

Trauma, Embodiment, and Compromised Agency



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Volume 2, Number 2

Fall 2019

DOI: [10.25335/PPJ.2.2-05](https://doi.org/10.25335/PPJ.2.2-05)

Abstract

Traumatologist Bessel van der Kolk states, “We now know that trauma compromises the brain area that communicates the physical, embodied feeling of being alive” (3). Although research into trauma primarily lies within the disciplines of psychoanalysis, psychology, neurobiology, and literary theory, the question of how trauma compromises the embodied feeling of being alive is fundamentally a philosophical inquiry. In trauma, what is at stake for us as humans is the aspect of embodiment that informs our sense of agency, ownership, and temporality. In the following, I survey the works of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Shaun Gallagher, and Catharine Malabou and use the metaphor of the body as a work of art to describe what constitutes the embodied feeling of being alive, how it is compromised in traumatic experience, and how the destructive plasticity of trauma creates a new self.

I am simply reading . . . I am struck by the words: “A smashed up face is still a . . .” and without warning, as my eyes touch the words, unfolding letter-by-letter, stacking on each other to create (no, conjure) the image, I am flooded with sensations and memories: my heartbeat quickens, I gasp for air, shudder, shake my head. In that moment, there is no “I”; there is only shock, terror, horror.

I believe my experience in this chance, traumatic flashback is what Catherine Malabou is referring to in *The Ontology of the Accident* when she states that, in the accident, there is an “abandoning of subjectivity.”¹ In the moment of the flashback, the subject is wrested out of the present experience and hauled back to the traumatic encounter, re-experiencing that encounter as though it is currently occurring. The individual experiences the terror and horror as a *happening-to*, as though it were happening again at the moment. However, there is no external force acting on the individual within the flashback; these are effects of traumatic experience, and understanding them better is important not only for recovery from trauma but also for philosophical understandings of the relationships between mind,

body, self, and agency. In this article, I will focus on experiences of disruption to self and agency that are the result of trauma, such as flashbacks and other experiences that indicate Malabou’s “flight from self” and “abandoning of subjectivity” to provide a phenomenology of trauma from the perspective of someone who has undergone such a metamorphosis of self and to try and grasp why the metamorphosis of the self is such an abject, painful process. However, the metamorphosis of the self depicted in Malabou’s destructive plasticity inadequately addresses the phenomenon of traumatic experience. Trauma does more than just compromise aspects of embodiment, such as ownership, subjectivity, and temporality; it heightens our awareness of embodiment.

In *The Body Keeps the Score*, traumatologist Bessel van der Kolk states, “We now know that trauma compromises the brain area that communicates the physical, embodied feeling of being alive.”² That is, in trauma, part of the stakes for us as humans are the aspects of embodiment that inform our sense of agency: successful intentional activity, ownership, and linear temporality. Although we can never have complete global awareness of the body, we are aware of our bodies both as a phenomenal experience and object of study. There is a plastic relationship between our body image and body schema, maintaining an equilibrium, which, for humans, produces a sense of owner-

1. Malabou is presenting an ontology of the *accident*, where at times, she refers to such an ontology as “an accident” and other times as “trauma.” I find that her ontology of the accident maps onto the ontology of the type of trauma I am speaking about, specifically, PTSD. Moving forward, I intentionally use the term “trauma” when describing such an ontology and the phenomenology of PTSD. My intention in using this term is to acknowledge that not all trauma happens by accident; in fact, trauma is frequently the result of intentional action on the account of others, such as sexual assault or child abuse.

2. Bessel Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Viking, 2014), 3.

ship, temporality, and agency, and in trauma, this equilibrium can be challenged, or even lost.

Thus, what is significant about trauma studies is that such inquiries disclose how embodiment informs agency. Against this backdrop, trauma stands out as an extraordinary embodied experience, and the traditional notion of plasticity may fail to capture the ontological metamorphosis of the individual who experiences trauma. Plasticity is traditionally understood as the ability to maintain a capacity for change and balance, with the aptitude of remaining the same subject, despite disruptions to the body. As such, it is generally seen as allowing for a positive metamorphosis, including the possibility of adjusting to or responding to the changes that one may experience in traumatic circumstances. On the other hand, Catharine Malabou provides an account of *destructive plasticity* that illustrates how such a metamorphosis due to accident/trauma can form a whole new being, what she calls “flight identity.” Malabou’s account explains how some trauma survivors experience serious disruptions in identity and agency, but I do not go so far as to say there is no connection between the self prior to and after the trauma. Instead, if anything, there appears to be a minimal, embodied self that endures and continues to endure the trauma.

