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Introduction

1   This article is about the cinematic presentation of time, arguing that contemporary cinema draws on musical structures to organize images in ways different from earlier eras. As such, we see a new emergent form, different from Gilles Deleuze's two major strands of cinema—the movement-image and the time-image. I term this new emergent form the morph-image. Temporal form in *Spring Breakers* takes on aspects of what Catherine Malabou dubs the plastic—something that both takes form, gives form, and explodes form (Malabou 5). *Spring Breakers*' temporal form *takes* form after the contemporary spatiotemporal organization, *gives* form to the very experience of living in such a spatiotemporal culture, and *explodes* the conventional temporal form of the continuity system as well as the conventional understandings of time. Instead, *Spring Breakers* presents us with a morph-image, an image where time both changes and does not change. Malabou's notion of plasticity stands to reason: that which is plastic molds itself after something and retains that shape. *Spring Breakers* molds itself after a new spatiotemporal culture and so retains these new (sensory) configurations of time. Time increasingly feels like a resource, something to be spent, used, and experienced.

2   Music, sound design, and sonic structures are increasingly important for contemporary audiovisual culture and the resultant spatiotemporal organization. Sound has a more plastic, fluid nature than cinematic images, and much of this plastic nature rubs off on visual practices. Harmony Korine's *Spring Breakers* (2012) is part of this larger audiovisual turn in cinema that Carol Vernallis identifies as "accelerated aesthetics" (*Unruly Media*), Steven Shaviro calls "new articulations of space and time" (*Splitting the Atom*), and Danijela Kulezic-Wilson dubs "the musicality of narrative film" (in the namesake book). With *Spring Breakers*, I am particularly interested in two forms that

dictate its expression. The first is the loop form, used particularly in electronic dance music (EDM). The second is the morph, which is most often used in terms of visual effects but is also a technique used in sound design.[1] Taken together, these two forms indicate ways in which music impacts editing, narrative structure, and overall aesthetic expression. *Spring Breakers* is therefore part of a larger media transformation, a dissolution of the boundaries between cinema, music videos, and electronic dance music alongside sound and music design.

3   *Spring Breakers* tells the story of four college women on spring break who get embroiled in drug crime with the help of the gangster Alien (James Franco). Soon two of the women, Candy (Vanessa Hudgens) and Brit (Ashley Benson), begin to take over Alien's operation and by the end of the film they have essentially become drug lords, although they leave for college at the end of the film, ecstatic with their newfound sense of vitality and purpose, best friends for life. This rather threadbare, conventional narrative is interspersed with unmotivated slow-motion shots of spring breakers on the beach, dancing and drinking while loud EDM, particularly dubstep, plays. The film is also filled with voice-over narration from Faith (Selena Gomez) and the narrative's shift to the last part of the film is a music video style sequence of the women and Alien playing Britney Spears' "Everytime" that transitions into Spears' album version as the women and Alien gun down another drug gang in slow-motion. *Spring Breakers* presents an anarchic story that trades on ideas of transgression of the commodity form of spring break, young lust and restlessness, all of which is the least interesting aspect of the film, due to its trading in stereotypes and cliches.

4   Music is integral to *Spring Breakers*' form. Both its narrative and its visual style follow musical forms, rather than the reverse. While sound has often been regarded as the great continuity maker in narrative cinema (Donnelly 202), the role of sound is different in *Spring Breakers*. Scenes repeat without being coded as flashbacks, dialog is repeated without a clear anchor to when this dialog occurs for the first time, and scenes pop up without clear narrative motivation. However, as Danijela Kulezic-Wilson has shown, *Spring Breakers* employs asynchronous sound and musicalized speech patterns to produce a coherence similar to the loop-based structure of electronica ("Musically Conceived Sound Design," 435). The film's coherence is based on repetition and temporal distention, what I call a morph-like audiovisual figure.

