls, marking the position of the sun on the longest and shortest days of the year. The carvings consist of spirals and other formations, depicting traditional rituals related to the solar calendar, such as planting and harvesting. The spiral symbolizes multitudes, representing the sun and sky, water, physical or spiritual migration, and the experience of human existence (Metcalf, 2020).

“Spiralic temporality” refers to the Indigenous experience of time, which is connected to the seasonal cycles of the land and the current generation’s relationship and responsibility to their ancestors and those who are not yet born (De Vos, 2020). Armstrong (2009) describes how time is understood as cyclic, taking on a spiral form because “day becomes night and returns to day but never to the same day” (Armstrong, 2009, p. 167). Spiralic temporality is a communal embodiment of the coexistence and fluidity between the past, present, and future: ancestors, the “living”, and descendants. Whyte (2018) explains how “spiralling time” can be experienced through nonlinear narratives, such as dream-like sequences, simultaneous events, reversals, irregular rhythms, counterfactuality, parodies of linear thinking, and eternal themes (Whyte, 2018, p. 229). These spiraling narratives emerge as one engages with, reacts to, and contemplates the actions and perspectives of both one’s ancestors and descendants. They unfold as ongoing dialogues, encompassing the dramas of the community’s personal evolution as they transition from descendants to ancestors throughout their lifetimes. Spiralic temporality rejects the construct of linear time, embracing and holding space for the fluid, transgenerational embodiment of change.

Timeless and Nonlinear

“Time is not an absolute, and that’s radical.”

—Chanda Prescott-Weinstein

You are spinning in space, colors and surroundings swirling and blurring, no sense of up, down, front, back or side. There is no sense of time or space, as if you are existing within an alternate or multiple realities. You are beginning to feel nauseous and, to stop, have to either reverse rotation or surrender to the floor. You feel free and out of control, edging the threshold into chaos. A quick counterclockwise twist in your spine; jolts you to a stop. As you stand in place, you continue to feel the spiraling sensation in your body as if you have not stopped. You bounce to feel your weight in the ground in an attempt to mitigate the dizziness. Your surroundings gradually redefine themselves, yet the movement continues spiraling through your body.

This spinning movement would be described by Bartenieff (1980) as the “Spell Drive”, which is timeless (Bartenieff, 1980). The Spell Drive originates from Laban/Bartenieff movement analysis, which is a lens, framework, methodology, and language for observing and interpreting movement. Laban created the “Effort” elements, in which Flow, Weight, Space, and Time, inherently affect movement. This system is utilized to understand the unique characteristics and intentions behind each movement. For example, the actions of punching and reaching both involve the extension of the arm, utilizing much of the same body pathway, but have significantly different qualities in terms of timing, weight, and control. The Spell Drive is the integration of three out of the four Effort qualities: Flow, Weight, and Space, with the absence of Time. The dominance of Weight and Space creates a stabilizing quality, combined with Flow to facilitate movement, without a singular direction or destination (Bartenieff, 1980).

Schoop (2000) theorizes that humans experience two levels of existence simultaneously: the reality of being an individual of reason in a “time-limited, space-limited, energy-limited” world and the “Ur Experience”, a timeless and limitless universal flow of energy (Schoop, 2000, p. 91). The “ur” principle is the forces of time, energy, and space that make up the “eternal, ongoing process of cosmic order and harmony”, in which there is no starting point, singular direction, or end goal (Schoop, 2000, p. 91). The past, present, and future exist all at once and not at all. While humans are limited and bound by finite constructions of time and space, they must also embody the Ur Experience in order to cultivate one’s whole, conscious, and intuitive being. Schoop (2000) emphasizes that dancers are in an ideal position to experience the dual realities; a heightened awareness of gravity and spatial boundaries as one feels their weight in the floor, muscles flexing and contracting, breath circulating in and out, while simultaneously connecting to the instinctual movement of all living beings—a universal rhythm that exists within all forms of time, space, and energy.

The Spell Drive and Ur Experience are embodiments of the absence of “time” and are therefore a representation of nonlinear time. Deleuze and Guattari describe time not as a measurement of movement, but movement itself (Arienzo, 2016). As Barbour stated in an interview with Kuhn and Getzels (2013), time is not real, but solely a reflection of change. Time’s existence is based on the relational spatial change between objects, such as the daily changing of the sun’s position in the sky, causing time to appear linear. While time is psychologically real, in that it is a global construction that organizes, regulates, and determines how human civilization functions and moves in the world, it is not fundamental to existence. In Kuhn & Getzels’ (2013) interview, Price emphasizes three primary properties of the Western conception of time: it is a “special, present moment”, “some kind of flow or passage”, and it has

a “fundamental direction”, all of which are based on human perception (Kuhn & Getzels, 2013, 0:02:41). The mind is inherently subjective, “so that we are projecting onto the world the temporal perspective that we have as agents [in our environment]” (Kuhn & Getzels, 2013, 0:05:20). While debates continue, currently the majority of physicists and philosophers would agree that time is an illusion, implying that the past, present, and future are not chronological or distinct entities. If time is not “real”, then what is time? First, it is necessary to understand the origins of the Western, Eurocentric construction of linear time.

The linear view of time originates from monotheistic and messianic religions: the Zoroastrians in ancient Persia and the Hebrew prophets in ancient Israel (Jongeneel, 2009). According to Brandon (1965), in a comprehensive study on the impact of concepts in history before the Common Era, the Hebrew interpretation of time as ‘the revelation of divine purpose’ had one of the greatest influences on human’s understanding of history and time, not only affecting Christianity and Islam, but Western contemporary ideologies such as humanism, evolutionism, capitalism, and Marxism. While the latter are not centered around a divine being, the belief of a beginning and an end to the universe (i.e. Big Bang theory) is rooted in our current cultural, social, and institutional systems (Jongeneel, 2009).

The Abrahamic religions are based on a linear timeline; the Exodus in Judaism, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in Christianity, and Muhammad’s migration (*hijra*) from Mecca to Medina in Islam are viewed as pivotal historical events (Jongeneel, 2009). The sequencing of years in Western society is organized around the birth of Jesus Christ and was put into place by the astronomer Petavius in A.D. 1627 (Aveni, 2003). A.D. (*anno domini*) refers to the presumed interval of time between the birth of Christ and the present, known as the Christian era or Common era, and B.C. refers to the years before Christ’s birth. While the advancement of

technology now determines the succession of time, “this abstract, rational arithmetic scheme still serves as the framework with which we order all events” (Aveni, 2003, p. 112). The linear timeline is built around a goal, a destination, and a teleological doctrine.

Berkhof (1967) argues that Christianity’s linear timeline, combined with the ‘messianic’ savior complex, is at the root of imperialism, colonialism, and Christian missions. Berkhof describes Christianity’s direct impact on the creation of capitalism in the Western world and shows the correlation between linear Christian time and the oppression and dehumanization of those who do not fit into White, Eurocentric bodies. Bandyopadhyay (2019) concludes that colonialism and capitalism are inseparable and dependent on one another in order to maintain current hegemonic systemic power structures, such as institutional racism and incarceration. While capitalism initially took root in Northwestern Europe, its geographical scope has steadily broadened through a variety of evolving methods. These include trade, colonialism, the enslavement of Africans and their transportation to the Americas, nineteenth-century Imperialism, substantial foreign lending, transfers of technology, and the contemporary globalization of production and finance facilitated by electronic means (Sewell, 2008). While there are varying and even opposing understandings of capitalism, Fraser and Jaeggi (2018) suggest there is a general understanding of capitalism as a path-dependent sequence of accumulation regimes that evolves chronologically throughout history.

Harvey (1982) suggests that the drive for geographical expansion stems from repeated endeavors to discover a 'spatial fix' to address capitalism's inherent crisis tendencies (Harvey, 1982, p. 427). This pursuit, although never permanently successful, represents an ongoing quest for new sources of increased profits sought by capitalists. A recurring means of achieving enhanced profits, according to Harvey, involves what Marx terms the "annihilation of space

through time"—a process that involves accelerating the circulation of capital by expediting and therefore reducing the costs of transportation and communication (Harvey, 1982, p. xxiii). Given that capitalism perpetually generates crisis tendencies, leading to a continuous succession of new spatial fixes, its spatial framework is built on the “abstract logic of endless accumulation” (Sewell, 2008, p. 527). Although capitalism has been embedded in society over the past 2,000 centuries, Sewell proposes that its logic can be “superceded or unravelled” sometime in the future (Sewell, 2008, p. 532).

