

## Queer, plastic residues

Dalton, Benjamin

DOI:

[10.1080/09639489.2022.2047624](https://doi.org/10.1080/09639489.2022.2047624)

License:

Creative Commons: Attribution (CC BY)

*Document Version*

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Citation for published version (Harvard):*

Dalton, B 2022, 'Queer, plastic residues: biological mutability and queer resistance in Robin Campillo's *120 BPM* (2017) and the work of Catherine Malabou', *Modern and Contemporary France*, vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 193-208.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09639489.2022.2047624>

[Link to publication on Research at Birmingham portal](#)

### General rights

Unless a licence is specified above, all rights (including copyright and moral rights) in this document are retained by the authors and/or the copyright holders. The express permission of the copyright holder must be obtained for any use of this material other than for purposes permitted by law.

- Users may freely distribute the URL that is used to identify this publication.
- Users may download and/or print one copy of the publication from the University of Birmingham research portal for the purpose of private study or non-commercial research.
- User may use extracts from the document in line with the concept of 'fair dealing' under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (?)
- Users may not further distribute the material nor use it for the purposes of commercial gain.

Where a licence is displayed above, please note the terms and conditions of the licence govern your use of this document.

When citing, please reference the published version.

### Take down policy

While the University of Birmingham exercises care and attention in making items available there are rare occasions when an item has been uploaded in error or has been deemed to be commercially or otherwise sensitive.

If you believe that this is the case for this document, please contact [UBIRA@lists.bham.ac.uk](mailto:UBIRA@lists.bham.ac.uk) providing details and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate.



## Queer, plastic residues: biological mutability and queer resistance in Robin Campillo's *120 BPM* (2017) and the work of Catherine Malabou

Benjamin Dalton

To cite this article: Benjamin Dalton (2022): Queer, plastic residues: biological mutability and queer resistance in Robin Campillo's *120 BPM* (2017) and the work of Catherine Malabou, *Modern & Contemporary France*, DOI: [10.1080/09639489.2022.2047624](https://doi.org/10.1080/09639489.2022.2047624)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09639489.2022.2047624>



© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 31 Mar 2022.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 128



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

# Queer, plastic residues: biological mutability and queer resistance in Robin Campillo's *120 BPM* (2017) and the work of Catherine Malabou

Benjamin Dalton 

Department of Modern Languages, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK

## ABSTRACT

This article analyses how Robin Campillo's cinema explores queer identity and queer political resistance through its focus on the mutability and resilience of (micro)biological life, arguing that this focus echoes a turn to the biological in recent French philosophy and queer thought, in particular in the work of Catherine Malabou. Whilst *120 BPM* closely follows the human narratives of the AIDS pandemic, the film also foregrounds biological processes at work in the bodies of those with the virus. In one sequence, we see the ACT UP activists dancing together in a nightclub; the camera gradually loses focus of the human forms and zooms in on a microbiological landscape of cells as they move, transform and interact. Placing the cells within the context of the nightclub, Campillo's camera avoids a diagnostic or pathologizing gaze upon (micro)biological life, instead foregrounding its intrinsic plasticity and resistance. I read Campillo's biological gaze in dialogue with Malabou's philosophy of the *plasticity* of biological life. Malabou's elaboration of the dual capacities of biological plasticity for mutability and resistance, I argue, is also at work within Campillo's cinematographic exploration of queer political formation through corporeal, micro-biological plasticity.

## RÉSUMÉ

Cet article analyse la façon dont le cinéma de Robin Campillo explore l'identité queer ainsi que la résistance politique queer en se focalisant sur la mutabilité et la résilience de la vie (micro) biologique. Nous argumenterons que cette attention fait écho à un mouvement vers la biologie dans les discours philosophiques français et la pensée queer récents, en particulier dans l'œuvre philosophique de Catherine Malabou. Bien que *120 BPM* suive de près les récits humains de l'épidémie de sida, le film met également en avant les processus biologiques à l'œuvre dans les corps des personnes atteintes du virus. Dans une séquence, nous observons les militants du groupe ACT UP danser ensemble dans une boîte de nuit. Progressivement, la caméra perd de vue les formes des êtres humains, et zoome sur un paysage microbiologique de cellules qui se meuvent, se transforment et interagissent. La caméra de

**CONTACT** Benjamin Dalton  [b.dalton@bham.ac.uk](mailto:b.dalton@bham.ac.uk)  Department of Modern Languages, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT, UK.

Dedicated to my mom, Rosie Dalton (1964-2019), who believed unfalteringly in the body as a site of transformation and resistance.

© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Campillo situe les cellules dans le contexte de la boîte de nuit, ce qui évite de porter un regard diagnostique ou pathologique sur la vie (micro)biologique. Bien au contraire, la caméra de Campillo met en valeur sa plasticité et sa résistance intrinsèques. Je fais l'analyse du regard biologique de Campillo en le mettant en dialogue avec la philosophie de Malabou sur la plasticité de la vie biologique. L'élaboration par Malabou de la mutabilité et de la résistance de la plasticité biologique est également à l'œuvre dans l'exploration cinématographique de Campillo concernant la formation politique queer à travers la plasticité corporelle et microbiologique.

## Introduction

In following the HIV/AIDS activist group ACT UP in *120 Battements par minute* (2017), Robin Campillo's lens often relaxes its macroscopic focus on the film's human protagonists, zooming in instead on (micro)biological landscapes and cellular processes. At certain points, the camera moves beneath the surface of the human body, focusing on individual cells as they float and mutate within bloodstreams, or tracing fluids and other particles in movement. At other moments, the camera shifts its attention to other non-human life forms or material processes, focusing on plant life, or on the activity of dust particles in the air. In one particular scene, the activists dance in a nightclub following a protest: the dancing shapes of the human bodies dissolve into the forms of cells in close-up, undulating amid other particles and fluids.<sup>1</sup> This article examines Campillo's engagement with biological and micro-biological processes in his exploration of the HIV/AIDS activism of ACT UP in *120 BPM*. Indeed, writing on *120 BPM* has highlighted the singularity of the film's visualization of the microbiological landscape of HIV within the context of French AIDS cinema more broadly, such as Chase Ledin's argument that the CGI imagery of cellular processes retroactively merges historical depictions of the AIDS crisis with 'a fantasy of future intervention' (Ledin 2021, 8). My own argument is that the film's cinematographic visualization of biological and micro-biological processes is central to its conceptualization of queer political resistance and freedom. Further, I want to underline how Campillo's turn to (micro)biology as a resource for rethinking modes of queer resistance and freedom is significant in that it echoes approaches to biology and biomedical science in recent French philosophy, and feminist and queer theory, and in particular in the work of the contemporary French thinker Catherine Malabou surrounding the concept of *plasticity*.<sup>2</sup> Here, biology emerges as no longer an essentialist or essentializing doctrine, but as a resource for approaching and witnessing the capacity of living organisms for transformation, pleasure, and resistance.