5   I believe this audiovisual morph to be a new expression of time, following Gilles Deleuze's two ways that cinema presents time: the movement-image and the time-image, established in his two books on cinema, *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2* (both Bloomsbury 2013, originally 1983 and 1985, respectively). For Deleuze, the classical cinema of the movement-image presents time indirectly, through action and the juxtaposition of one image to the next (*Cinema 1*, 37). For the time-image, "a cinema of seeing replaces action" (*Cinema 2*, 26), time is presented directly as a "pure optical and sound situation" (*Cinema 2*, 57). This new way of presenting time—the morph-image—is more entwined with sound than Deleuze's two prior images. The morph-image is distinguished by pleats of time: past, present, and future emerging together, organized in *Spring Breakers* through sound's multi-temporality. Deleuze accepts that past, present, and future are always intertwined: "[t]here is no present which is not haunted by a past and a future" (*Cinema 2*, 54). However, while the time-image is tightly bound up with the past through its recollection-images, neither of his cinema books presents an explanation for how the future impacts the present. The morph-image is an attempt at remedying this

problem. This is also why I introduce the term "pleats," a term not used by Deleuze but by Michel Serres instead to articulate the plurality of time. Time is not linear or even non-linear but a tangle of knotted strands that touch upon and impact each other. Such pleating is similar to the musical structures of the dubstep that suffuses *Spring Breakers.* Pleating here means that temporalities intertwine and interlace with each other. Not one time but multiple temporalities that overlap, interact, amplify, and decrease each other.

6   Repetition, looping, and anticipating time are ways of extending that sublime lacuna that is college spring break. The film's audiovisual form hinges on a temporal morph of opening up and stretching a time that is clearly demarcated (two weeks of spring break). There is a peculiar vacillation between the swelling and exhaustion of affect: the girls in the film's story have the time of their lives, while at the same time knowing that this time must end. As such, *Spring Breakers* exploits an incommensurability: the desire for more time that can only be gained by repeating what time we already have. Time is "weaponized," as Nina Power argues, but paradoxically weaponized simultaneously as a control mechanism and as an exuberant liberation (no page). As a control mechanism, possible futures may be closed off, while as liberation, possible futures may be opened up. What matters, for Power, is the ability to open up or close off these possible futures. Weaponized time, therefore, shows time as a resource but also as power. Time renders sensation, producing both lines of flight and lines of articulation of the experience that we undergo. Time and experience are the same because it is through time that change and becoming are made manifest.

7   This weaponization of time comes from the two main temporal forms: looping and pleating. I will first examine how looping functions as a sonic structure that supersedes the narrative structure of the film. Secondly, I will analyze how the EDM loop structure produces plural temporalities that do not distinguish between past, present, and future. Instead, time works only as a force, an intensity of experience that is modulated.

Sonic Structures

8   *Spring Breakers*' sonic structure comes not just from its musical score but also from the way other sound aspects, such as dialog, are repeated and looped. While the film has a distinct narrative structure, there are other modes of time in it as well, modes that challenge and often supersede the conventional narrative structure of mainstream cinema. These modes are identifiable as uniquely embellished time patterns, temporal figures that are adapted from electronic dance music. As Robin James has shown, EDM (electronic dance music) "*embellishes time patterns* (rhythms) over pitch relationships (melody)" (James 40, emphasis in the original). Harmony Korine explicitly wanted to emulate EDM in *Spring Breakers*, producing what he calls a more fluid narrative (McClanahan no page). Korine produces a fluid narrative by repeating and looping events and snippets of dialog to distort and destabilize temporal progression. There is both a sense of repetition and anticipation in these snippets of dialog.

9   The clearest example is placed at the end of the film, when Brit and Candy decide that they should confront Archie (Gucci Mane) and keep asking Alien if he is scared. This dialog exchange is looped over and over as asynchronous sound in several different sequences. This is an example of what Kulezic-Wilson means when she argues that

Spring Breakers produces a rhyming musical effect out of asynchronous dialog ("Musically Conceived Sound Design" 434). As the sentences are repeated, again and again, they are emptied of narrative meaning, since they provide no new narrative information. Instead, they become an embellished time pattern of an insistent rhythm, a decision that Alien must make but does not want to make. The looping builds intensity slowly, rhythmically expressing Alien's trepidation. Again and again, more and more, is he scared, will he do it? Is he scared, will he do it?