In the following, I provide an account of what produces the “embodied feeling of being alive” from a philosophical perspective. To do so, I survey the works of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Shaun Gallagher, and Catharine Malabou and use the metaphor of the body as a work of art to describe the process of transformation of the self in trauma. I first describe the aspects of embodiment that produce the sense of agency. Second, I articulate a general theory of plasticity and then explain Malabou’s account of *destructive plasticity* and how it helps us to better understand traumatic experience, specifically that of PTSD. I then summarize what we can learn from trauma regarding how embodiment informs agency. Last, I assert that no matter how overwhelming and painful the experience, there is an aspect of recovered agency that can be accomplished through writing-trauma.

1. Embodiment and Agency

We can think of embodiment as overlapping bodies: the *world-body* (the tangible, in which our bodies are also tangible), the *lived-body* (phenomenal body which senses the palpable experience of both world and body), and the *I-body* (subjective body conscious of the self, body, and world). We dwell in a definitive world of sensible things in which the body is one such “object.” We are aware of our own bodies by way of the world, enacting our bodies within a specific environment through intentional and unintentional action. We primarily operate without bodily awareness to accomplish intentional activity, though. This is because the body has a world of its own, always operating in the background. It is the very material and space for such intentional and unintentional activity. In this way, the body shapes consciousness, but we are not necessarily directly aware of this.

To articulate embodiment, Maurice Merleau-Ponty compares the body to a work of art. In *The Phenomenology of Perception*, he writes:

A novel, poem, picture, or musical work are individuals, that is, beings in which the expression is indistinguishable from the thing expressed, their meaning, accessible only through direct contact, being radiated with no change of their temporal and spatial situation. The idea of the body is incommunicable by means other than the display. It is in this sense that our body is comparable to a work of art. It is the nexus of living meanings, not the law for a certain number of covariant terms.”³

The meaning of a painting cannot be communicated other than by way of the painting itself. One could give a description, but there is no equivalent in which the *visual* content can be known other than through a direct encounter with the painting. Here, we can see a distinction between the painting and the image of the painting, a distinction between the object and how it is interpreted.

3. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 1945, trans. Colin Smith (Reprint, New York: Routledge, 1962), 175.

We see this same distinction in regard to the body. We can have an image of our bodies, but this is different from the body itself. This distinction can be condensed into two concepts of “body image” and “body schema.” Generally, body image is understood to consist of a system of perceptions, attitudes, emotions, and beliefs pertaining to one’s own body. According to Merleau-Ponty, it is the way one is conscious of the world through the medium of the body. He writes, “Consciousness projects itself into a physical world and has a body, as it projects itself into a cultural world and has its habits . . . any form of lived experience tends towards a certain generality whether that of our habits or that of our ‘bodily functions.’”⁴ That is, our body image is often a reflection of, or embodiment of, normative cultural standards and a conception of how our bodies function in that context. We may be conscious or unaware of how cultural norms inform our body image. Also, our body image is constituted by our intentional actions and our chance for success.

In everyday experience, our sense of ownership is part of the structure of agential experience. As Gallagher explains, it is non-observational self-awareness of our own body enacting *our* actions. He states, “the body image, as a reflexive intentional system, normally represents the body as *my own* body, as a personal body that belongs to me. This sense of ownership contributes to a sense of an overall personal self.”⁵ Yet, the action is not mediated by a judgment that we have ownership of our bodies. In other words, we do not think “I own my body” when accomplishing an intended task; instead, it is incorporated into our body image. That is, as Merleau-Ponty says, it is not a matter of “I think” but of “I can.” In the case of the body, ownership materializes as the individual grasps control: if I control the movement of my body, I own my body.

Gallagher notes that our sense of agency is built into the structure of thinking itself, that is, the very structure of consciousness. To clarify, he offers Edmund Husserl’s description of phases of the conscious act, focusing on the retentional and protentional functions. The

function of retention is to retain previous consciousness and the intentional content of that consciousness. The protentional function is to anticipate what is about to happen in terms of experience. Protentional thought underlies a sense of agency in thinking, whereas, retention provides a sense of ownership of thought.⁶

If we are able to retain the thoughts we just had, then we get a sense that they are our thoughts. Being able to anticipate what comes next in terms of thinking gives us a sense that we are the ones who are thinking it. Thus, according to Gallagher, “the retentional-protentional structure of consciousness is constitutive of self-identity within the changing flow of consciousness; it generates the basic sense of . . . the feeling of identity, of being the perspectival origin of one’s own experience, which is a basic component of the experienced differentiation of self from non-self.”⁷ In other words, through this structure, we have a sense that “I am the one experiencing. . . ,” which provides a sense of ownership and agency since the thought coincides with my experience; that is, one experiences body-mind coherency.