Bringing *120 BPM* into dialogue with Malabou's work on biological mutability and bodily plasticity, this article suggests that Malabou's central concept of plasticity names a capacity for socio-political transformation and resistance which, rooted in the innate mutability and vulnerability of organic life, resonates strongly with *120 BPM*'s approach to the (micro)biological at play within the queer and the political. Such an approach also undertakes to demonstrate how Campillo's queer politics and aesthetics in *120 BPM* might extend conceptions of queerness and queer politics within Malabou's approach to biology. Firstly, I will turn to Malabou's concept of plasticity, exploring plasticity's import

for queer theory and politics. In order to do this, I will bring out two particular elements of the concept that resonate with Campillo's cinematographic queer politics: *mutability* (both biological and socio-political), and the intrinsic relation of this mutability to the capacity for *resistance*. My overarching argument is that Campillo and Malabou, in different ways, turn to biology in order to think bodies that are both highly transformable and vulnerable, but at the same time capable of potent political resistance and innovation precisely because of this transformability and vulnerability. This opens new avenues for conceptualizing the relation of the biological materiality of the body to queer activism and politics in *120 BPM's* exploration of the HIV/AIDS crisis, and for rethinking the potential of the (neuro)plastic body for queer thought and film more broadly.<sup>3</sup>

### **Plasticity, queer plasticity, and the plastic residue: biological mutability as queer resistance**

Malabou's transdisciplinary work across philosophy, neuro—and biomedical science, psychoanalysis, cybernetics and other domains orbits her central concept of 'plasticity'.<sup>4</sup> Malabou's plasticity designates a capacity for transformation and metamorphosis—the characteristic of being 'plastic' and mutable—inherent across all lifeforms, structures, and modes of being. In her engagement with biomedical research into (neuro)plasticity and epigenetics in works such as *Changer de différence* (2009a) and *Avant Demain* (2014), Malabou's focus becomes that of the biological plasticity of the body and the neuroplasticity of the brain. She documents in both texts the ways in which organisms are not bound to their DNA, but able to mutate in ways which constitute improvisations and interpretations of their DNA. For Malabou, this unmooring of organisms from their DNA shows the biological itself to be non-essentialist (Malabou 2009a, 156): plastic life is not bound to its genetic blueprint but rather free to transform and self-generate. Plasticity's organic transformability is however not merely a purely positive site of (trans)formation and regeneration; rather, Malabou demonstrates, plasticity also names a highly vulnerable and fragile aspect of biological mutability, as she explores in relation to the 'plasticité destructrice' of brain traumas for instance, in which people undergo radical, irrevocable metamorphoses (Malabou 2009b, 2017). Malabou's work is thus interested in the radical potentialities of plasticity's transformability: how to embrace plasticity for political resistance, change, and freedom; and how to come to terms with plasticity's more devastating vulnerabilities and explosions. In this way, Malabou's concept of plasticity and anti-essentialist approaches to the biological body have much to offer to both queer theoretical engagements with the body and to queer political thought and activism: her thought envisages new, materialist ways of conceptualizing not just the mutability of bodies and desires which exceed the normative, but also their resistance and refusal to being shaped or appropriated by normative power structures.

Indeed, recent work has suggested the potential riches of developing further current understandings of (biological) plasticity within queer theory (Brown 2015; Washington 2017, 2018; Dalton 2019a). I have argued elsewhere that Malabou's plasticity allows us to think embodied and highly transformative forms of queer identity by aligning queerness with the radical mutability of biology itself; this, I have suggested, extends attempts to reconcile queerness within (and not against) concepts of nature and ecology currently ongoing within the field of 'queer ecology', precisely by adding the concept of biological mutability and plasticity into queer ecological thought (Dalton 2019a). In approaching

Malabou's plasticity in relation to queerness in *120 BPM*, however, I want to foreground two key characteristics of her concept: firstly, the mutability of (biological) plasticity and plasticity's capacity for radical *transformation*; secondly, plasticity's capacity for *resistance*. As we will see, for Malabou, the plastic body not only transforms, but is able to insist upon certain formations and *resist* certain deformations.

Plasticity's simultaneous propensities for mutability and resistance are described throughout Malabou's work. In *Que faire de notre cerveau?* (Malabou 2011), Malabou theorizes the (neuro)plasticity of the brain in relation to the artistic process of sculpture in the plastic arts:

'Le matériau plastique est celui qui garde l'empreinte et résiste en ce sens à un polymorphisme infini. Il en va ainsi du marbre que l'on sculpte. Une fois la statue terminée, nul retour possible à l'indétermination de départ. La plasticité désigne alors la solidité autant que la souplesse [...] (Malabou 2011, 61-62).

Malabou contrasts plasticity to flexibility and polymorphism (Malabou 2011, 166–67): plasticity does not describe endless (re)mouldability, but rather exhibits a kind of formal creativity and agency in not only being able to be shaped and to shape actively, but also to refuse or resist being re-shaped and re-moulded without limit.

In *Changer de différence*, Malabou details the two-way creativity of plasticity (its ability both to give and receive form) which allows for plasticity's simultaneous capacities for mutability and resistance: 'La plasticité, on le sait, désigne la double aptitude à recevoir la forme (la terre glaise est plastique) et à donner la forme (comme dans les arts plastiques ou la chirurgie plastique)' (Malabou 2009a, 75). In relation to the question of feminism and 'la femme', Malabou shows how the scientific discovery of biological plasticity unsettles any conceptions of 'essence' as something fixed or genetically predetermined, allowing her to develop a concept of 'la femme' as plastic and mutable 'au-delà de l'essentialisme comme de l'anti-essentialisme' (Malabou 2009a, 115). For Malabou, the very concept of essence itself has been misunderstood: 'Le débat entre essentialisme et anti-essentialisme repose sur une conception vulgaire, inculte, de l'essence' (Malabou 2009a, 154). Essence, for Malabou, is itself a transgressive, plastic instance: 'la plasticité revendique la transgression de la présence, transgression toujours déjà comprise dans l'essence, et donc dans la forme, des choses. Plastiqueuse, ce n'est pas moi qui le suis, mais l'essence même' (Malabou 2009a, 154). For Malabou, then, it is no longer about situating identity either within or against nature, biology or 'essence', but rather about exploring the ways in which nature and biology are themselves radically plastic, mutable, and queer.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, for Malabou, more radically still, identity is not threatened by biological plasticity and transformability but rather dependent on this transformability:

Construire son identité est un processus qui ne peut être que l'élaboration d'une première malléabilité biologique, d'une première transformabilité. Si le sexe n'était pas plastique, il n'y aurait pas de genre. Si quelque chose ne s'offrait pas, dans le déterminisme naturel et anatomique du sexe, à être transformé, la construction identitaire ne serait pas possible. (Malabou 2009a, 155-56).