10   There are two things to consider here. The first is how we can use musical terminology to usefully describe narrative and visual forms. That is to say, does it make sense to say that *Spring Breakers* is structured "like" EDM? The second thing to consider is the impact of this media transformation, this shift from narrative to sonic organization. Regarding the first point, we can follow Lars Elleström's distinction between "mediation" and "representation." For Elleström, mediation is "the process of a technical medium realizing presemiotic (potentially meaningful) *sensory configurations"* (14, emphasis in the original). These sensory configurations may then be repeated in a different medium, in a process that Bolter and Grusin term "remediation" (Bolter and Grusin 53). Bolter and Grusin argue that the logic of remediation is *productive*, that it (re)produces a feeling in the perceiving subject (53). Combining Elleström's argument with Bolter and Grusin's is helpful because it underscores the sensory reconfiguration of shifting between media. *Spring Breakers* need not narratively or visually *resemble* EDM in order to *feel* like EDM. As long as the sensory configurations of *Spring Breakers* feel like EDM, the film can be regarded as an instance of remediation, and as productive of the sensory logic of EDM. Remediation is thus as much a matter of sensory experience as it is a formal feature.

11   Remediation as sensory experience is useful for me, due to the way that the repeated dialog produces intensity in the scene I just discussed, as well as several others. The intensity of repeating the dialog is therefore a time pattern that James identifies as loops (James 55). These loops build intensity and reduce linear narrative development, producing a sense of heading nowhere. Yet this heading nowhere should still be considered as an affirmative, a clear refusal to head in the direction prescribed for the girls (college, career, family, etc.). This looping structure as a cultural refusal is what connects EDM, *Spring Breakers*, and the accusations of Korine trading in cultural appropriation, since "Afro-diasporic musics tend to foreground repetition" as a form of cultural resistance (James 55). Repetition, in this case the loop, is the dominant form, even the dominant narrative form, of *Spring Breakers*, and exactly what produces the fluid narrative that Korine argued for. The main impact of this media transformation, the relationship between EDM and *Spring Breakers* comes in the dissolution of linear narrative and the sensorial configurations of EDM.

12   This corresponds to what Elleström would term "transmediation" of one sensory configuration (the sonic form of EDM) into a different medium (the sonified form of *Spring Breakers*) (12). This media transformation is a large part of the cinematic shift towards a post-cinema that organizes image and narrative according to a different logic. There are experiential overlaps in the kind of stretched return that dubstep and *Spring Breakers* employ; tongue-in-cheek, we might argue that both EDM and *Spring Breakers* express an endless return rather than the eternal return identified by Deleuze, following Nietzsche in *Difference and Repetition* (41 and following). Everything returns in

Spring Breakers but nothing ever really changes. The sensory experience is one of a return building intensity but not variation.

13   All music depends on repetition but as James points out, dubstep foregrounds repetition through the loop form (James 54). Such loops are also foregrounded in *Spring Breakers* in its breaking of continuity conventions. The media transformation established in EDM is remediated into film, where the loop punctures both the movement-image and the time-image. Time is not expressed indirectly through movement, because the movement loops, and time is not expressed directly through contemplation either, because the loops interrupt this contemplation. Instead, time multiplies as the same events loop over each other and replay without variation.

14   The expression "without variation" should be carefully assessed, though. Many of the events are replayed replications: the same dialog, the same shot; not a different performance, not a different take. In this way, the events are the same. However, when events are replayed they do change their expressiveness for the viewer. Seeing the same event again in a different position within the plot changes that same event's expressive relation to the events surrounding it. Time proliferates but also remains the same. It is in this way that *Spring Breakers* expresses time both as proliferation and unchanging variation. Time is asymmetrical but in an unexpected way—the future weighs heavier than the past; fuller than what happened before the present, the future fills up with events that have not yet taken place but have begun to repeat.