Linear time never stops moving forward on an upward incline, inevitably leaving one’s body in the lurch. This capitalist-colonial time is a well-oiled machine, which can only succeed or fail and must infinitely plow ahead to the never-ending finish line to survive. The body runs on a different and incongruent plane—a multidimensional and cyclical experience, which is continuously shifting and does not exist based on the binary of success or failure. The ticking of the clock, the national bank schedule, and the capitalist push of progress and production are fixed and persist despite one’s personal or collective experience of time. The natural healing process is cyclical and nonlinear—the wound scabs over, reopens, scabs over, and a scar remains. Time speeds up and slows down; you feel as if time has come to a stand-still, your body numb and in shock, but the clock keeps ticking. When the body is made to exist in the linear timeline, it feels physically unnatural, as if your body is being forcibly compressed and narrowed. Each bony segment of your vertebrae is pressed into another, the spine becoming a singular, rigid column. As you try and twist to look behind you, there’s a sharp pinching in your spine. You find yourself stuck and have to return to a frontal position. You let out a deep sigh; you have been holding your breath the entire time. Space condenses on all sides until you are only able to move forwards in the sagittal plane. The air is oppressive or maybe it is the absence of air altogether.

Ore and Houdek (2020) introduce a “spatiotemporal politics of breathing” as a framework through which to acknowledge “times of suffocation” for Black lives and to dismantle oppressive linear time (Ore & Houdek, 2020, p. 443). Societal systems of power are upheld by “white national time”, which assumes linearity, heterogeneity, closure, and a denial of responsibility (Ore & Houdek, 2020, p. 444). The accumulation and continuation of racialized violence is denied by white national time, by viewing each act of anti-Black violence as its own separate and merely coincidental event. This is evidenced by the backlash Oprah Winfrey received when pointing out how the 1955 lynching of Emmett Louis Till and the 2012 shooting death of Trayvon Martin were “the same thing” (Heals, 2013). Winfrey's assertion highlighted that regardless of time, space, or circumstance, the motivation and driving force behind the deaths of these two Black adolescents were identical. Ore and Houdek (2020) argue that the controversy over the Till-Martin comparison underscores a continuous denial of the adaptive and mutating aspects of lynching. According to the linear timeline, each act of violence is its own distinct and cemented event, making it all too easy to ignore and flat out denounce the transgenerational, nonlinear embodiment of oppression and injustice. Dialogues recognizing the persistence of lynching's historical and contemporary occurrences demonstrate how racism utilizes white national time to uphold the racial status quo and excuse the white nation from its continual and all-encompassing racism. Viewing instances of anti-Black violence as isolated events along a linear timeline, upholds the temporal fabrication of post-racism.

Scholars who analyze the interplay between time and race conceptualize race not solely as an “embodied orientation but also as a temporal orientation that naturalizes racist logic” (Ore & Houdek, 2020, p. 446). White national time originates from race-making, anti-Black perceptions of the “so-called Man”, and colonialism (Wynter, 2003). Fanon (1961) describes the

colonial world as “Manichaeism”—the dualistic belief in pure Good versus absolute Evil, the colonizer dehumanizing the colonized subject and reducing them to “the state of an animal” (Fanon, 1961, p. 32). The colonizer declares the colonized as incapable of having values and therefore, the ability to be rational, cementing the binary fabrication of White equating to “Good” and Black equating to “Evil”. Al-Saji (2013) analyzes Fanon’s account of the White colonizer’s “logic” as a period of temporal dislocation and detachment, wherein racism removes racialized bodies from historical context and confines them to a “closed past” (Al-Saji, 2013, p. 6). Mbembé (2017) expresses that one’s relationship to time is not only subjective, but intersubjective—the construction of white national time is based on how the colonizer views the “Other”. This Manichaean act of Othering was intrinsic to colonialism and slavery, as it rationalized the exploitation, enslavement, extraction, and impoverishment of Black lives by positioning them as detached from the human historical narrative.

The oppressor “creates the spiral, the spiral of domination, exploitation and looting” while the “colonized subject lies coiled and robbed” working to unravel and spiral outwards (Fanon, 1961, p. 34). The intention behind and direction of the spiral is critical. Spiraling inwards creates constriction, isolation, narrow-mindedness, and a grasp for control, which builds upon itself and perpetuates violence. The concepts of the “downward spiral” and “spiral of violence” are examples of the continual and exponential oppression of the colonizer’s spiral (Câmara, 1971). Spiraling outwards, on the other hand, is opening-up, embracing curiosity and the unknown, reaching out for connection. Ore and Houdek (2020) propose acknowledging a “countertemporality” is essential to cultivating a future characterized by justice, healing, and a new approach to remembrance (Ore & Houdek, 2020, p. 445). The outward, unspooling spiral is countertemporality in itself, actively resisting the “master narrative”, which Morrison (1990)

describes as, “whatever ideological script that is being imposed by the people in authority on everybody else” (Morrison, 1990, 0:08:35). The master narrative upholds the White, racist, colonizer’s fabrication, declaring it as a rational and absolute Truth. Imagining other spatiotemporal futures, memories and justice, not only challenges white national time or the “master narrative”, but is a “radical act of resistance and survival” (Ore & Houdek, 2020, p. 448). What are these spatiotemporal embodiments outside of the dominant narrative of standard time? Spiralic, nonlinear modalities of time, which are intentionally erased and trivialized by white national time, can ultimately lead to transformative embodied experiences.

Indigenous Time

Indigenous scholars and writers describe time as a spiralic experience, rather than the linear timeline directly tied to settler colonialism (Vigil, 2023). Brooks (2012) expresses how history takes on a spiral form, which “revolves through layers of generations, renewing itself with each new birth” (Brooks, 2012, p. 308). Many U.S. history textbooks have claimed that American history began in 1492 and anything before was prehistory; Indigenous time has been erased from the short chronology of Western history. Linear time is anthropocentric, mainly emphasizing the importance of maximizing human production and consumption, while indigenous time is based on preservation and renewal (Kääpä, 2016). The Sámi people, who “primarily inhabit the Sápmi, a contested geocultural space covering northernmost Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia”, have a cyclical relationship and understanding of time and temporality (Kääpä, 2016, p. 136). For example, reindeer herders guide the herds according to the reindeer’s natural rhythm as the seasons change, moving to the mountains in summer and the forest in autumn, in order to sustain and preserve the land. Instead of implementing a system with the goal of increasing the herd and maximizing profit, the Sámi cyclical approach supports

the wellbeing of animals and the land. There is a vast and rich array of Indigenous understandings, encodings, and embodiments of time, but one collective element is the cyclic and transgenerational experience of Indigenous time.

Dakota Iapi, the language, is nonlinear in that there are no verb tenses (Vigil, 2023). In Iapi, speakers and listeners employ contextual words to help each other recall when an event occurred or will occur. The focus lies on the verb rather than the object or subject, making movement the central element of communication (Vigil, 2023). Another example of indigenous time is the Waniyetu Wówapi–Winter Counts. Dakota, Lakota, and other western Plains people have used Winter Counts to document the motion of time. Typically, one individual, "the Keeper," assumes the duty of maintaining the Count (Vigil, 2023, p. 173). Initially inscribed on rock walls within caves, canyons, or mountains, these records later transitioned to buffalo, deer, and cow hides. Subsequently, they were transcribed onto ledger paper and muslin. The Keeper utilized natural dyes to craft the images. Burke (2007) describes Winter Counts as pictographic calendars where each image depicts a unique event within a single year, arranged in spirals or rows, originally on hide. Waniyetu (winter) is manifold in that it can signify the season or an entire year from "first snow to first snow", which does not line up with the Gregorian calendar year. The Keeper of the Winter Count functioned as a historian, responsible for documenting and preserving significant events. The images they crafted "served as mnemonic devices for community members" (Burke, 2007, p. 2). Therefore, this archival practice was both an individual and communal experience, as the stories recounted events that impacted a community or band of Lakota/Dakota who camped together. These narratives and historical occurrences imparted valuable lessons to the community, which needed to be retained over time. There were

experiences of collective remembering “at various times throughout the year” as the Keeper would unroll the calendar and retell the community’s past events (Burke, 2007, p. 3).