Biology, Malabou suggests, is itself anti-essentialist, queer, and trans: 'La biologie n'est pas essentialiste, comme en témoigne aujourd'hui l'incroyable essor de l'épigénétique. L'espace du "bio" au "trans" est déjà peut-être, en lui-même, un phénomène biologique ...' (Malabou 2009a, 156).

The biological plasticity of the body is both highly resilient and highly vulnerable. The (biological) plasticity that Malabou describes in *Changer de différence* in relation to 'la femme' is also a plasticity that is forged through violence. The resistance that Malabou sees as intrinsic to plasticity's mutability is here inextricable from a certain ineffaceability or indestructability in the face of violence and destruction. In Malabou's conceptualization of 'la femme', plastic essence is reduced by the violence done to it to its most vulnerable and most minuscule form, to near breaking-point, yet it refuses and resists being reduced to nothing. Something within plasticity protests and remains; some form of plastic residue is left behind. Conceptualizing 'la femme' as a residual essence as metamorphic and mutable as it is ineffaceable, Malabou states:

J'affirmerai de la femme un concept minimal, un "reste" ineffaçable, selon lequel "femme" désigne un sujet surexposé à un type de violence déterminé. Cette violence se définit fondamentalement comme double contrainte, ou pression schizoïde, du travail social et de la domesticité. Ce concept minimal – surexposition à une double exploitation – est le reste brûlant et plastique avec lequel nous devons travailler. (Malabou 2009a, 108-9)

It is suggested, then, that the plasticity and political dynamism of this minimal, reduced essence—this 'reste brûlant et plastique'—depends somehow on its reduction to almost nothing. Malabou goes on to specify: 'La femme n'est plus rien, que cette violence par où son "rien d'être" continue d'exister. Moignon ontologique formé par ce qui le nie' (Malabou 2009a, 115). The asymptotic reducing of plastic essence into this '[m]oignon ontologique' seems to generate both the possibility of a new politics (beyond the essentialist/non-essentialist binary) and ensure the resistance and resilience of plastic essence, protecting it from erasure: 'Cette assimilation de la "femme" à un "rien d'être" ouvre peut-être une nouvelle voie pour aller au-delà de l'essentialisme comme de l'anti-essentialisme. Acceptons donc de penser, sous le nom de femme, une essence vidée mais résistante, résistante parce que vidée, une *frappe d'impossibilité*' (Malabou 2009a, 115).

Whilst Malabou's focus here, as aforementioned, is the exploration of a plastic essence of 'la femme', this plastic essence, I have attempted to highlight, reposes on a more generalized conception of plasticity that demonstrates identities (both individual and collective) to be highly mutable at a biological level more broadly. While it is clearly important not to appropriate the specific violence that Malabou argues is done to 'la femme', I want to argue that we might also locate a plastic essence in queerness and in queer bodies that recognizes the specificity of the history of violence done to them (such as the different forms of violence experienced by queer bodies in the context of HIV/AIDS in *120 BPM*, for instance, from the socio-political to the biological). Indeed, Fiona Johnstone has written specifically about connections between Malabou's concept of plasticity (in particular Malabou's analysis of the destructive or explosive nature of plasticity) and HIV/AIDS self-portraiture and photography. In particular, Johnstone reads Mark Morrisroe's self-portraits of his body's transformation through AIDS through Malabou's notion of destructive plasticity:

perhaps what his face ultimately communicates is a self-emptying, a *kenosis*. Morrisroe-the-man makes way for Morrisroe-the-myth: chronically unstable, damaged and damaging, constantly and creatively re-forming from a condition of vital destruction – a truly explosive plastic subject. (Johnstone 2012, 137)



For Johnstone, then, the subjectivity of the AIDS body, through the image, reveals its explosive, metamorphic subjectivity through a *kenotic* process of ‘vital destruction’. Here, Johnstone evokes Malabou’s elaboration of the concept of kenosis, or the kenotic aspect of plasticity, in her first book *L’Avenir de Hegel* (1996). Here, Malabou analyses the concept of kenosis in Hegel as an act of self-hollowing or self-emptying which is ‘neither divine passivity nor pure divine activity, but divine plasticity’ (Watkin 2016, 88). This kenotic possibility of (self-)annihilation within plasticity reverberates through images of destruction and reduction throughout Malabou’s oeuvre. In *Que faire de notre cerveau?*, for instance, Malabou celebrates the neuroplastic brain’s capacity to detach itself from familiar ties and identities, jumping into the void:

‘N’est-ce pas là la meilleure définition possible de la plasticité: le rapport qu’un individu entretient avec ce qui, d’un côté, l’attache originellement à lui-même, à sa propre forme, et ce qui, de l’autre, lui permet de se lancer dans le vide de toute identité, d’abandonner toute détermination rigide ou fixe?’ (Malabou 2011, 182).

The kenotic ‘vital destruction’ that Johnstone, through Malabou, finds in Morrisroe’s self-portraits, I want to suggest, is imaged in converging ways in *120 BPM*, but in particular through the film’s focus on the microbiological processes and forms of life at work within queer activist bodies. In what follows, I argue that Campillo’s staging of biological reductions and resistances in *120 BPM* elaborates a conception of queerness which, reduced almost to nothing by violence, resists and survives as a plastic residue, as metamorphic as it is resilient.