15   There is another sensory configuration that follows the loop form in the final segment of *Spring Breakers*. The constant repetition of dialog builds tension into a soar, which culminates in the final shoot-out. A soar in EDM is defined by Robin James as "a combination of timbral modification and rhythmic intensification that builds tension up to a crisis point." (James 29). This is exactly what the repeated asynchronous dialog motif does in *Spring Breakers*—by looping the dialog over multiple different scenes, the stakes grow higher in anticipation of release. This intensification of dialog also reveals the way that EDM privileges time patterns over melody. With the dialog repeating exactly, the same pitch relationship is simply reproduced over and over. This empties out the sensuality of the voices as significant in themselves. Rather than shifting, contrasting, and complimentary pitch relations, the relation is built from the temporal pattern of looping that builds to an anticipatory soar.

16   In this respect, *Spring Breakers* borrows a temporal logic from music rather than conventional narrative patterning to build affective anticipation. In dubstep a soar is often followed by a drop, "a big 'hit' or 'climax' of loud, highly (often 'wobbly') bass and sub-bass synths, [that] intensifies 'down'" (James 36). *Spring Breakers* has a parallel effect of intensifying the narrative tension of the soar "down" by preempting the outcome of the shoot-out at Archie's house. As we see Candy, Brit, and Alien sail towards Archie, the sun is setting. Then we cut to Candy and Brit at a convenience store at night, calling their mothers over the phone to tell them how amazing spring break has been. In other words, since the phone call scene takes place at night it must be *after* the shoot-out, thus showing us that Candy and Brit will survive, and probably even be successful.[2]

17   James likens the drop to the inertia of your body being stopped by the seat belt (James 2015, 36). Likewise, we expect *Spring Breakers* to build into a peak but it turns out to collapse into a valley. The climactic shoot-out bottoms out and even though it is still shown, it is filmed in slow-motion with asynchronous sound—this time of Faith's phone

call to her grandmother, an event that happened much earlier in the film but that comes back now as a kind of post-ironic comment on the shoot-out itself, and also as a narrative reverberation, a repetition. This soar-drop structure that builds tension only to preempt it also explains why Daniel Barrow finds the time of *Spring Breakers* to be a lacuna (Barrow no page). Although there is progression in the film, there is no real change. Unlike conventional Hollywood films, the protagonists do not undergo a change; they remain inside their stereotypes. Good girl Faith does not go bad but goes home, while bad girls Brit and Candy do not learn a life lesson. There is a scene at the beginning of the film, where Faith's fellow churchgoers warn her against Candy and Brit saying they are dangerous. Candy and Brit also "break bad" before ever going to spring break or meeting Alien, since they rob the Chicken Shack restaurant.

18   This is change without change, a kind of temporal morphing and looping that suggests movement but without any real direction. Such forms of time are referred to as multi-temporal in music (Gordon 125). There are two tempos in *Spring Breakers*—one is the sonic structure and the other is the narrative structure. These two tempos do not preclude each other but work in concert to produce an unusual and distinctive relation between music, sound, and cinema. Again, as Barrow points out, this is why many film critics saw *Spring Breakers* as akin to a music video: sound is what structures the image patterns as much as any narrative pattern does. Sound often takes precedence over conventional narrative patterns, such as the looping build to a soar and then drop.

19   The loop form of *Spring Breakers* that adds on soars and drops presents a peculiar version of time, a version that is best understood through the axiom that Deleuze expresses with Guattari: "It is the difference that is rhythmic, not the repetition, which nevertheless produces it: productive repetition has nothing to do with reproductive meter." (*A Thousand Plateaus* 314). As is so often the case with Deleuze and Guattari, their writing works aphoristically and so comes off as quite dense. To unpack it, we must draw a distinction between productive repetition and reproductive meter. For Deleuze and Guattari, meter is a striated space of sameness returning over and over again. For this reason, meter is empty repetition because it is "repetition of the identical, which is what occurs in the notion of units of time being identical to one another in the measure of time." (Hulse 28). Meter is uninteresting for Deleuze and Guattari because there is no difference, and so no real change, and so time does not actually change in meter.