The body schema is the spatiotemporal field of our body. That is to say, it is a way of expressing how the body is *in-and-of-the-world*.⁸ In this way, the body is tacitly understood in the figure-background structure—“every figure stands out against the double horizon of external and bodily space.”⁹ Knowledge of the body is not a matter of concentrating or directing attention to the lived-body; rather, embodied knowledge is instantaneous; it is peculiar to itself, and, moreover, it is complete in itself.¹⁰ The body does not need cognitive consciousness to *know*; it does not need language or representation to know. As Merleau-Ponty puts it, the body “has its world, or understands its world, without having to make use of any ‘symbolic’ or ‘objectifying function.’”¹¹

However, we can draw attention to our body image to affect our body schema. This is something we do when training for some

4. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 1945, trans. Colin Smith (Reprint, New York: Routledge, 1962), 158.

5. Shaun Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 28.

6. *Ibid.*, 193.

7. *Ibid.*, 201.

8. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 1945, trans. Colin Smith (Reprint, New York: Routledge, 1962), 115, 163-64.

9. *Ibid.*, 163.

10. *Ibid.*, 100.

11. *Ibid.*, 173.

skilled activity, like running, playing soccer, modifying our posture, etc. At the same time, our body schema can inform our body image; for instance, if you are successful with the intended act within a skilled activity. Cognitive concentration¹² is present but, in most cases, just temporarily; and moreover, it is not solely responsible for acquired embodied knowledge.

In summary, on the classical model, embodiment is to be tied to a certain world; to be embedded in a definite environment; to identify oneself with certain projects; to be continuously committed to such projects; and to have a continuous narrative history, all of which contribute to a sense of ownership, temporality, and subjectivity.

2. Plasticity

The ability to continually enrich and recast the body schema is evidence of the plasticity of embodiment. The body image and body schema are malleable, allowing ongoing attempts to recreate equilibrium. This may be temporary, like in the case of using crutches to assist after injury; extended over time, as in the example of an injury that imposes a permanent bodily change; or a profound change in identity, as in more disruptive conditions such as trauma. In each situation, the body has to (re)learn and understand its own embodiment.

Plasticity is the ability to maintain a capacity for change and balance, with the aptitude of remaining the same person. Catharine Malabou describes plasticity as “an equilibrium between the receiving and giving of form. It is understood as a sort of natural sculpting that forms our identity, an identity modeled by experience and that makes us subjects of history, a singular, recognizable, identifiable history, with all its events, gaps, and future.”¹³ Plasticity allows for a positive transformation, one that is developmental, modulational, and reparative.

Malabou adds that “Plasticity also refers to the possibility of being transformed without being destroyed; it characterizes the entire strategy of modification that seeks to avoid the threat of destruction.”¹⁴ For instance, Merleau-Ponty notes that in the case of danger, illness, or grief, new emotions and perceptions develop and replace old ones. He adds that this process only affects the “content of our experience and not its structure.”¹⁵ This means that what structures our experience is not replaced—we still experience the world as embodied subjects with a sense of ownership, agency, linear temporality, and historical narrative. So while the content of such experience influences how body schema and body image are shaped, this capacity for equilibrium remains an essential component of our being, despite disruptions to the schematic system.

Thus, while there may be disruptive events to the body-image-schematic system, there is a creative plasticity. An individual can go through several metamorphoses, several new combinations of body schema and body image to gain equilibrium. But in any of these interpretations, the true nature of being¹⁶ is not “carried off,” and self-identity, though always malleable, remains fairly stable.¹⁷

Malabou, though, proposes that if the identity were to change substantively then there would be no return to prior forms.¹⁸ Rather, the circle of metamorphosis would be broken and the capacity for equilibrium would be annihilated.¹⁹ This is what Malabou labels as *destructive plasticity*. Through the process of destructive plasticity, the subject is transformed to the point that it is unrecognizable not “because of a change in appearance” but “on account of a change in nature.”²⁰

12. Soon I make a distinction between cognitive concentration and an intensified, immediate feeling of being alive.

13. Catherine Malabou, *Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity*, 2009, trans. Carolyn Shread (Reprint, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), 3.

14. *Ibid.*, 44–45.

15. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 1945, trans. Colin Smith (Reprint, New York: Routledge, 1962), 96.

16. What I take Malabou to mean by the “true nature of being” is the structure and mechanisms of the human body that produce a felt sense of agency, ownership, and linear temporality.

17. Catherine Malabou, *Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity*, 2009, trans. Carolyn Shread (Reprint, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), 11.