### Robin Campillo’s plastic residues

In ways which resonate strongly with Malabou’s minimal plastic essences and the residual, kenotic ‘moignon ontologique’, Campillo’s cinema repeatedly explores the breaking down of identities and bodies into their smallest possible constituents and residues. Scenes of the reduction and the breaking down of bodies flood Robin Campillo’s work. Campillo’s cinematographic interest in the residues of bodies and identities in his previous films, I argue, anticipates his depiction of the breakdown of bodies and the turn to microbiological landscapes in relation to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in *120 BPM*. For instance, Campillo’s first film, the zombie genre horror film *Les Revenants* (2004), centres upon the return of a town’s dead. The dead, however, are radically evacuated of their former selves and do not remember who they are. The film therefore questions the reducibility of subjectivity in ways strikingly similar to Malabou’s questioning of the radical transformation or destruction of subjectivity undergone by people in cases of severe neuropathology and brain injury in *Les Nouveaux Blessés* (Malabou 2017). Campillo, like Malabou, seems to be asking: how much can be removed before a person is no longer themselves?<sup>6</sup>

Later, in his more explicitly queer film *Eastern Boys* (2013), cinematic depictions of reduction and evacuation are again central, and intimately connected to the question of the violence done to queer bodies, and the way these bodies both resist this violence and transform. In one central scene, the protagonist Daniel is tricked into letting a gang into his apartment, who proceed to humiliate him and gut his apartment of all his belongings. The length of the scene, unmatched by any other sequence in the film, underscores its thematic and aesthetic centrality. We witness, at length, each reduction and subtraction



of Daniel's belongings until Daniel is left alone in his empty, ransacked apartment. The violence of reduction and destruction of Daniel's life down to its barest residues is intrinsically connected to the question of Daniel's queerness. His queerness is mocked and tested throughout the apartment's ransacking: the gang's leader mock-flirts with him; and gang members point at pictures of Daniel with a man and laugh. The image of Daniel, stripped of all the material markers of his identity and the images of his past in his empty apartment, renders in architectural terms Malabou's '[m]oignon ontologique' or 'essence vidée' (Malabou 2009a, 115): Daniel's queerness, like Malabou's plastic essence, is reduced to its barest, most hollowed-out form.

The forms of Daniel's queerness and of his identity past this point in the film, I want to suggest, become negotiations and experiments in how to survive and transform following their reduction. As with the indifferent, post-traumatic zombies in *Les Revenants*, wiped clean of their prior selves, *Eastern Boys* asks: what is the liveability, or the plasticity, of this emptied, residual essence? Indeed, the next day, as Daniel surveys the damage, a title appears on the screen over the images of broken glass, broken pieces of wood, and discarded bottles: 'CE QU'ON FABRIQUE ENSEMBLE'. The question of hollowing out and reduction, then, becomes for Campillo inextricable from the question of formation, making or building. Campillo's use of the verb 'fabriquer' here might refer simultaneously to what has been fabricated or forged in the violence itself—the destructive-plastic forms of the battered apartment—and to the promise of what might now be produced from these forms. In this way, the hollowed-out forms of Daniel and his apartment, and the film's evocation of a communal building, 'ensemble', echo Malabou's use of the first-person plural 'nous' when she evokes: 'le reste brûlant et plastique avec lequel nous devons travailler' (Malabou 2009a, 109).

A striking similarity between this sequence in *Eastern Boys* and the sequence of dissolves between dancing human bodies and microbiological particles in *120 BPM* is the atmosphere of release and letting go suggested in both. The reductions in both sequences are accompanied by electronic music and dancing bodies. As the gang empties Daniel's apartment, they all drink and dance. At a certain point, Daniel seemingly abandons himself to the destruction and begins to dance with those around him, loosening his body in movement and surrendering to the beat as his belongings are carried out of the apartment. The dissolve of the shots into one another alongside electro music gives the scene the feel of a trip. Daniel seems at one point to relax, submitting to his reduction; he drinks from a glass and tilts his head back, opening his mouth slightly, resigned. The scene envisages, then, a brief moment of agency and power in Daniel's active embrace of this reduction or hollowing out of his identity: a moment of plastic kenosis.

The cinematographic hollowing out of the apartment and of Daniel performed in *Eastern Boys*, I argue, echoes as a central and repeated force of reduction at work in *120 BPM*, also often connected to ecstatic moments of letting go and release on the dancefloor. In *120 BPM*'s tracking of the reduction and becoming-small of bodies both in illness and through social violence, and in its filming mutations in cells on a microbiological level alongside human bodies, the film searches for the smallest possible essence or residue of the queer body. The film looks to these residues, I want to suggest, as a resource from which a queer politics can begin to be reconstructed or transform, echoing the verb 'fabriquer' superimposed over the devastated landscape of Daniel's former life in *Eastern Boys*. This reconstruction, I argue with reference to *120 BPM*,

is not to be understood as a purely constructive re-building which undoes or redeems reduction or destruction, or a denial of the reality of the fragility and mortality of queer bodies in the face of the AIDS crisis. Rather, Campillo's *fabriquer* calls for precisely a building *with* the hollowness and vulnerability of what remains: a building with residues as plastic queer essences.

## Dancing plasticities

As aforementioned, a central sequence of *120 BPM* stages a chain of reductions in scale and transformations in form: from the human bodies of ACT UP activists dancing in a club, to dust particles turning in the air above them, to human cells in blood streams, mutating and moving towards and away from each other as they come into contact with HIV.<sup>7</sup> The film then cuts to an ACT UP meeting held in a lecture theatre, in which sketches and outlines of the cells being infected by HIV are projected onto a screen, informing ACT UP activists of the latest biomedical knowledge on the disease.

At the start of the sequence, we see the activists' bodies dancing in the nightclub. Whilst the bodies are initially recognizable as the activists we have met in the first part of the film, the strobe lighting acts to dissect these bodies, cutting them up into the smaller constituent forms of undulating body parts and surfaces. The camera then shifts its focus within the club space, now foregrounding beams of light in which we see dust particles in movements. The camera then refocuses again, and suddenly we see cells in microscopic close-up, rendered by computer animation. Then, just as suddenly, we are back in the amphitheatre where ACT UP meetings are held; the cells we have just seen dancing and mutating in the club are now rendered as sketched outlines drawn in marker pen on acetate paper.

The succession of plastic forms does not suggest a hierarchical top-down reduction, or a Russian-Doll effect of exteriors and interiors (the human bodies are surrounded by dust, the cells are in the human bodies, etc.); rather, the slippages between these plastic forms—dancing bodies to dancing particles to dancing cells to projected outlines—de-hierarchize and horizontalize the forms. Indeed, house music plays over the transitions between the bodies and their reductions—humans, particles, cells—acting to rhythmically align the forms. Further, the cells seem to be lit with beams, suggesting that they are moving around the same nightclub space as the human bodies. Just as (human) bodies move in and out of the light, towards and away from each other in the club, the cells shift towards and away from each other, mimicking the previous bodies in movement as well as in (trans)formation; (micro)biological, social and sonic plastic forms are transformed and (ex)changed between one another.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, as Malabou describes of the plasticity of essence: '*regarder l'essence, c'est regarder l'échange*' (Malabou 2004, 27). Campillo's lens here allows us to watch—*regarder*—precisely this changeability of essence in its movement between the mutable residues and particles of plastic life.