20   Rhythm, on the other hand, is what introduces difference: rhythm is the in-between, produced in the interaction between different manifestations of life (Abel 101). Rhythms produce time, and this time is almost always multi-temporal. There is a rhythm in *Spring Breakers*, we can say, between the sonic structuring and the narrative structuring. We can even rephrase Korine's interest in fluid narrative as a desire to move beyond the "meter" of conventional narrative structures because these conventional forms are empty repetitions. Real repetition manifests *between* various forms, in this case between cinema and EDM, "which always involves inequalities and selection made by intensive differences and accents." (Hulse 28). Time emerges from rhythm but is never singular. There are always plural times at work.

21   To understand these multi-temporalities emerging from the rhythmic interaction of sonic structures, visual structures, and narrative structures, it is useful to turn to Deleuze's discussion of the three syntheses of time, which he presents in *Difference and Repetition*. The first synthesis of time, that of the present or *Chronos* is where the past

and future become dimensions of the present. This occurs often in repetitive actions and habits, such as biking. Every step on the pedal is a little different from the previous one and the next one, yet we can anticipate the next step and remember the previous step as mostly the same. This conception of time as ever-expanding presents comes closest to the notion of meter, of repetition as identical. The second synthesis of time is that of memory or *Aion*. Here, the past works on our present rather than being a dimension of the present, "no longer a synthesis of a particular pattern from the past in the present, but rather a dimension of an ongoing synthesis of all of the past in the past." (Williams 65). That is to say, the past's relation to us changes depending on how the past contracts in the present. The past is not static but rather a process of intensities, essentially one form of rhythm.

22   Things get more complicated with the third synthesis, which is that of futurity, defined by Deleuze as "the future is that which is repeated." (*Difference and Repetition* 94). This is so because the future is always different, so what returns is that difference, what Deleuze calls pure difference. All potentialities, possibilities, and probabilities have not yet taken form and so remain virtual until they pass into the present in a particular form. For this reason, as James Williams has noted, the future is static for Deleuze, "because its sole characteristic of order always remains the same, the before and after of each cut always remain" (Williams 89). It is not that the future is unchangeable or determined, it is that the relation of "before" and "after" is always what organizes it, and so it never changes. This cut is the new, a dislodging of time as human-oriented and oriented instead towards the disruption of the same into the production of novelty. However, this synthesis of time is completely absent in Deleuze's two cinema books, where the future is only a dimension of past memory. This has the unfortunate effect of making time symmetrical. In this way, the static-ness of the future (contingent on the cut between before and after) becomes too literal as the present becomes only cut between past and future. Deleuze's temporal expression is then only a linear trajectory that might not have a teleological end in sight but is oddly singular.

23   *Spring Breakers* challenge and unsettle this singular view of time through the film's sonic loop structure. In our lives and everyday experiences, we cannot experience the future before it occurs by passing into the present. But, as Mark Abel puts it, cinema "is an art form that can present a non-homogeneous time capable of fluctuation and reversal, especially if, like modernist literature, it avoids the use of teleological narrative as its organising principle." (Abel 98). As I have already shown, this is precisely how *Spring Breakers* functions, particularly through its rhythmic integration of the sonic forms of loops, soars and drops. Rather than *Aion* and *Chronos*, we need to find a way of understanding time as multi-temporal. Cinema's ability to show non-human, non-homogenous time is what enables cinema to be liberating, to produce exuberance. This recognition also reveals the separation of time experienced by Candy and Brit and the time experienced by us as viewers.

Pleats of Time

24   The temporal distortion in *Spring Breakers* elucidates my idea of a new expression of time. The scene when the four women are arrested is filled with doubled-back temporal rhythms: past, present, and future mixing oddly together in a dream-like way. The time we are presented with is fluid, looping over and anticipating future events. Dominated

by a Skrillex dubstep track, the four women party with a bunch of other spring breakers in a hotel room. There are unmotivated cuts to the spring breakers on the beach, certainly included for mood but also for repetition and sonic structuring. There are also shots of the hotel room party that emulate a black and white camcorder, all stripes and grainy footage. We see shots of the four women in distorted, pixelating color images that morph and shift for no apparent reason. Everything is overload and sensory excess, both visually and sonically.[3]