The images contained within many "Winter Books" held intricate meanings that could only be fully grasped through stories exchanged within the *tiošpaye*—the community (Vigil, 2023, p. 176). Thus, the Winter Count wasn't merely an archive in isolation but was ingrained within a vibrant linguistic and cultural framework, necessitating both storytellers and listeners to transmit the teachings encapsulated in pivotal events, enabling the lessons to endure across time and space. While the Keeper served as the community's historian, the recording and recollection of history had to be conducted communally, involving consultation with elders to select which events to document for the commemoration of a specific year and how to narrate and share the collective experiences. The *tiošpaye* had a collective understanding of time as they jointly held the responsibility to understand the narratives depicted in the Winter Count and safeguard them for future generations. Within the imagery and stories of the Winter Count, pasts, presents, and futures are interconnected (Vigil, 2023).

The Native slipstream, described as a form of speculative fiction authored by Indigenous writers of science fiction, intertwines stories with elements like time travel, alternate realities, multiverses, and alternate histories (Dillon, 2012). These narratives present an alternative conception of time as a spiral, “as pasts, presents, and futures flow together like currents in a navigable stream” (Dillon, 2012, p. 3). Dillon coined the term “Indigenous Futurisms” based on “Afrofuturism”, which focuses on integrating traditional knowledge systems into imagined futures, prioritizing values such as sustainable and balanced relationships over what is perceived as progress (Cornum, 2015). Cornum (2015) further describes Indigenous Futurisms as the “profound deconstruction of how we imagine time, progress, and who is worthy of a future”

(Cornum, 2015, para. 2). Indigenous time is a spiralic spatiotemporal embodiment, resisting the linear settler colonial “logic” of the “authentic” Indigenous experience as being confined to the past (De Vos, 2022, p. 4).

Black Temporality

Afrofuturism is a Black cultural lens through which to imagine possible futures and activate liberation (TEDxFortGreeneSalon, 2011). Afrofuturism is both an artistic aesthetic and a critical theoretical framework, which incorporates imagination, technology, art, music, and grassroots organizing. Afrofuturism resists white national time and redefines Western notions of blackness for both the present and the future (Womack, 2013). Afrofuturism simultaneously acknowledges that black lynching is not closed to the past and “fatalism is not a synonym for blackness” (Womack, 2013, p. 11). Afrofuturists work to uncover the erased history of Black sci-fi and futuristic works, dating back to precolonial Africa, and reintegrating Black bodies into current and future temporalities. Womack (2013) argues that Afrofuturism has the ability to facilitate individual, collective, and societal growth through imagination, integrating African diasporic cultures with the future, and transcending constricting and oppressive space, time, and cultural constructs. Cyclical time and the fluidity between the past, present, and future is what makes Afrofuturism differ from other sci-fi or futurist movements (Womack, 2013).

Brown (2021) argues that because Black people have been dehumanized and excluded from what is considered normative, acceptable society, they have a “particular epistemic and ontological mobility” (Brown, 2021, p. 7). There is “real power to be found in such an untethered state”, allowing for the ability to imagine and exist within alternative spatiotemporal realities that resist the epistemological logics of human domination (Brown, 2021, p. 7). Brown (2021) proposes a “radical refusal” of selfhood and society’s limited conception of existence, instead

imagining an entirely new paradigm, a utopia existing in a nonlinear spatiotemporality beyond human conception. Instead of imagining a new future, Brown (2021) calls for an “alter-frequency” and temporal estrangement from the human construction of past, present, and future (Brown, 2021, p. 8). Goffe (2022) describes Black time as “not-yet-standardized”; in contrast to imperial time, literally referred to as “standard time” or Greenwich Mean Time (Goffe, 2022, p. 112). Not-yet-standardized time is simultaneously of the future and the “multiplicity of precapitalist African temporalities”—a transgenerational, nonlinear and embodied experience of time (Goffe, 2022, p. 112).

Brown (2017) examines Black women mystics who have embodied the responsibility and practice of an alter-frequency that refuses the master narrative. Being both Black and female, they have been pushed to the outskirts of society—“aliens amid the alienated”, creating intentional collective spaces that radically resist what is considered logical and real (Brown, 2017, p. 11). Within these alternate communities, the emotional, physical, and spiritual are interconnected, the boundaries between individuals dissolving through a shared and embodied experience. Lee (1849) describes these non-unitary experiences as “melting time[s]”, an ineffable, nonlinear, and ecstatic mode of being (Lee, 1849, p. 24). Black feminist spatiotemporal alter-frequencies are radical and embodied modes of liberation and transformation because, as Lorde (1984) states, “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house” (Lorde, 1984, p. 110). Using the “master’s tools”, which are linear, Manichaeian, and capitalist, to try and dismantle oppression will never bring about true change because it only services those who have White, Christian, cisgender, heterosexual, and “able” bodies.

Queer Time/Temporality

“Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant”; queerness is a positionality in relation to the normative (Halperin, 1995, p. 62). Halberstam (2005) states that queerness has “the potential to open up new life narratives and alternative relations to time and space” (Halberstam, 2005, p. 2). Sedgwick (1993) describes “queer” as “a continuing moment, movement, motive—recurrent, eddying, *troublant*”; an ongoing spiralic intention, motion and embodiment (Sedgwick, 1993, p. xii). Queer theory is a critical, social justice-based framework, which examines the ways in which society and culture define, uphold, and police sexuality and gender norms. The theory challenges heteronormativity and the construction of binaries, imagining and offering alternative lenses into identity politics. Queer theory came out of gay identity politics/activism in reaction to the AIDS epidemic, feminist theory, and cultural studies. “Queer theory” was coined by de Lauretis (1991) as a way to “both transgress and transcend” terminology which originated from binaries, whiteness, and cisgender gay men, proposing that queerness is an act of social change that creates space for a “discursive horizon” and “another way of living the racial and the sexual” (de Lauretis, 1991, pp. x-xi).

Queer theory challenges linear time, which is built around the normative family and reproductive time, examining how materialization, space, and temporality affect and form the normative family. Butler (1990) explores how the materialization of sex enforces the normative family and which bodies are intelligible, and therefore, matter. The materiality of the heteronormative family exists through institutions, laws, borders, traditions, “reproductive time”, and “chrononormativity”. “Chrononormativity”, coined by Freeman (2010), is constructed, linear, heteronormative time that uses bodies for maximum productivity and profit. Marriage, reproduction, inheritance, and the accumulation of wealth and health are all aspects of chrononormativity, which is directly tied to what Halberstam (2005) calls reproductive time—the

linear, straight timeline of dating, marriage, sex, birth of children, and inheritance. Queerness disrupts the neoliberal, linear, normative timeline through non-conforming temporalities and channels of communication, creating spaces for queer kinship and solidarity (Sedgwick, 1990).

Halberstam (2005) characterizes "queer time" as a concept denoting particular models of temporality that arise within postmodernism once individuals depart from the temporal constraints associated with reproduction and family, longevity, and inheritance (Halberstam, 2005, p. 6). Queer subcultures generate alternative temporal frameworks by enabling participants to envision their futures guided by logics that transcend conventional markers of life experience, such as birth, marriage, reproduction, and death; "reproductive time and family time are, above all, heteronormative time/space constructs" (Halberstam, 2005, p.10). In Western culture, longevity, stability, and patrimony are assumed as desirable and ideal modes of living, and anyone who falls outside of these normative values and temporalities are pathologized as "immature" and "deviant" (Halberstam, 2005, p. 152). Freeman (2010) argues that the concept of sexual identity was a part of the movement towards the reification of space and time, a product of industrial capitalism, while queerness is seen as being out of sync/temporally unaligned with class, capitalism, and structured linear time. Sedgwick (1993) explains how "the word "queer" itself means *across*—it comes from the Indo-European root—*twerkw*, which also yields the ... Latin *torquere* (to twist)" (Sedgwick, 1993, p. xii). Queerness is not only "strange" and "antiassimilationist", but is transversal, relational, and "antiseparatist"—embodying the spiral's multidimensional ability to resist, be seen and connect.