18. *Ibid.*, 9.

19. *Ibid.*, 5.

20. *Ibid.*, 9.

3. Destructive Plasticity and the Metamorphosis of the Self

Destructive plasticity is an unprecedented metamorphosis: it is “a plasticity that does not repair, a plasticity without recompense or scar, one that cuts the thread of life in two or more segments that no longer meet.”²¹ Here lies the distinctive feature of destructive plasticity: the incapacity for reestablishing equilibrium. Yet, the language of “plasticity” is still appropriate because it is an underlying aspect of our being: we are plastic beings, and as Malabou notes, anyone of us has this plastic power of destruction within us and can undergo such a metamorphosis.²²

In the process of destructive plasticity “one form annihilates the other” and results in “the formation of a new individual.”²³ Malabou describes the formation of a new individual with “a molting of the inner sculpture.”²⁴ This means that both content and the structure of experience undergo metamorphoses. That is to say, the meaning-making content of one’s identity (agency and ownership) is compromised as the structure and mechanisms that produce such meaning-making capacity are fundamentally disrupted, resulting in a new individual. For instance, prior to my own traumatic experience, any reference to a “smashed up face” in film, literature, or everyday talk, had no visceral effect on me. But now, I have to intentionally anticipate and avoid such references and symbols. If I am exposed to any reference or symbolism of a bloodied, smashed up face, I experience a traumatic flashback, as described in the introduction, no matter whether I anticipated an exposure or not.

In Malabou’s account of destructive plasticity, the being is not destroyed to the state of non-being. Rather, Malabou contends:

Something *shows itself* when there is damage, a cut, something to which normal, creative plasticity gives neither access nor body: the deserting of subjectivity, the distancing of the

individual who becomes a stranger to herself, who no longer recognizes anyone, who no longer recognizes herself, who no longer remembers her self. These types of being impose a new form on their old form, without mediation or transition or glue or accountability, today versus yesterday, in a state of emergency, without foundation, bareback, sockless.²⁵

What shows itself in such cases is the absence of subjectivity, which means a loss of the individual’s sense of agency, autonomy, narrative history, and spatial-temporal world—the very ingredients of the embodied feeling of being alive. Consequently, the phenomenological experience of trauma includes a disassociation of the self and numbness towards the world.

Specifically, the new form imposed on the old form is what Malabou identifies as the *form of flight*. When threatened by destruction, the individual wants nothing more than to flee, instantaneously, with every bit of strength and force. In that moment, *flight* appears as “the only possible solution”—flee or be destroyed.²⁶ Within traditional plasticity, as opposed to fleeing, the individual transforms to evade the danger or to recover from destruction. But, she argues that “metamorphosis by destruction is not the same as flight; it is rather the form of the impossibility of fleeing.”²⁷

That is to say, despite any desire, any attempt, some trauma survivors cannot transcend the present or the body of the past. As Malabou argues, they experience, “Identity abandoned, disassociated again, identity that does not reflect itself, does not live its own transformation, does not subjectivize its change.”²⁸ This is because what forms the subject—the sense of embodied subjectivity, how we can determine an individual self distinguishable between worlds—is absent. The individual attempts to flee from the very thing which constitutes being—the body. In such cases, the individual wants to flee an impossible present.²⁹

25. *Ibid.*, 6.

26. *Ibid.*, 10.

27. *Ibid.*, 10.

28. *Ibid.*, 11.

29. Such analysis lines up with recent research on trauma and changes in the body’s alert-response system. In terms of polyvagal theory, the main effects take place within the polyvagal system, or rather the mixture of the activation and calming that operates out of a unique nerve influence.

21. Catherine Malabou, *Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity*, 2009, trans. Carolyn Shread (Reprint, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), 6.

22. *Ibid.*, 2, 5.

23. *Ibid.*, 5, 12.

24. *Ibid.*, 9.

The lack of a subject includes a lack of ownership. For instance, one phenomenon of trauma is the sense that something is happening to the individual, in which the individual grapples with making it intelligible. Malabou steers in a different direction by indicating that the sense of “happening to” can only occur in a coherent, continuous, recognizable self. In the instance of destructive plasticity, there is not a coherent sense of self that is carried on and through such that one can cognize the “happening-to” as the previous identity. Further, it is not an external force which is “happening to” the individual. The body “happens to” itself. Here is the seed of the disassociation of the self—there is no recognizable self and the dwelling of the missing self is experienced as foreign, external.

