

### **Temporal Looping and Morphing in *Spring Breakers***

With the advent of new, digital modes of image production, cinematic forms have mutated and morphed into a much broader range of affordances than previously possible and permissible. As Steven Shaviro has pointed out, these new affordances have allowed for new articulations of sound and vision (Shaviro “Splitting the Atom”). Harmony Korine’s *Spring Breakers* is one cinematic example of how these audiovisual articulations become increasingly fluid. The movie’s narrative structure borrows the drawn out rhythm and temporal stretching and remixing found music videos and the dubstep music, or EDM more generally, that dominates the movie’s soundtrack. The same events reappear in slightly different order, scenes loop and distend in a dream-like way, and much of the movie feels like a lacuna, as Daniel Barrow has pointed out (“Girls Go Wild in the Social Factory”).

*Spring Breakers* is part of a larger audiovisual turn in cinema that Carol Vernallis has identified (Vernallis, *Unruly Media*). While sound has often been regarded as the great continuity maker in cinema (Donnelly *Occult Aesthetics* 202), the role of sound is different in *Spring Breakers*. The movie is incredibly sound-dependent: with the narrative’s mercurial looping, underdetermined narrative beats, and constant repetitions, sound is what produces coherence. However, as Danijela Kulezic-Wilson has shown, *Spring Breakers* employs asynchronous sound and musicalized speech patterns to produce a coherence that is based on the loop-based structure of electronica (Danijela Kulezic-Wilson “Musically Conceived Sound Design”). While the movie does have a linear narrative progression, the coherence is based on repetition and temporal distention.

In other words, *Spring Breakers* exists in a symbiotic relationship with music, employs a musical form as its dominant structure (dubstep), and so produces a new image of

time for contemporary audiovisual culture. This image is a peculiar vacillation between the swelling and exhaustion of affect; the girls in the movie's story have the time of their lives, while at the same time knowing that this time must end. Repetition, looping, and remixing time are ways of extending that sublime lacuna that spring break is. The movie's symbiotic form hinges on a temporal morph of opening up and stretching a time that is clearly demarcated. As such, *Spring Breakers* exploits an incommensurability: we desire more time but can only gain more time by repeating what we have. Time is weaponized, as Nina Power argues (Power "The Pessimism of Time") but paradoxically as both a control mechanism and as an exuberant liberation simultaneously.

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### **Bio**

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Recent books include *Drone Age Cinema: Action Film and Sensory Assault* (I.B.Tauris 2016), and articles on film and affect: “Mediating Potency and Fear: Action Movies’ Affect” in *Cultural Studies* 32(1), 2018, and “Pain and the Cinesthetic Subject in *Black Swan*” in *Screen Bodies* 1(2), 2017.