Queer time and space acts as a critical framework to reflect on change, reimagining, and transformation. Muñoz (2009) argues that queerness has not been reached yet; it is the ultimate desire and is of the future. Queerness is the refusal of the present and is the imagining and

working towards of a new world. Political idealism and critical imagination are often viewed as naïve and impractical, but Muñoz (2009) states that hope can act as a critical methodology that creates the possibility for futurity. He uses the philosopher Bloch's perspective on utopia and the critique of temporality to argue that queerness is in the "not-quite-conscious", it does not fully exist yet, which challenges the neoliberal ideology of constant progress (Muñoz, 2009, p. 21). Muñoz calls for an "ecstatic and horizontal temporality", which unites the past, present, and future, proposing that we all take "ecstasy" in order to work towards a collective queer temporality (Muñoz, 2009, p. 186). Queerness, as ecstatic and horizontal, disrupts the straight timeline, freeing one from the confines of chrononormativity.

Muñoz (1996) describes the history, past, and memories of queerness as "an archive of the ephemeral" (Muñoz, 1996, p. 10). Memories and archives, especially for individuals and communities that have been marginalized and erased by Western white heteronormative patriarchy, are often solely stored in the body because there is not the luxury of writing and publishing an archive. It is crucial to note the distinction between who records and legitimizes "history" versus the history of those who have been dehumanized and fall outside of the master narrative. In queer subcultures, there is a tendency for blurred lines between archivists and creators. Typically, "minority" subcultures are documented by individuals who are either former or current members of the subculture, as opposed to "adult" experts (Halberstam, 2005). In dominant Western history, there is a clear distinction between the archivist and the subjects, and the present versus the past. Written documentation and "objective" perspective are deemed as rational, accurate, and therefore the "truth", whereas a people's or individual's lived experience, which are recorded and remembered oftentimes orally or solely through the body, are deemed

illegitimate and irrational. All forms of nonlinear temporality are embodied transgenerational archives, inherently promoting empathy, connection, and community.

Integration of Opposites

You are lying on your back in an “X” formation, legs and arms reaching out along a diagonal line. You feel your skull, scapulae, and tailbone weighted into the floor. The heels of your feet and the tops of your hands are reaching, but not rigid. You begin to turn your right toes and ankle inward towards your center as your left fingers begin to curl away from the floor and towards your chest in an outward rotation. Both the right leg and left arm have a rounded physicality, as if you are carving through or enclosing the space. As your opposite arm and leg are moving closer to one another and your center, the spine gradually rotates and the head turns following the arm. The limbs meet and begin to cross over the midline, creating a more intense and obvious twisting in the spine, your right hip and left shoulder releasing from the floor. Your center is automatically activated through the horizontal plane. You remind yourself to lengthen in the vertical plane through your head and tailbone to avoid a crunching sensation, as if you are wringing a towel but want to leave some of the moisture (Hackney, 2020, p. 181).

Polarities are integral to existence—inhale and exhale, up and down, opening and closing, right and left—“twoness” is a critical part of the developmental process that allows for individuation: the separation between mother and child (Hackney, 2002). Polar opposites are necessary for the differentiation process, serving as a guide for human survival, development, and growth. It is impossible for there to be connectivity and unity without first identifying differentiation. Wilber (1979) explains how all directional and spatial dimensions are based on opposites: up versus down, long versus short, inside versus outside. However, understanding the world through polarities can easily become a simplistic and ultimately harmful lens, suffocating

any opportunity for critical thinking or the integration of dualities. It is all too easy to get stuck in polar biases, labeling one half as “good/right” and the other as “evil/wrong”, reinforcing binaries which uphold oppressive and violent systems and ideologies. To deny that all opposites are inherently “aspects of one underlying reality”, is akin to trying to separate the opposite ends of a single rubber band, pulling and pulling until the band breaks in two (Wilber, 1979, p. 27).

Hackney (2002) emphasizes that in order to embody integration, one must move beyond polarities in order to embrace the whole. There will inevitably be moments of intense tension where the band is on the brink of snapping, but either end will ultimately have to initiate a yield/release in order for there to be integration and transformation.

The logarithmic spiral is the relationship between and integration of opposites; an initial clash of polarities, which develops into a resolution and transformation before confronting each other once again (Purce, 1974). Within any living entity is the potential for growth both upwards and downwards through a spiralic movement (Hartley, 1995). For example, a tree’s roots spiral downwards from gravity in relationship with the earth, while the tree’s limbs simultaneously spiral upwards towards the sun, seeking nourishment from both polarities. Embodying these spiral polarities within one’s own body honors and holds space for growth in all directions while remaining rooted to the earth. The Yin Yang symbol is another example of the spiral integrating polarities. Yin Yang originates from the Chinese Tao, which is the source, creation, and totality of both cosmic and human life (Ward, 2006). Yin represents retreating, passivity, and receptivity, and Yang represents advancing, propulsion, and expansion. The polarities of yin and yang are present in the existence of all things, such as male and female, light and dark, order and chaos (Feuchtwang, 2016). The symbolic relationship between yin and yang, *taijitu*, is represented through the spiral curve, which simultaneously bonds and differentiates the two polarities,

emphasizing their “symmetry and interdependence, and indicating a continuous cyclic movement or flow” (Ward, 2006, p. 120).

Dance/movement therapy embodies the spiralic relationship of polarities through breath, head-tail connectivity, countertension/cross-lateral connectivity, and the process of dance/movement therapy in itself. Dance/movement therapy is the use of movement and dance as a facilitator for an individual’s growth, mind-body integration, and overall well-being (Payne, 1992). It is based on the principle that motions and emotions affect one another; the body stores one’s emotional and ephemeral archive, which is communicated and embodied through one’s posture, gestures, use of space, and intuitive movement (Chaiklin & Wengrower, 2016). Dance/movement is both a therapeutic and creative vehicle to access the unconscious and one’s self-knowledge, while also promoting kinesthetic empathy, social connection, and community (Chaiklin & Wengrower, 2016). Dance/movement therapy utilizes a vast array of psychological and movement-based theories and methodologies and is a continuously evolving field.

Movement and breath are the first indicators of life and form of expression, preceding language and thought (Chaiklin & Wengrower, 2016). Movement is a universal and instinctual form of communication, which is fundamental to the existence of the solar system, the beating of our hearts, the inhalation and exhalation of our breath, and the cycle of life and death (Payne, 1992). Breath, the key to life and movement, functions through the cyclic relationship between polarities: expiration and respiration. The core essence of dance/movement therapy is intricately linked to the emergence of opposites, such as movement and stillness. The therapeutic process is a continuous relational dynamic between order and chaos (Payne, 1992).

Schoop (2000) explains how society and/or the environment pressures people to select and conform to an individual identity, often causing one polarity to be dominant and the other to

be suppressed. In supporting a client to embody balance and integration of the whole self, Schoop not only promotes consciousness of the hidden or erased polarity, but awareness of how the given polarity is critical to and “*actually incorporated*” in the person’s current presentation (Schoop, 2000, p. 95). For example, heaviness and lightness are the “yin and yang of weight”, one polarity cannot exist or be understood without the other, inherently causing heaviness to exist within lightness and vice versa (Schoop, 2000, p. 95). An individual experiencing depression may solely be embodying heaviness, having forgotten what lightness feels like. Dance/movement therapy can facilitate the gradual integration of the suppressed polarity, allowing for a more balanced, multidimensional, and whole self.

Hartley (1995) describes human growth and development as spiralic, rather than a linear process. Observations of patterns initially encountered in the womb or during birth can be noticed in the early stages of a child's movement development. These embodied memories and their reenactment lay the groundwork for subsequent phases of perceptual, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual maturation. Hartley (1995) emphasizes the importance of returning back to the instinctual movement patterns of the cells in the womb, where the initial embodied understanding of one’s relationship to gravity is explored and developed. As one continues along the spiralic pathway of development, it is crucial to return to the cellular level in order to remain connected with the earth (Hartley, 1995). During the infant's movement development, extending beyond personal limits marks the onset of upward momentum. The intention driving this motion stems from redirecting attention outward and upward, fueled by the aspiration to surpass familiar confines. Circling along any part of the spiral represents a process of integration and growth, in which one is building off of and informed by their cellular roots, laying groundwork for the next transition (Hartley, 1995).