This horizontal reduction of plastic forms, occurring predominantly in the space of the nightclub, plays out in an atmosphere of paradoxical serenity and calm, recalling the hollowing out of Daniel's apartment in *Eastern Boys*: the mellow pulse of the club music; the fleeting, static forms of dancing bodies with their eyes closed; the slow undulating of cells in liquid, the free transport of dust particles in the air. *120 BPM*, then, bears witness to the biological (trans)formations of bodies during the HIV/AIDS crisis not as a linear

causality of infection and contagion—a teleological narrative of spread and death—but rather as a circular movement of material, formal interactions in which queer bodies, biologies, relationships and politics occur as communal metamorphoses effectuated within an atmosphere of self-abandonment. Biological, social, architectural and sonic forms, confined together in the same space, can only transform and (ex)change themselves; this sense of mutability and (ex)change between these forms seems inextricable from their reduction to their smallest essences and residues within the sequence. This logic of reduction and becoming-small recalls Malabou's alignment of plasticity with smallness in *Le Change Heidegger* (2004): '*Migrer, se métamorphoser c'est toujours, en un sens, devenir moindre. Nous sommes devenus moindres*' (Malabou 2004, 233).

In this sequence, the computer-generated images of the cells both reference and subvert medical imagery. Whilst the images recall the images of microbiological life produced with scanning electron micrographs (SEM), the cells' fluid movements towards and away from one another overlaid by the club music, and the suggestion of the nightclub's strobe lighting in how the cells are lit, acts to distance the cellular forms from a visual lexicon of medical diagnosis or surveillance. The use of CGI in *120 BPM* further plasticizes the cellular forms: medical imagery, through computer animation, becomes a mode of bearing witness to microbiological plasticity in a way which enhances, intensifies and invents with this plasticity rather than seeking to categorize or pause it. Indeed, Christopher Holliday aligns computer animation with Eisenstein's notion of 'plasmaticness', arguing that computer-animated film further realizes Eisenstein's concept in pursuing the truly 'protoplasmic instability' of forms (Holliday 2018, 107). Furthermore, Eisenstein's own elaboration of plasmaticness is striking in its allusions beyond drawn animation to biological plasticity and to a nostalgia for the mutability of the world and of forms that is lost after early life. This nostalgia, for Eisenstein, is precisely why plasmaticness 'attracts' (Eisenstein 1986, 21): plasmaticness 'behaves like the primal protoplasm, not yet possessing a 'stable' form, but capable of assuming any form and which, skipping along the rungs of the evolutionary ladder, attaches itself to any and all forms of animal existence'; Eisenstein playfully wonders if we can remember a time when we too were plasmatic, at 'the origin of the foetus' (ibid). Despite the fact this origin cannot be remembered, Eisenstein asks if this plasmaticness is somehow still in our memory: 'not just as it resides in the brain, but in all its predecessors, right down to the cellular tissue' (ibid). *120 BPM's* sequence of corporeal reduction, then, injecting medical imagery with the ecstasy of dance and new CGI sites of cinematographic plasmaticness, imbues its images of queer history and activism with a nostalgia for form's plasmatic plasticity.<sup>9</sup> Further, if Susan Sontag has argued that metaphors of pathology are particularly maligned in the case of AIDS, in which the disease is seen as a kind of punishment inflicted on queer bodies (Sontag 1990), the serene, horizontal modulations between (micro)biological forms and bodily pleasures in the nightclub acts to distance these forms from the purely medicalized, diagnostic gaze or the visual lexicon of pathology with which these images might otherwise be associated.

Instead, moving beyond this gaze, this sequence foregrounds how plasmatic form 'attracts' (Eisenstein 1986, 21) in a way which renders the possibility of queer collectivity and coming-together not merely a question of conscious, human political organization, but rather a kenotic moment of letting go in which Campillo's lens simply bears witness to the formations and attractions occurring between biological, plastic life forms. The

projected image of the diagrams of cells in the ACT UP meeting further evokes the hand-drawn animation to which Eisenstein refers, whilst showing how the activists bear witness to the biological as a collective.

The horizontal exchangeability between plastic lifeforms does not seem to suggest recyclability or assimilability, but rather precisely their inability to be effaced: similar sequences return repeatedly throughout *120 BPM*, demonstrating the resistance of these queer forms, and their mutability, to erasure. Again, this acts to connect the ideas of the reduction of bodies to their smallest, microbiological constituents with a capacity for resistance and indestructibility; while *120 BPM* highlights the vulnerability and fragility of the body on a biological level, the film's repeated and insistent mobilization of the cyclical sequences of reductions, and therefore of the resonances between biological forms (the cells, for instance) and political resistance (the ACT UP meetings, protests, and dancefloor moments), suggests the ineffaceability of reduced, kenotic queer essences beyond the limits of the singular, mortal body. Indeed, as I will argue in the next section, Sean's death in the film is not seen as an end, but yet another entry into the film's cyclical sequences of kenotic yet ineffaceable queer forms and essences.

In *Plasticité surprise* (2000), Malabou characterizes plasticity as a residue, which is simultaneously infinitely recyclable and eternally non-(bio)degradable:

En affirmant les capacités synthétiques de la plasticité, je ne dis pas que tout soit recyclable ou récupérable, mais qu'il devient de moins en moins possible d'assigner des modes d'être distincts au réassimilable et à l'irré récupérable. Je m'interroge justement sur le fait qu'un même mot, *plastique*, dise aussi bien ce qui peut être retiré que le laissé pour compte, aussi bien le réutilisable que l'indégradable ou le reste absolu (que l'on pense à ces sacs en plastiques qui polluent la terre, la mer, et sont pour le moment indestructibles). (Malabou 2000, 323)

Strikingly, Malabou chooses the medium of film to bear witness to the remainder or residue—both ineffaceable and highly metamorphic—drawing in particular on Peter Fischli and David Weiss' art film *Der Laufe der Dinge* (1987). Here, the camera traces a series of material interactions between objects: a bottle strapped to a wheel fills a saucepan, upending a chair connected to a broom which pushes materials into a chemical reaction, and so on: 'Ce que je tente de penser se rapproche beaucoup de leurs extraordinaires séquences où l'on voit sans cesse le reste se réanimer, se reformer [...] (Malabou 2000, 323). Like the chain of material interactions in *Der Laufe der Dinge*, the sequence of metamorphic reductions in *120 BPM* shows residues not to be merely recycling rejects, but rather insistent, plastic forms that refuse to disappear, constantly reanimating and reforming themselves. Faced with threats of eradications, both by social exclusion or indifference and by the disease itself, the queer activist community *remains* as a 'reste brûlant et plastique' (Malabou 2009a, 109).