25   Temporally, there is a sudden cut to the women in police cars at dusk, cutting back to the party, to the beach, to the women outside a cop car in handcuffs, to the police descending on the hotel room, arresting the partygoers, including the girls, cutting to the partying again, before the familiar cock and release of a gun goes off and we switch scenes to inside the jail. As is evident, time is out of joint with no emphasis on tension, curiosity, or any other conventional narrative suspense. Instead, the narration does not so much disperse information as distributes energy and force. Later events come before earlier ones and causality is disrupted because this is not a matter of producing a surprise twist—the arrest is too much part of the larger rhythm being established. Time here feels as if it stutters and loops around itself, repeating things that have not yet happened.

26   Robin James points out that dubstep uses digital tools to manipulate sound color through the use of a delay machine, essentially deregulating sound (James 41). In much the same way, *Spring Breakers* deregulates time by unmooring it from stable, causal relations within the continuity system. The time of *Spring Breakers* is not a singular trajectory but what Michel Serres refers to as a mixture of "stopping points, ruptures, deep wells, chimneys of thunderous acceleration, rendings, gaps." (Serres and Latour 57). Serres' conception of time as plural is affiliated with Deleuze's argument that every present folds past and future into it. However, the strength of Serres' conception is that there is not merely one strand of time. The problem faced by Deleuze and overcome by Serres is the problem of the virtual as emerging from several past actualities (following Bergson). Not only are there many pasts at work in the present, but there is also a percolating, a passing and not-passing of time; time does not flow but is in flux (Serres *Branches*122-23). Time in *Spring Breakers* is turbulent but it is also amorphous, refusing to separate past, present, and future as anything other than intensities. This is not a matter of time travel but rather an instance of time being immanent, emerging within a process. The girls do not travel back and forth in time but move linearly according to time's arrow. The experience of watching *Spring Breakers*, however, is nothing like the girls' experience of time. Rather, time for the viewer is restructured: looped and pleated. Events slide back and forth with no clear temporal location. In fact, *Spring Breakers* insists that we do not spatialize time but think about temporalities as intensities. Time is multi-temporal, made up of what Serres has termed "pleats of time" (Serres 60). Past, present, and future are modulated "passages of nature" in the same way that EDM modulates time through rhythmic stutters (James 39). Time in EDM is thus the prime example we have of how time actually works—time stutters.

27   Time in *Spring Breakers* is expressed musically, remediating EDM as its primary temporal organization. As EDM favors rhythm over pitch, *Spring Breakers* favors repetition and preemption over narrative momentum. Seeing the girls arrested at the party before we have seen the police show up de-emphasizes narrative tension, clarity, and suspense. Seeing the girls call their mothers after the shoot-out before we have

seen the shoot-out, de-emphasizes the tension of the shoot-out. Instead, the narrative climax turns into a languid, lazy, almost dream-like spectacle that is beautiful but not tense. This beauty over tension is emphasized by the sequence being in slow-motion. Let the sound-images wash over you and enjoy their scintillating richness.

28   Two things are of note here: the composited nature of *Spring Breakers*' editing and the resulting concept of time that emerges. *Spring Breakers*' editing style clearly belongs to what Shaviro has dubbed "post-continuity" in the namesake article. Continuity is no longer necessary, and images may "just pop up, without any discernible motivation or point of view" (Shaviro *Post-Cinematic Affect* 71). The continuous inserts of spring breakers partying on the beach, where we never see the girls, is one example of this. This is compositing, where sounds and images are "composited together into new configurations," (*Post-Cinematic Affect* 68). Loops, soars, and drops: new configurations that do not belong within a continuity system but do belong in EDM. In other words, *Spring Breakers*' composited post-continuity editing style follows a music logic and not a narrative logic. What this means is that events in *Spring Breakers* dissolve their linear causality and become modules. Time becomes modular because events are dislodged from a given, fixed position in a linear, causal sequence.