Head-tail connectivity is integral to early developmental movement. Hackney (2002) explains how the head and tail are in a continuously changing and interactive relationship with one another, no matter how simple or complex the movement. Some of the first spinal patterns in developmental movement are what Cohen (2012) has coined the “reach and pull and push” (Cohen, 2012, p. 101). For example, when a baby is exploring how to move through space lying on their stomach, the first spinal pattern is initiated from the head by pushing into the tail. The next spinal push is initiated by the tail causing the body to move forward towards the head. A series of push patterns enable the baby to push themselves along the floor, establishing their kinesphere from head to tail/front to back, and vice versa. The push patterns have a grounded and weighted quality, enabling strength development. Next, as the reach and pull patterns are utilized, the baby moves out of their personal kinesphere, taking on a lighter quality, not only lengthening the spine, but completely changing their perception (Cohen, 2012). The push pattern solidifies one’s kinesphere and the reach and pull are “breaking through” one’s kinesphere—an expansion into the space beyond, altering one’s awareness from the inner to outer environment (Cohen, 2012, p. 102). When simultaneously embodied, push and reach and pull polarities allow for connectivity in the body and integration of perceptual-motor activities. Head-tail connectivity is critical to total body spiraling, especially when changing levels in space, such as spiraling in and out of the floor (Hackney, 2002).

“Contralateral” movement is the most complex of the developmental patterns, which utilizes connectivity between and crossing of the body quadrants to move through space (Cohen, 2012). Contralateral emphasizes diagonal movement and the crossing of the midline in which the opposite arm and leg extend or flex at the same time. Contralateral connectivity integrates all three planes: the vertical, horizontal, and sagittal, forming a spiralic movement. An example of

contralateral connectivity is “simple” walking, where one’s opposite arm and leg swing forward simultaneously (Hackney, 2002). Hackney (2002) puts quotations around “simple” because oftentimes people are not utilizing contralateral connectivity to its full effect. For example, if one’s upper body appears rigid and their spine is fixed, their arms and legs swing from the proximal joints instead of connecting diagonally through the midline. Contralateral, or as Hackney (2002) prefers, “cross-lateral” connectivity, enables a seemingly “simple” walk to become a spiraling movement that activates the entire body. It connects the upper and lower body through the use of the horizontal plane and gradated rotation, engaging the kinetic chains of muscles throughout the body (Hackney, 2002). While cross-lateral connectivity is not necessary to survival, it facilitates integration throughout the body, creating an overall more embodied experience. Hackney (2002) argues that cross-connections on a body level help to facilitate cognitive connections between the right and left side of the brain. Hackney (2002) has found that students who intentionally embody cross-lateral connectivity are further able to connect symbolic and analytic thought processes and integrate them with the body. She emphasizes that students who focus on embodying spiraling movement tend to have an especially comprehensive experience due to the constant gradation of spirals (Hackney, 2002).

While “countertension” is especially prominent in contralateral connectivity, it is always present in order to facilitate efficient movements in the neuromuscular system, even on a micro level (Hackney, 2002, p. 235). Countertension is the relationship between polar spatial directions and refers to the act of opposing or going against the direction of the tensile force exerted by an action. The example of a tree’s roots spiraling downward while its limbs shoot upward for nourishment is an embodiment of countertension. Bartenieff (1980) describes how “spatial tensions are the springboards for mobility” because the ability to anchor and be “grounded”

allows for more freedom of movement (Bartenieff, 1980, p. 103). There is a continuous shifting of spatial tensions, even in moments of what appear to be “stillness”. If there was not a constant renewal of countertensions, one’s body would become tense, fixed, and “devitalized” (Bartenieff, 1980, p. 108). In other words, the rubber band would snap in two. Countertension allows for balance and stability, such as the ability to remain upright, while also having the ability to be adaptive.

Countertension is inherently involved in twisting/spiraling (Bartenieff, 1980). An example of this is in the twisting of the spine, which involves countertension between the upper and lower body, as described in the embodied image mentioned prior. The spiral always has a center which allows for both stability and maximal play. In this case, the spiral’s center is in the internal core, under the rectus abdominus. Often stability is equated with stillness, but true stability is when spatial tensions are able to shift and reform while remaining connected with the center. Hackney (2002) argues that the intentional use of countertension can be the most accessible and effective way of opening up one’s range of movement. Based on her experience working with clients, Hackney (2002) has found that oftentimes people are unable to fully move due to feeling unstable. The practice of embodying the simultaneous stability and mobility of countertensions can give clients the ability to jump into the unknown through grounded and intentional risk-taking. Countertension provides “history”, the center of the spiral from which one leaps, knowing they are anchored and always connected to the point of origin (Hackney, 2002, p. 235).

Getting Stuck...Finding More Space

You are twisting your spine, shoulders, neck, and head as your feet stay planted. Your right arm is following the trajectory of your spine. As you spiral further, the heel of your right

foot inevitably lifts, so you are only making contact with the floor through the ball of your foot. Your right arm is reaching out into space as far as physically possible, fingers searching and outstretched. You have reached the ultimate point of countertension, the diagonal between your hand and foot taut. Where do you go from here?

The cross-lateral connectivity between the upper and lower body is initiated with a “space-carving” of the arm and shifting of weight in the legs, creating countertension between the opposite hip and shoulder/arm. This transverse movement is made up of “three unequal spatial pulls” that continuously adjust in their relation to one another (Hackney, 2002, p. 226). When the spiral movement is activated it reaches a point of maximal tension between the vertical, horizontal, and sagittal planes, where the lower body ultimately has to release and unravel in order not to lose balance and fall into total chaos (Bartenieff, 1980). Depending on the intention and initiation of the movement, the spiral can either be coiling and twisting to the point of countertension, unraveling and opening, or simultaneously embodying the two polarities. A natural unwinding process takes place as the body seeks alignment, healing, and integration, releasing energy from the center and sequencing out towards the extremities (Hartley, 1995). During the final developmental stage, the contralateral crawling pattern, movement initiates from the extremities and sequentially spirals through the center and out to the opposite extremity, simultaneously winding towards and unwinding away from the center.

While cross-lateral connectivity and spiraling motions are instinctual developmental movements, Hackney (2002) explains how there are common misconceptions about the spine, which can limit one’s range of movement. For instance, the spine is often referred to as a “backbone”, but in reality, it is much more central. The back-most part of the vertebral column, the spinous processes, is often mistaken for the spine, but the vertebral body of the vertebrae is

actually much closer to one's central line of gravity. Hackney (2002) proposes that imagining one's spine as central, especially at the level of one's ears, the level of the lowest rib, and in the pelvis, can promote an overall feeling of balance in the body. Balance does not only signify stability, but a connection with the core and back space, that allows for a larger range of multidimensional movement. The adult spine is made up of twenty-four vertebrae, with the skull and sacrum-coccyx forming the two ends, with the intention of each segment collaborating and contributing to spinal movement. Hackney (2002) has observed that oftentimes, movement in the spine is concentrated in the waist area, around the third or fourth lumbar vertebrae, creating a rigidity and disconnect throughout and forcing compression and overuse in a singular section of the spine. Integrating the entire spine through head-tail connectivity, allows for simultaneous stability and fluidity and an equal usage of each segment of the spine (Hackney, 2022). Head-tail connectivity is focused on more than just completing a task, allowing space to be curious, imaginative, and fluid, while remaining supported through the core and central line of gravity.