The insolubility of *120 BPM's* queer plastic residues is further underlined by the film's repeated juxtaposition of queer bodies and with bodies of water. When Sean and Nathan go to the beach on holiday, a scene of serenity, pleasure and joy is again structured around formal exchanges and shifts in scale between forms. A slow pan across the beach mimics again the camera's fluid movements in the dance sequence; the shot is dominated by the opaque forms of war bunkers which dwarf Sean and Nathan, again evoking the movement of reduction from large bodies to smaller forms. The giant, geometric forms of the war relics are plastic residues forged by violence, like Malabou's plastic essence of 'la

femme' in *Changer de différence*; the shot aligns these geological residues with the human forms of Sean and Nathan moving towards the sea in their mutual resistance of the sea's liquidity and threat to dissolve. Just as the bodies, particles and cells co-exist in the dance sequence, here, human and geological residues co-exist serenely next to one another, as if attracted to one another.

Indeed, scenes of water and liquidity flood Campillo's film, from the close-up of plants being watered at an activist meeting, to the preparation of fake blood prepared by activists in a bathtub for throwing at demonstrations, to the recurrent shots of the Seine. Like the above-described shot of Sean and Nathan moving defiantly towards the sea, the proximity of these scenes of liquidity to the sequences of material reductions and plastic exchanges demonstrates an insistent and repeated juxtaposition of plasticity and fluidity. Indeed, Malabou also contrasts plasticity to fluidity, situating plasticity in between fluidity and solidity or 'reification': 'A lifetime always proceeds within the boundaries of a double excess: an excess of reification and an excess of fluidification. [...] Plasticity situates itself in the middle of these two excesses' (Malabou 2010, 81).<sup>10</sup> In *120 BPM*, Campillo's staging of visual confrontations between plastic forms or bodies and liquids highlights the irreducibility of Campillo's cinematographic plastic residues and their resistance to dissolving.

Indeed, this resistance to dissolve is perhaps seen most poignantly in the film's movement into an extended sequence towards the end of *120 BPM* which observes Sean's death in his apartment. This section is immediately preceded by images of liquidity, specifically the river Seine coloured blood-red. Alongside the images, the sound also bears witness to the tension between fluidity and plasticity: the gentle lapping of water (aurally evocative of the beach scene) is overlaid with Sean's laboured breathing, which is heavy, difficult and yet persistent. As we will now see, the resilient insolubility of the queer body in *120 BPM*, up to and beyond the moment of death, is at once a site of suffering, resistance and assembly.

## Plasticity and the queer body in death

Indeed, the queer corpse is a central figure of the branch of queer theory known as the 'anti-social thesis' or 'queer negativity'. The queer corpse haunts Leo Bersani's famous essay 'Is the Rectum a Grave?' (1987), for instance, in which Bersani boldly embraces the subversive negativity and self-shattering *jouissance* of queer sex amid the AIDS crisis. In Lee Edelman's *No Future* (2004), meanwhile, the queer body stands in for the death drive itself: the political potentiality of the queer body, here, is its ability to the destroy all 'positive' attachments and heteronormative constructions, namely life, reproduction, and futurity. The relentless negativity of the queer body as death drive, in such theories of queer negativity, destroys bodily form: it is resolutely anti-essence, anti-biological, and anti-plastic. Malabou, however, insists in her work on destructive plasticity that the death drive has a plastic, formative power (Malabou 2009b, 24); this is most apparent in her work on brain injury and neuropathology in works like *Les Nouveaux Blessés* and *Ontologie de l'accident* (2009b), in which Malabou argues that the destruction of the brain does not lead to the complete erasure of identity—to nothingness—but precisely to the generation of radically new forms of identity, precisely forms of the destruction of identity.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, now in relation to *120 BPM*'s treatment of the materiality of Sean's dying and

dead body, I want to argue that the film insists upon the queer corpse not as a dematerialized figure of the death drive, but as a particularly poignant site at which we witness the mutability of biological, plastic forms and of the radical insolubility of these forms.

The apartment that Sean dies in recalls the emptied apartment of *Eastern Boys* in its relative bareness. The scene begins with Sean being carried in on a stretcher by SAMU workers: everything is on wheels; bodies are easily transported and removed on wheels and furniture is easily removed or packed away, as with the furniture removal van in *Eastern Boys*. The apartment of Sean's final days and death, then, is an architecture of kenotic reduction, echoing the deathly, explosive plasticity that Johnstone reads in Morrisroe's self-portraits (Johnstone 2012, 136–7).

In his final hours, having asked Nathan to euthanize him, Sean's subjectivity becomes insistently kenotic. Sean's being is communicated predominantly through sounds, and from the movement of Nathan and Sean's mother around him. We hear a call from the bathroom 'Nathan!' and the sloshing of water; Sean's body becomes a form moving in space, rendered architecturally through the apartment and through the camera's movement around the apartment or inability to see into certain rooms. His persisting consciousness becomes a nuisance to him; when, in the night, Sean realizes Nathan has not yet euthanized him, he groans: 'j'suis pas encore mort? Mais qu'est-ce que tu fous?'. Sean's body voices frustration at its seeming indestructability and persistent being.

Following Sean's death, the apartment is visited by activists, friends and family. While we see emotion on the faces of Sean's friends, family and fellow activists, this affective life is not the focus of the scene; rather, the scene comprises shots of long duration which observe the practical, material problems of the queer corpse as ineffaceable residue. The camera's focus is on the automatic, practical, 'neutral' actions of those around the body: the packing up of the sofa bed, the preparation of coffee, etc. Activists help Sean's mother to dress his dead body.