29   Modular time has been discussed in relation to non-chronological narratives by Allan Cameron, a feature he associates with a database aesthetic and narrative complexity, and by Sean Cubitt, who associates the modular with neo-baroque Hollywood (Cameron 3; Cubitt 238). Despite different conceptions of the modular, Cubitt and Cameron largely agree that modular films do not really present time but are either strongly associated with determinism (Cameron, 48) or more "architectural than temporal." (Cubitt 238). *Spring Breakers*, then, is modular in the sense of modular compositing. Events may be re-arranged like samples or other chunks of sound in EDM. James makes it a point that composited media "lack the linear temporality—i.e., the sense of 'before' and 'after'—that makes relations of cause and effect possible" (James 42). The EDM-structured editing style of *Spring Breakers* disrupts and de-emphasizes linear causality and narrative coherence. Borrowing from James' neoliberal critique, *Spring Breakers*' EDM-structured, composited editing rhythm is *deregulated* time (James 42). There is no real sense that events follow other events logically; most events simply succeed one another without any temporal coherence. In other words, time's stutter loosens past, present, and future relations and makes any connections tenuous and plural.

30   This structure is not entirely new; *Spring Breakers* is reminiscent of what Lev Manovich described as the database form, where "the database represents the world as a list of items, and it refuses to order this list," whereas a narrative "creates a cause-and-effect trajectory of seemingly unordered items (events)." (Manovich 225). However, *Spring Breakers* does have an order to the sequence of events; they are just not causally connected. Instead, the events are structured as music, with repetitions that provide a contiguous, rhythmic form of coherence, not a narrative coherence. While algorithms are what order events in Manovich's database example, sonic, rhythmic structures are what order events in *Spring Breakers*. A different form of convergence is less oriented towards databases and algorithms and more oriented toward rhythms and loops. So, Manovich helps us see that new media builds different types of structures, one of which is the database but another is the loop. The loop differs from the database form through its repetition and so its amplification of events.

31   In either case, however, we see a dislodging of time through new technological affordances. Non-linear editing tools are part of this temporal shifting, both for music and films. This remediation of a different technological logic, the integration of different sensory configurations begs the question of how to address time in these instances. As Serres argues, time pleats. Whitehead notes that "every event extends over other events and every event is extended over by other events." (Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature* 31). Events have duration but no event has only one duration. Every event, rather, consists of multiple durations, our experience of time only emerges from "their temporal relations" (Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature* 28). Our experience of time in *Spring Breakers* emerges from the temporal relations of looping events, the remediation of EDM-based rhythms, preemptions, and flashforwards.

32   This non-linear experience of time also questions one major issue—the extent to which causality is experienced. In *Spring Breakers* we experience time in reverse, seeing the effect before we see the cause. This may seem like a paradox but again, we must keep in mind that there is a difference between technologically mediated time and the everyday experience of time. Barker maintains that this paradox is resolved when we pay attention to "the causal efficacy of technology—namely, how digital processes may produce new experiences of time." (Barker 9). Causal efficacy is Whitehead's term for the "actual presences, whose exact relationships in the external world are shrouded." (Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* 116). That is to say that we perceive in the mode of causal efficacy when sensations contribute to our experience without us being experientially aware of these sensations.

33   While we are certainly aware of experiencing the plot of the film, we cannot be directly aware of the digital processes of digital, non-linear, composited, editing that has produced the film. The composited, non-linear rhythms of *Spring Breakers* may not be immediately recognizable as EDM stutters and loops, but nonetheless transmit certain intensities that produce an experience of composite time. No clear before and after, but a cause that we at first extrapolate from its effect, a preempted future that empties out the present and suggests that the present is a dimension of the future.

Weaponized Time

34   What is at stake here is the status of the future, the way that the present consists of the conditions out of which a specific future will emerge (Barker 48). The future, as Whitehead says, "lives actively in its antecedent world" (Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* 192). The immediate future emerges through anticipation. For my purposes here, *Spring Breakers* consistently anticipates later events through flashforwards but also through a recognizable story structure that is nonetheless de-emphasized. The other aspect of this future emergence is the peculiar lacuna that Barrow noted—even though time progresses, nothing really changes in *Spring Breakers*. All the four women constantly note what an amazing time they have, yet the shots of them partying during spring break look much the same as the partying back on campus. Saturated in blue and red neon light, the soundtrack is what distinguishes campus life from spring break. Everything else stands still, and even spring break is constructed through temporal loops of repeated actions.