Dowd (1981) explains how the anchoring of the lower limbs allows the spine to coil and uncoil elastically through space, creating a greater range of movement in the upper extremities. As the spine rotates, one's visual frame of reference can expand into the back space, discovering a new perspective. Dowd (1981) imagines a light illuminating from the base of the pelvis like an oil lamp, glowing and expanding outwards and up through the central axis, forming a lengthening sensation in the spine in order to minimize compression between the vertebrae. She simultaneously visualizes three diamond shaped bases in the horizontal plane and parallel with the ground— one diamond connecting the hip joints, the second connecting the shoulder joints, and the third connecting points just below the two ears. When increasing the distance between each of the diamond's points, there is the potential for expansion in the horizontal dimension and

more mobility in the rotation of the spine. Dowd (1981) expresses how fear is embodied through the tensing of the muscles, shutting one's eyes, holding one's breath, shoulders, ribs, and fists, and feeling disconnected from the ground. As one's defenses come down, the spine is able to uncoil as the flow of energy expands both outwards and into the ground (Dowd, 1981).

Embodied Grassroots Movements

Brown (2017) describes transformation, emotional growth, and movement growth as nonlinear cycles, meetings, and disruptions. In order to embody individual and collective growth, the “framework of failure” must be released, dismantling the binary of success and failure and the goal of a definitive end and crossing of the finish line (Brown, 2017, p. 66). Embracing the nonlinear temporality of transformation is at the heart of social movements, as Brown (2017) emphasizes the importance of the “feedback loop”— a cycle of experimentation, feedback, and experimentation (Brown, 2017, p. 68). Occupy and Black Lives Matter/Movement for Black Lives are two examples of spiralic grassroots mass movements that were built around collective longing and a letting go of control (Brown, 2017). The movement's genesis was small and local, continually building over time: not rushing, not solely reactive, not overly produced. There was a communal and intentional effort to break down hierarchical leadership structures, opening up and creating space for all to contribute; “no one is special, and everyone is needed” (Brown, 2017, p. 71). While competitiveness, criticism, control, and a want to be special will inevitably show up in social movements, it is how the individual and collective hold themselves and one another accountable that is critical, intentionally and continuously opening up and out.

Brown (2017) emphasizes the importance of community-based actions, which are led by those who are directly impacted versus those who have the choice and ability to leave. Too often, the funding and background organizing of a movement is dominated by people on the outside,

which initially generates hope, community members taking risks and initiating restorative programs, ultimately causing the community to be left in the lurch when the funders decide to shift their efforts elsewhere. Instead of penetrating in from the outside, grassroots movements grow out from the center. Accountability is key to radical community transformation, both in terms of the individuals involved and the strategic approach. Brown (2017) highlights the importance of not taking a surface level, reactive approach, but forming a deep and proactive practice that works to confront and dismantle the roots of social injustice. Systemic change is “fractal”—transforming from the micro to the macro, gradually cycling upwards (Brown, 2017, p. 39). Bourgeois (2018) distinguishes between spiraling inwards from the periphery—coiling, tightening, and contracting to the point of disappearance, versus spiraling outwards from the center—unraveling, opening, giving, and letting go of control. Whether organizing a grassroots movement, relating to others or simply being with oneself, one must be intentional about where they are situated in the spiral.

Foster (2003) examines three nonviolent protest movements, all of which have a grass roots profile and are not run by an individual leader. The lunch counter sit-ins of 1960, the ACT-UP die-ins of the 1980s, and the World Trade Organization meetings protest in Seattle in 1999 all involve direct actions where the body becomes the catalyst for collective activism and change. The physical embodiment of direct action forces others to witness, automatically forming a collective felt experience. For example, during the ACT-UP die-ins, police officers and passersby had to directly envision the magnitude of helpless bodies, unable to move on their own (Foster, 2003). Especially during the initial die-ins, the police wore gloves when in physical contact with the protestors, embodying and emphasizing the question of how to care for and be in relationship with another body. The protestors at the lunch counter sit-ins were intentional

about where to place their bodies and how to move through space. They specifically chose lunch counters in dime stores because of the blatant contradiction, since Black people could shop in the dime store but could not eat at the counter (Foster, 2003). The White customers and servers inevitably had to witness and respond to being in a shared space with the Black protestors. So often, social injustices become desensitized through statistics, people becoming mere numbers, but the body directly resists this dehumanization by articulating “its persistence, and its right to persistence” (Butler, 2015, para. 11).

Spiralic Temporality as Indigenous Resurgence and Activism

Coulthard (2014) argues for the necessity of direct action. Direct action, which is inherently an embodied resistance, is most often led by those who are most directly affected: Indigenous women and other grass-roots community members. Negotiations among leaders are deemed more legitimate and civil in comparison to civilians putting their bodies on the line. Direct actions are often labeled as disruptive, violent, and uncivilized, when in reality, they embody through praxis Indigenous people’s ancestral responsibilities to protect and honor the lands central to their culture, community, and way of being (Coulthard, 2014). How can embodying the spiral serve as both a heuristic and direct action in order to enact transformation?

The Cree round dance is an embodied example of spiralic temporality and indigenous resistance to colonialism. The round dance originates from what the Cree elder, John Cuthand, describes as a gift given by the ancestor to their living descendants in order for the ancestor to rest, the descendants to grieve, and for all to become one (The Kino-nda-niimi Collective, 2014). The boundaries between the dead, the living, and the unborn dissolve, allowing for the past to be reborn in the future. The round dance is spiralic in that it is not only cyclical, but continuously transforming (De Vos, 2020). The round dance consists of a group of hand drummers standing in

the center as the rest of the participants move in a circle around them. Oftentimes, there are multiple rings of circles and the dancers will sometimes hold hands or move shoulder to shoulder as they step in unison to the drum beats. The round dance can range from a small gathering, which one family sponsors, or involve multiple communities coming together as a form of solidarity and indigenous resurgence.

Experiencing time through round dancing is a resistance to settler-colonial, linear and progress-oriented time (De Vos, 2020). The Idle No More Movement is an example of Indigenous resurgence, which utilizes the round dance as a form of activism. Idle No More was initiated in 2012 by Treaty People in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta in order to protest the dismantling of environmental protection laws by the Canadian government, which were “endangering First Nations who live on the land” (Idle No More, 2020, para.1). Idle No More is a social movement that has connected and built a community of Indigenous people and allies, ranging from the most urban to most rural areas across Canada. Many of Idle No More’s actions to address and resist harmful government policies have been “flash mobs” of round dancing, intentionally enacted in public spaces rooted in settler-colonialism, such as malls, legislative buildings, and city centers. Situating round dance in these spaces acts as an embodied Indigenous reclamation (The Kino-nda-niimi Collective, 2014).

Dance/Movement Therapy and Activism

Change, relationship, and patterning body connections are fundamental (Hackney, 2002). Time is a representation of change and movement is essentially change. Since change is inevitable, the question is how does one choose to embody, interact with, and understand change. Brown (2017) calls for “intentional adaptation”, embracing and moving with change, while remaining connected to the deeper collective purpose (Brown, 2017, p. 45). Relationship is

fundamental in the sense that one needs to cultivate a relationship with both their own and other bodies in order to connect and transform. Revisiting early developmental patterns is integral to reconnecting with one's instinctual self and paving new pathways that dismantle habitual, linear, and oppressive body patterns.

Movement is the initial language that connects each individual to one another and the larger cosmos and is ultimately the “most powerful tool in facilitating the transcendent function” (Smallwood, 1978, p. 22). While collective embodied experiences can facilitate communal action and interconnection, it is crucial to distinguish between transformation and transcendence. To transcend beyond individual identities and differences is utopic, which can all too easily become a colorblind, passive, floaty, and ultimately harmful framework. Transcendence is spiraling out of this world, up, up and away, losing one's anchor to the earth. Transformation is continually changing, moving upwards, and imagining alternatives, while remaining connected with one's roots (Foster, 2003). Gabitov (2016) explains how circular dances embody unanimity, but not uniformity. Each member is equally necessary to form the circle and is embodying the same movement, but in one's own unique way. There is a balance between one's individual self and the collective, the concrete and the abstract image, the personal and universal world. Payne (1992) highlights the potential harm of expressing “harmony” or “unity” as a therapeutic goal, as it can emphasize a denial of difference and a pressure to conform (Payne, 1992, p. 253).