The length and persistence of the immediate wake following Sean's death allows us to sit with the materiality of Sean's body as a space of political deliberation around a central question: what to do with this queer residue? The very final sequence proposes a response. Here, the activists storm the lavish buffet of a conference for health insurance in order to throw Sean's ashes on the food. Here, the actions of the activists seek to perform and demonstrate the queer body's ineffaceability as residue. The sequence is, in this way, the film's final and most striking kenotic reduction. The sequence begins with a wide shot of the pharmaceutical company buffet. The activists walk into the event, chanting and waving banners. Activists start throwing Sean's ashes on the buffet food; the clouds of ash in the air recall the shots of dust which recur throughout the film. The buffet is then suddenly lit with the flashing lights of the nightclub, and we witness activists' bodies through these fragmented flashing strobes, their forms seemingly held in statuesque poses in each burst of light. At the end of the sequence, the music fades away, and for a few fleeting seconds we are confronted with the raw, biological soundscape of bodies thrashing around on a dancefloor: thumping, squeaking feet and jagged breath. The film's final act of kenotic emptying-out or reduction is again one underscored by its paradoxical irreducibility and insolubility: the act of scattering Sean's ashes on the food articulates the radical inedibility and indestructability of Sean as plastic queer residue. It is in the act of scattering that the plasticity of the irreducible is demonstrated: as the film again begins the rhythm of the cuts

between particles and bodies, Sean's remains are seen not to be final, non-plastic forms, but rather the catalyst of further horizontal (ex)changes between mobilizing bodies. Sean's queer kenosis is thus celebrated by the activists as a shared irreducibility: overlaid shots of Nathan having sex with a new lover show this irreducibility to be a grounds for new forms of relationality, collectivity, and pleasure.

## Conclusion: assembling plastic residues

The organization and assembly of the activists throughout the film, then, shows queer kenosis and reduction to be not an individual activity or an unchecked dispersal, but a matter of assembly and 'attraction' between bodies and microbiological particles. Indeed, Campillo himself argues for the necessity of physical, bodily proximity in the organization of political resistance. Campillo recalls his own experience of ACT UP meetings in the 80s, contrasting the physical presence of bodies in 80s activism to the immaterial digital activism of the contemporary moment:

people are so radical on Facebook but you have no one on the streets—never. For instance, France was known for big demonstrations, but that doesn't exist anymore. With ACT UP, that was different. Before confronting the government, before confronting the pharmaceutical groups, we had to confront each other in this amphitheatre. And for me, this amphitheatre in the film is like a brain. It's dreaming the political actions and the political discourse. (Chen and Campillo 2018)

Campillo's amphitheatre-brain again casts the activist group's decision making within a biological register, recalling also the neuro-plastic brain at the centre of Malabou's work on the inseparability of the biological and political. Indeed, for Malabou in *Que faire de notre cerveau?*, the neuroplastic human brain is the primary tool we possess for socio-political change and revolution, and we must learn to embrace and activate the radicality of this brain's plasticity (Malabou 2011, 179–187). Malabou's manifesto—which suggests a neural collectivity resonant of Campillo's amphitheatre-brain in its use of the first-person plural pronoun in 'notre cerveau'—leaves us with the challenge: 'construire et entretenir un rapport avec son cerveau comme avec l'image d'un monde à venir' (Malabou 2011, 187). Through the exploration of (micro)biological landscapes in *120 BPM*—from the amphitheatre-brain, to the materiality of the queer body in death, to the cellular processes ongoing in the nightclub—Campillo's cinema activates the plastic residues of the queer body as the promise of a 'monde à venir'.

In bringing together Campillo's cinematographic rendering of (micro)biological mutability and Malabou's philosophical conceptualization of the plasticity of biological life, we witness across both Campillo and Malabou a mobilization and an assembling of biological lifeforms which, reduced to their smallest constituent parts and residues through the violence done to them, form the mutable, plastic life force of a queer politics to come: as vulnerable as it is ineffaceable, and radically metamorphic.

## Notes

1. For in-depth discussion of the images of cells and virologic processes occurring in this sequence, see Chase Ledin (2021).



2. Beyond Malabou, other recent French philosophy, queer and feminist thought has taken inspiration from biology to theorize the body not as essentially fixed or predetermined but rather as creative and open to transformation. See, for instance, Paul B. Preciado's analysis of the body's capacities for pleasure and resistance within pharmaceutical power structures (2013). Indeed, in their work on the return to the question of the materiality of the body in contemporary French queer thought, Elliot Evans notes the specificity of the context of the HIV/AIDS crisis in establishing the body as a central concern for queer theory: 'Queer thought emerged from a consciousness of the material vulnerability of certain bodies at risk of contracting the virus' (Evans 2020, 1). For a further overview of the renewed engagement with (biomedical) science in contemporary philosophical approaches to the biological and to embodiment, see James (2019, 181–219).
3. In using the terms (neuro)plasticity and (neuro)plastic, I am referring both to Malabou's engagement with scientific definitions of neuroplasticity (the brain's capacity to self-shape and sculpt its synaptic networks throughout life) and her work on plasticity more broadly: the material characteristic of being 'plastic' and thus mutable and transformable.
4. For a full overview of the development and evolution of Malabou's concept across her work, see my interview (Dalton 2019b). See also Ian James' situating of Malabou's project within the context of contemporary French philosophies of science (James 2019).
5. For an overview of how queer bodies have historically been designated as 'against nature', and how queer theory might instead begin to reclaim conceptions of nature and ecology, see Mortimer-Sandilands and Erickson (2010).
6. Indeed, whilst *Les Revenants* has no explicit queer themes, Campillo has spoken about resonances between his exploration of the returned dead and the HIV/AIDS epidemic: 'It captures this sensation of not being dead but not being completely alive, of living in a sort of hinterland, a no-man's land' (Goodfellow 2017).
7. Ledin describes in detail the virologic processes rendered in this sequence: 'computer-generated images (CGI) of fuzzy black balls approach a large white object with gangly arms (a white blood cell). The black balls (that is, the HIV virus, which is represented as the inverse colour of the white blood cell) zoom through the open space, threatening to touch down and attach. In the background, the vastness of the empty space emulates the liquid regions of the blood. This dark zone contains multiple free-floating red and white blood cells, which move slowly in and out of vision. By comparison, the black balls resemble HIV. The camera approaches a white cell, which is now bombarded by HIV' (Ledin 2021, 7).
8. My use of '(ex)change' here echoes Peter Skafish's use of the term in his translation of Malabou's *Le Change Heidegger* to suggest simultaneous meanings of 'change' and 'exchange' in Malabou's use of the French word 'change' (Skafish 2011, xv).
9. Indeed, Garry Needham aligns *120 BPM*'s cellular CGI with Eisenstein's concept of plasmaticness in his conference paper '120 BPM's Digital Effects Emblem' (2019).
10. Indeed, in *Changer de différence*, Malabou's surveying of conceptual schemas of fluidity or elasticity of 'la matière femme' (2009a, 148) acts to place her own concept of plastic essence in contrast to these schemas. Elsewhere, I further elaborate contrast between fluidity and plasticity in my reading of queer plasticity in Alain Guiraudie's film *L'inconnu du lac* (2013) (Dalton 2019a, 75–6).
11. As Malabou argues: 'Personne ne pense spontanément à un art plastique de la destruction. Pourtant, celle-ci aussi configure. Une gueule cassée est encore un visage, un moignon est une forme, une psyché traumatisée reste une psyché. La destruction a ses ciseaux de sculpteur' (Malabou 2009b, 11). For further discussion of dialogues between Malabou's destructive plasticity, the death drive, and theories of queer negativity, see Washington (2017, 2018).