35   Nina Power has argued that time can be weaponized by making people wait or take away any notion of a viable future (Power, no page). The lack of change we find in

Spring Breakers is, as Barrow notes, an example of such future-less time, a time where the future is conditioned by the present and there is no real outside from where a transformation may occur. This is the kind of change without change that Jeffrey Nealon also shows (although indirectly) in his argument about contemporary society being intensive rather than expansive; there is no real authenticity of self any longer, merely the "intensive retooling of the self." (Nealon 32). Spring break is that intensive retooling—by the women's own admission, this is the time of their life, everything is more vibrant, more saturated, more *intense* than anything else.

36   Yet this intensity also connects to the film's deployment of time as amorphous, something that is not simply temporal continuation but also intensity in itself. Temporal continuation speaks to the extensiveness of time and is associated with the measurement of time. *Spring Breakers* differs; by borrowing a temporal logic from music, the film presents a new image of time based on the pleating of experience. The looping of time in *Spring Breakers* comes precisely from its musical form—and this is a musical form, not simply an analogy or metaphorical borrowing of terms. Such sonic structuring sets the image free in new ways and moves us towards a new image of time, one beyond the movement-image or the time-image.

37   The cinematic remediation of EDM produces a new synthesis of time; a synthesis where the present becomes a dimension of the future. Effects precede causes and while this is not something we can generally experience ourselves in everyday life, cinema produces new experiences of time. This is why the temporalities of *Spring Breakers* can also be regarded as liberating, new lines of flight away from the staid and preexisting forms of time. While the girls experience a lacuna of time, a return to what they attempted to get away from, the experience of watching the film is radically different and opens up new experiences. We are exposed to how the future is already present; not in a determined manner but through the intensities of remediated EDM.

38   Although *Spring Breakers* does not show us the actual future (how could it?) its composited and pleated presentation of time that renders causality ineffective nevertheless articulates how the future constantly exists in a tension between a closing off and an opening up. Although EDM is not a privileged site of the future, it is its stuttering temporal expression that, once integrated with cinema, allows this tension to be experienced. This tension also does not express the future as pure difference but rather as a struggle of actualization of plural strands; it is this struggle between and among actualizations that comprises the future.

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NOTES

1. For more on the visual morph especially, see Sobchack (*Meta Morphing*)

2. There is a whole other discussion here about the film's soar structure and resilience that I leave out. But Candy and Brit perform resilience by making the best of a bad situation: they get arrested for vandalism and turn that into a successful criminal mini career that leads to an epiphany.

3. This is clearly an example of post-continuity editing as defined by Steven Shaviro in "Post-Continuity: An Introduction" (2016).

ABSTRACTS

This article is about the cinematic presentation of time, arguing that contemporary cinema increasingly draws on musical structures to organize images. Drawing on a Deleuzian conception of time in cinema, I propose and develop the idea of a morph-image. In the case of *Spring Breakers*, this musical structure is that of electronic dance music, that intensifies and amplifies experience through two primary temporal forms: looping and pleating. Time repeats and returns, brushing against itself. In so doing, *Spring Breakers'* musical form expresses the tension between a closed or open future, what Nina Power has called the "weaponization of time."

Cet article porte sur la représentation du temps au cinéma. Il avance que le cinéma contemporain s'appuie de plus en plus sur des structures musicales pour organiser les images. Puisant dans une conception deleuzienne du temps au cinéma, je propose et développe l'idée de morph-image. Dans le cas de Spring Breakers, cette structure musicale est celle de la musique de danse électronique, qui intensifie et amplifie l'expérience par le biais de deux formes temporelles principales : le retour en boucle – *looping*, et le tressage – *pleating.* Le temps se répète et revient sur lui-même. Ainsi, la forme de *Spring Breakers*, inspirée de la musique, exprime la tension entre un futur fermé ou ouvert, ce que Nina Power a appelé le « pouvoir offensif du temps ».

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