Gray (2023) asks what it means to be a dance/movement therapist working with individuals and communities of various and intersecting cultural, racial, religious, sexual, socioeconomic, and other contextual identities. Three of the major themes Gray (2023) identifies as critical are “Timing & Embodied Justice”, “Micromovements”, and “Compassion” (Gray, 2023, p. 93). “The restoration of true timing is embodied justice”; it is the responsibility of the

therapist to attune to and honor the client's experience of time and encourage a slowing down (Gray, 2023, p. 94). Slowing down and holding space for the client to advocate for their own timing or rhythm of healing ultimately resists Western, Euro-centric and capitalist frameworks. This embodied justice is made up of micromovements—literal and figurative mini movements honoring the healing nature of time, a gradual and embodied restoration. Compassion is at the heart of the dance/movement therapist's work, emerging out of the more primary responses of sympathy and empathy. Gray (2023) describes this "Trilogy of Human Response" as a spiral in the form of a nautilus shell (Gray, 2023, p. 101). The nautilus shell is an emergent spiral that continuously returns to its center for nourishment. While these three human emotions are related, they also differ significantly. Sympathy is the initial response of feeling for another, which oftentimes takes the form of pity, inherently disempowering the subject. Empathy is a further evolved and interrelational response, central to human connection. Compassion is "empathy plus the will to act"; the shaper of human connection, justice, and transformation (Gray, 2023, p. 102).

Carmichael (2012) expresses how dance/movement therapists have an ethical responsibility to be culturally competent and are particularly well-positioned to serve as social justice advocates. The advancement of clinical competency in multicultural diversity entails both internal and external exploration, necessitating therapists to embody horizontal, vertical, and sagittal dimensions. In the horizontal plane, activities such as gathering information and observation occur. The interplay between vertical and horizontal dimensions continues as therapists uncover new layers of bias and cultural awareness. Regrettably, discussions often stall at this juncture. The sagittal plane represents the subsequent phase, the action step, where therapists transition into social activists. The how—the process of transformation and the

integration of the vertical, horizontal, and sagittal planes is the ultimate question: as Brown (2017) asks, “How do we cultivate the muscle of radical imagination needed to dream together beyond fear?” (Brown, 2017, p. 39).

Discussion

In current Western Eurocentric culture, people have a tendency to be spatiotemporally isolated from one another and disconnected from the body. The oppressive construction of linear time, shape shifting and manifesting throughout human existence as colonialism, capitalism, and countless other systems of institutionalized violence, is the constant/consistent variable that shuts down fertile ground for justice, interconnectivity, and transformation. While empathy and compassion should be continuously practiced on a cognitive, emotional, and physical level, it is ignorant and unfair to call for world peace/love, when significant reparations have not been put into motion and humans are arguably more disconnected from themselves and one another than ever before. Empathy and love are profound embodied feelings yet are tossed around as mere words all too often. If there is ever the possibility of fostering empathy, compassion, and radical transformation on a global and interconnected scale, humanity must first return to the body. How can dance/movement therapy serve as a catalyst for collective transformation, liberation, and belonging?

The spiral serves as an embodied and critical theoretical framework, which can thrive through dance/movement therapy. While the therapeutic healing practice of dance/movement therapy is often focused on positive growth and integration, it is just as critical to dismantle and resist learned patterns that promote fear, bias, isolation, and controlled conformity. There is a dynamic of simultaneously unraveling and unlearning while spiraling and growing up and outwards, holding space for the inherent polarities, contradictions, and gray areas of human

existence. Dance/movement therapists have the ability to use culturally competent critical frameworks in order to dismantle Manichaeian binaries while embracing the coexistence of polarities through the spiralic integration of the mind and body. As a dance/movement therapist, one has an ethical and empathic responsibility to continuously learn how systemic power structures harm and affect individuals and communities as a whole. It is equally important for a dance/movement therapist to be aware of their own relationships to power, privilege, and oppression. Utilizing critical theoretical frameworks is necessary to build self and social awareness, continue one's professional and personal education, and to resist and reimagine the oppressive, linear societal constructions put in place. Yet, to ultimately dismantle and transform as a collective, we must return to the body.

Integrating the critical theories with the body is the action step—if humans primarily exist, make choices, and reflect on a cognitive level, then they are upholding oppressive logics, stuck using the master's tools. It is especially important for individuals who have been handed positions of power, to resist and let go of the master narrative, colonial logic and white national time by unlearning inherently racist and oppressive body patterns, postures, gestures, and ways of being, while reconnecting with one's body through the spiral. Speaking as a White, cisgender, and able bodied woman, there is an ethical responsibility to continually hold oneself accountable and intentionally put in the work by embodying and integrating the characteristics of the spiral on an intellectual, emotional, and physical level. While dance/movement therapists are not obligated to be activists, they have an opportunity to do so by embodying the spiral's spatiotemporal nonlinearity, intentional holding of polarities, grounded curiosity, and multidimensional integration and transformation. The dance/movement therapist must first

embody the spiral themselves in order to share this embodied knowledge and practice with others.

Framework for Embodying the Spiral

Connecting and listening to the body is radical in itself, but only if continually practiced. The practice of embodying the spiral does not follow a script, look a particular way or have an end-goal; its profundity is in its nonlinearity and accessibility. The process is spiralic in itself—starting from one’s individual center and expanding outwards to eventually connect with others through the horizontal plane. It is an infinite practice that is continually shifting; there will be moments where one feels a deep embodied understanding of the spiral, and many others where one feels the intense disconnect between the mind and body, the spiral seeming like an abstract, far off whimsy. Anybody has the ability to access the spiral. While it is a physicalized experience, that does not mean one has to twist their entire body to the extreme, follow a regimen or check off technical landmarks. To approach the spiral in this way would defeat its purpose, causing the compression of the body into a linear timeline. The presentation is insignificant, the image of the spiral is solely a tool for cultivation of an internal and embodied self-actualization, which can then open and connect with the collective. While understanding the complexities, symbolism, and physicality of the spiral on a cognitive level is beneficial for mind-body integration and collective organizing, it is by no means necessary and if anything, can be over-emphasized or relied on, ironically causing one to become disconnected from their body once again. The following are examples of ways to embody the spiral through dance/movement therapy in order to unlearn harmful and oppressive patterns and to generate and integrate new connective pathways.

A critical aspect of the spiral and dance/movement therapy is holding and embodying polarities—acknowledging and embracing the simultaneous inhalation and exhalation or the coiling in and unraveling out. It is not realistic to expect that one will reach a point of transcendence where you never coil up, shrink, or shut down. Human beings' very existence is formed through polarities; expiration cannot exist without respiration. Imagine the wringing of a towel—the simultaneous clockwise and counterclockwise twisting of either end, the towel spiraling to its limit, drained of all moisture and ultimately forced to unravel. While existing solely in one polarity is damaging and unsustainable, exploring the limits of each polarity can open up more space in the body. Exploring the limits does not necessarily mean twisting one's body as much as physically possible, but is about the sensation of being fully present in the movement. For example, with your arms relaxed at your sides in a standing or seated position, begin to rotate both of your arms outwards, initiating from the thumbs. If this movement is not accessible it can be done with a singular arm or through the mind's eye. As the thumbs turn away from the body, the palms open, the unraveling sensation gradually spiraling up the arms, into the shoulders and chest. There is a stretching, expansive, and vulnerable sensation from tail to head, one's heart completely exposed and chin tilting upwards. Now try the opposite—the thumbs curl inwards towards the body as the arms, shoulders, and chest follow suit. The continuous flowing movement has been stunted, the shoulders and chin curl forward as the chest retreats in the sagittal plane. A heavy, protective, stuck and closed sensation is felt and one's breath feels shallow. Practice gradating between the two polarities, discovering change in space, mobility, and self-awareness over time.

There is no goal to remain in the polarity of total openness, for while it can be a liberating and profound sensation, it is ultimately unsustainable. To exist solely in the expansive and

unraveling spiral, one would have to be in a state of ongoing transcendence. Embodying the spiral is about exploring and fluctuating between the polarities, acknowledging there are times where it is accessible to risk-take and show one's full self, and others where one must self-protect and form a shelter in order to survive. Dance/movement therapy is a spatiotemporal means of expression in which one can explore opening and closing, exposing and protecting, and safety and unsafety. Alongside individual exploration is the relational connection of spirals through the horizontal plane, ultimately integrating individual and collective transformation.