## Acknowledgments

With thanks to the London Arts & Humanities Partnership, doctoral training partnership funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## ORCID

Benjamin Dalton  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8656-993X>

## References

- Bersani, L. 1987. "Is the Rectum a Grave?" *October* 43: 197–222. doi:10.2307/3397574.
- Brown, J. 2015. "Being Cellular: Race, the Inhuman, and the Plasticity of Life." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 21 (2–3): 321–341. doi:10.1215/10642684-2843371.
- Chen, N., and R. Campillo. 2018. "120 BPM: The Magical Must-see Movie about AIDS, Love and Clubbing in Paris." *DazedDigital*. April 2. Accessed 05 December 2019. <http://www.dazeddigital.com/film-tv/article/39530/1/120-bpm-robin-campillo-interview>
- Dalton, B. 2019a. "Cruising the Queer Forest with Alain Guiraudie: Woods, Plastics, Plasticities." In *Beasts of the Forest: Denizens of the Dark Woods*, edited by J. Hackett and S. Harrington, 65–91. East Barnett: John Libbey.
- Dalton, B. 2019b. "What Should We Do with Plasticity? An Interview with Catherine Malabou." *Paragraph* 42 (2): 238–254. doi:10.3366/para.2019.0301.
- Edelman, L. 2004. *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Eisenstein, S. 1986. *Eisenstein on Disney*. Edited by Jay Leyda and translated by Alan Upchurch with an introduction by Naum Kleiman. Culcutta: Seagull Books.
- Evans, E. 2020. *The Body in French Queer Thought from Wittig to Preciado: Queer Permeability*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.
- Goodfellow, M. 2017. "'BPM' Director Robin Campillo Talks Inspiration behind Aids Drama", *Screen Daily*. Accessed 17 September 2021. <https://www.screendaily.com/interviews/bpm-director-robin-campillo-talks-inspiration-behind-aids-drama/5124941.article>
- Holliday, C. 2018. *The Computer-animated Film: Industry, Style and Genre*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- James, I. 2019. *The Technique of Thought: Nancy, Laurelle, Malabou, and Stiegler after Naturalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Johnstone, F. 2012. "The Explosive Side of Subjectivity: Mark Morrisroe's Plastic Photographic Practice." In *Changing Difference: Queer Politics and Shifting Identities*, Peter Hugar, Mark Morrisroe, Jack Smith, edited by L. Fusi, 125–137. Milan: Silvana Editoriale & Galleria Civica di Modena.
- Ledin, C. 2021. "Retroactivism and Futurity in 120 BPM and Théo Et Hugo." *Modern and Contemporary France* 1–13. doi:10.1080/09639489.2021.2000952.
- Malabou, C. 1996. *L'Avenir de Hegel: Plasticité, temporalité, dialectique*. Paris: J. Vrin.
- Malabou, C. 2000. Plasticité surprise. In *Plasticité*, edited by Catherine Malabou, 310–23. Paris: Éditions Léo Scheer.
- Malabou, C. 2004. *Le Change Heidegger: Du fantastique en philosophie*. Paris: Léo Scheer.
- Malabou, C. 2009a. *Changer de différence: Le féminin et la question philosophique*. Paris: Galilée.
- Malabou, C. 2009b. *Ontologie de l'accident: Essai sur la plasticité destructrice*. Paris: Léo Scheer.
- Malabou, C. 2010. *Plasticity at the Dusk of Writing: Dialectic, Destruction, Deconstruction*, translated by C. Shread. New York and Chichester: Columbia University Press.
- Malabou, C. 2011. *Que faire de notre cerveau?* 2nd ed. Paris: Bayard.
- Malabou, C. 2014. *Avant Demain: épigénèse et rationalité*. Paris: PUF.
- Malabou, C. 2017. *Les Nouveaux Blessés: De Freud à la neurologie, penser les traumatismes contemporains*, 2nd ed. Paris: PUF.

- Mortimer-Sandilands, C., and B. Erickson. 2010. "Introduction: A Genealogy of Queer Ecologies." In *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, edited by C. Mortimer-Sandilands and B. Erickson, 1–39. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Needham, G. 2019. "120 BPM's Digital Effects Emblem." Paper presented at "120 BPM: A Symposium", co-organised by Benjamin Dalton and Alice Pember, London, May 10-11.
- Preciado, P. B. 2013. *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*, translated by B. Benderson. New York, NY: Feminist Press at the City University of New York.
- Skafish, P. 2011. "Translator/Editor's Preface." In *The Heidegger Change: On the Fantastic in Philosophy*, edited by P. Skafish, xi–xxiv. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Sontag, S. 1990. *AIDS and Its Metaphors*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Washington, M. 2017. "Giving an Account of the Queer Subject: Plasticity, Psychoanalysis, and Queer Theory." PhD diss., Kingston University.
- Washington, M. 2018. "Reading Derrida's *Glas*: A Queer Presence Alongside Hegel." In *Thinking Catherine Malabou: Passionate Detachments*, edited by T. Wormald and I. Dahms, 201–217. London: Rowman & Littlefield International.
- Watkin, C. 2016. *French Philosophy Today: New Figures of the Human in Badiou, Meillassoux, Malabou, Serres and Latour*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

## Filmography

- Campillo, R. 2004. *Les Revenants*. DVD. Arrow Films.
- Campillo, R. 2013. *Eastern Boys*. DVD. Peccadillo Pictures.
- Campillo, R. 2017. *120 BPM*. DVD. Curzon Artificial Eye.
- Fischli, P., and D. Weiss. 1987. *Der Laufe der Dinge*.
- Guiraudie, A. 2013. *L'Inconnu du lac*. DVD. Les Films du losange.