The opening and closing spiralic movement utilize all three planes, but there is an emphasis on the sagittal plane—advancing and retreating through space. It embodies what Carmichael (2012) would describe as the action step or Gray (2023) would describe as compassion. Accessing the sagittal plane is critical for dance/movement therapists or any individual to embody activism and the drive for reimagining and transformation, but in order for individuals to become collective, one must also embody the horizontal plane. In order to access the horizontal plane, exploration of the backspace is vital. The backspace is often neglected and forgotten, as one is pressured to continue moving forward on the capitalist linear timeline of constant progress and accumulation. To turn around is considered backwards, deviant, and straying from the straight path. Accessing one's backspace is an embodied resistance to White, heteronormative, linear time, which ultimately utilizes the spiral. In a standing or seated position, try rotating the spine, initiating from the sacrum and moving up the spine. While the primary movement is the twisting of the spine in the horizontal plane, in order to fully embody the spiral, it is crucial to simultaneously find length through the vertical plane. As Hackney (2020) explained, twisting often leads to overusing one part of the spine. To move through the stuck, painful sensation, gradually rotate and create space in the spine upwards and outwards, as the

feet remain grounded. When embodying the spiral, try to intentionally integrate the breath, moving through and with the exhale and pausing and listening through the inhale. It is critical, especially in the early stages of embodying the spiral, that part of one's body remains rooted in the floor, such as the pelvis, legs, and feet. The fruitfulness of the spiral is in the integration of its continuous stability, mobility, and transformation.

The mobility of the spiral is driven by grounded curiosity—the desire to continually explore and move beyond what is apparent or normative, while remaining anchored to one's center. Exploring one's backspace while remaining connected with the floor is an embodiment of grounded curiosity. It is important to balance both a critical and curious lens. An overemphasis on the critical lens can lead to cynicism, burnout, and hopelessness, as one continues to build awareness of the multitudes of systemic violence and injustice. At the same time, an overemphasis on curiosity, especially as a White heteronormative individual, can lead to exoticizing, appropriating, and exploiting Indigenous, Black, and queer practices. Continually checking in with one's curiosity with the intention of remaining open to change, exploration, reimagining, and transformation will allow for self and collective actualization.

Returning to early developmental spiral patterns through dance/movement therapy promotes access to all three planes and reconnection with the curious, grounded and interconnected self. One of the most accessible ways of reconnecting with the spiral is through contralateral connectivity, whether by reaching across the body, crawling, or walking. Notice how it feels to walk through space, feeling for imbalances in terms of effort, initiation, stability, and mobility. If walking according to the standard linear timeline, one's upper body is stiff and leaning forward in the sagittal plane, continually advancing and leading the rest of the body. The spine is fixed, there is no time to pause and rotate the spine to look anywhere but ahead. The

limbs are continuously catching up with the torso, as if added to the body as an afterthought. When walking the counternarrative, there is space for the upper body to breath, shift and rotate. One can follow their intuition and choose to look up at the sky, spin until they are dizzy, suddenly move in a new direction, or continue walking ahead. The head and tail are stacked, allowing one's weight to fall evenly through the limbs and into the ground. The joints are relaxed, allowing the hips and limbs to sway. The clavicle is spreading across the horizontal plane. As the opposite arm and leg swing forward, the spiral connects the distal and proximal ends along a diagonal pathway, activating the entire body. It feels as if there is more space, ease, and opportunity. There are countless ways of embodying the spiral that will unravel and be discovered through exploration. It is intentional that the embodied spiral framework does not have a prescriptive set of steps, exercises, goals to be met, or final product, as that would essentially uphold the linear, colonial-capitalist narrative.

The spiral embodiments described above, which explore polarities, accessing one's backspace, contra-lateral connectivity, expanding through the vertical, horizontal, and sagittal planes, and grounded curiosity can be integrated into group dance/movement therapy sessions, allowing individual transformation to open out into the collective. For example, the unraveling and coiling polarity can be relationally embodied through exploring various spatiotemporal proxemics and orientations. How does it feel to face another person in close proximity, chests unraveling, open, and exposed in contrast to facing away from one another? How does it feel to mirror one another's spiralic movement—forming kinesthetic and reciprocal empathy? As the dance/movement therapist, one must be cognizant of the vulnerability inherent in spiraling, gradually building upon and opening the group's movement vocabulary. Initiating movement from one's center, especially in the early stages of forming group rapport and cohesion, can feel

unsafe, making it critical to begin with the extremities, exploring movement in the arms and legs that gradually spirals towards the center. A group may begin embodying spirals by walking through the space along individual pathways, exploring linear and nonlinear spatiotemporal movement dynamics, noticing how it feels to walk in a straight line at a quick and steady pace in contrast to an irregular and curving course. As the spiral is discovered in relation to the participants' distinct bodies, individualism is gradually dismantled, as the group connects through the rotation of the spine, accessing the backspace and the horizontal plane. Embodying grounded curiosity can involve playing with the gaze in relation to fellow participants and the space, kinesthetically connecting through twisting, cyclical, and cross-lateral movement, or sitting back-to-back with another, connecting from head to tail and feeling the shared spiralic rhythm. As group cohesion, empathy, and trust are built, participants can begin risk-taking—exploring the limits of countertension, order and chaos, connection and disconnection, fortifying the spiralic foundation for collective growth, healing, and liberation.

The spiral can naturally be embodied in groups through a circular formation, allowing everyone to see and be seen. Each person has tactile contact on either side, providing a felt sense of security and stability, while kinesthetically reaching across the horizontal plane to connect with the communal circle. The therapist is a part of the circle, facilitating, witnessing, and holding the container from within the group. The collective connects through the breath—the foundational spiral that flows between inhalation and exhalation. The group begins to rotate and move through space, shifting between clockwise and counterclockwise, bodies facing outwards and inwards, expanding and condensing vertically, horizontally, and sagittally. The communal spiral is timeless and limitless, embracing the strange, horizontal, and transformational, while remaining grounded to the earth. The therapeutic changing and healing process comes from

within and through the collective spiral. Embodying the spiral looks different for each individual and group depending on intersecting social and cultural factors, access to mobility, and interpersonal relationships, the critical framework holding space for adaptability, accessibility, and fluidity.

Crucial to integrating the spiral into the body and collectively working towards radical liberation, transformation, and belonging is holding one self and one another accountable. Indigenous, Black and queer knowledge, temporalities, and embodiments must be acknowledged, honored, and given credit for the use of the spiral in dance/movement therapy, alongside other communities outside of the master narrative. As a White dance/movement therapist this means continually yielding to and holding space for Black and Indigenous voices, teachings, and embodied knowledge, remaining open, curious and humble, and returning to the body through the spiral. Spiralic temporality is essentially the natural world's cyclical rhythm and experience of change, which Indigenous and Black communities have continually honored, embracing the nonlinear, communal, transgenerational, and transformational. Spiralic temporality is a radical resistance to the construction of White supremacy and colonization. Through collective embodied grassroots movements, critical methodologies, creative and radical reimaginings, such as Afrofuturism, Indigenous Futurisms, and queer ecstatic temporality, communities have continued to return to the body, which is ultimately the only way to truly dismantle the master's house.

An Imagining for a Collective Spiral Movement

You may be sitting, standing, or lying down. You are in a communal space with other beings. To the outside eye you appear still, but you are in fact visualizing and sensing the spiral through the body, as it gradually grows and unravels from the roots of your feet. The spiral

reaches in all directions, initiating from the center and spreading outwards. Your bones, joints, muscles, and flesh may begin to shift in response to the internal spiral seeking connection. As the spiral continues on its nonlinear pathway, it intersects and connects with others to form a multitude of converging unravelings. Each spiral is strengthened through connection with another, each one a fractal and micromovement within the larger collective. There is no leader, only the propeller where the spirals eddy; each spiral crucial and different, but not exceptional. The collective spiral is transgenerational, transdimensional, and transtemporal; bringing together the spirals of the mollusk and the Milky Way. Both mysterious and omnipresent, it is impossible to fully comprehend the spiral intellectually. Let us return to the body, to the center of the spiral.

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