With this ontology of the accident in mind, trauma may be experienced as incessant micro-accidents, and the past is experienced as present. When one’s world is incessantly interrupted by traumatic sensations, the individual

Within the “Social Engagement System,” the individual is regulated and calm; able to connect, engage, communicate effectively, learn, and problem-solve; and the heart rate is slow. When the brain perceives a threat, the “Aggressive Defensive System” becomes active and the individual experiences an increase in breathing and heart rate, hyperarousal, the fight or flight response mechanism, dissociative rage, and panic; and the individual is quick to blame, attack and judge. When the brain perceives a threat substantial enough that it feels life-threatening, the ‘Passive Protection System’ is activated resulting in a ‘shut-down’ of the precortex, and amygdala, and cortisol de-regulation. The individual experiences immobilization, shame, hopelessness, or rather the ‘freeze’ response mechanism. For more see Stephen W. Porges, *The Polyvagal Theory: The Transformative Power of Feeling Safe* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2017).

In Bessel van der Kolk’s work on traumatic memory and polyvagal theory, what takes place in the body is that the trauma is stored as sensory memory fragments, in which such memory remains intact and does not modify. Additionally, in his work on developmental trauma, he finds that over time, the individual’s brain will default to the fight, flight, or freeze response even after the event has occurred. This results in the individual’s inability to regulate their response to stressors. With that, the brain’s alert-response system is fundamentally recalibrated. For more see *The Body Keeps the Score* (New York: Viking, 2015).

Although I am providing the reader with some contemporary trauma theories that line up with the account of destructive plasticity provided by Malabou, I do not intend to suggest that such experience is reducible to entirely physical mechanisms in the body, as I am more concerned with the phenomenology of traumatic experience: the compromising of the “felt experience of being alive” (emphasis mine).

lives in a state of ambiguity—in the world yet flailing, disengaged, improvising, completely exposed to the world. What shows itself is not just the loss of subjectivity, disassociation, and a broken history; simultaneously, the body exposes the trauma, though it may not be available to visual perception. Thus, trauma discloses how the individual is exposed to the world as an embodied subject. The embodied feeling of being alive is experienced as an immediate, intense sensation of horror in which the individual experiences an urgent call to respond.³⁰ But, to respond, one must have a sense of agency and capacity to successfully accomplish intentional acts.

4. Metamorphosis through the Trauma

In order to grasp how trauma shows itself in the body, I return to the analogy of the body to a painting. Through a series of interviews, painter Francis Bacon draws a connection between his paintings and the accident. While there is always a manner of manipulation in painting, Bacon claims to work “by chance.” Bacon often suggests that involuntary marks, which he describes as haphazard, non-rational, irrational, non-illustrational, and anti-illustrational, are much more deeply suggestive, unlocking areas of sensation other than a simple illustration of an image.³¹

Bacon remarks that accident and chance in painting work to make the images “fresher, not interfered with,” “more organic,” “raw,” “immediate,” and not “tampered with by consciousness.”³² Bacon explains, “It’s really a question in my case of being able to set a trap with which one would be able to catch the fact at its most living point.”³³ He believes that “it’s the slight

30. Here is the distinction between cognitive concentration and the intense, horrifying feeling of being alive in the moment of the flashback, etc. Within cognitive concentration, there is also an increase in agential action, and the individual intentionally brings their attention to an acute awareness of their body. Within the flashback, the individual does not autonomously bring their attention to the body; rather, the body’s stored sensory memory fragments “make themselves known.” This is what produces a “happening-to” of the body.

31. David Sylvester, *Interviews with Francis Bacon* (Great Britain: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 56.

32. *Ibid.*, 57, 92, 120, 177-78.

33. *Ibid.*, 54.

remove from fact, which returns me onto the fact more violently.”³⁴ Bacon has to destroy the image of the individual to capture their most “living quality.”

Likewise with trauma, when undergoing the metamorphosis of form and identity, the felt sensations are much more deeply suggestive of how we are embodied subjects. We like to think that trauma is “in the mind,” but the gutting experience shows how much the mind is in the body. Bacon notes that the “human body is in a sense a filter, apart from its other attributes.”³⁵ All experience is filtered through the body. The body is the medium of the accident, the material real of the accident, without which the accident does not exist. Both painting and body are, as Merleau-Ponty intimates, “beings in which the expression is indistinguishable from the thing expressed, their meaning, accessible only through direct contact . . . the nexus of living meaning.”³⁶ The way in which the meaning of the painting is stored in the painting, only known by direct display, is the way in which the meaning of the trauma is stored in the body. The trauma forms a whole new, permanent filter—a whole new body—which modifies how one engages with the world.

The annihilation of form, then, both unveils the screens by which we engage with the world and exposes the raw, immediate, materiality of our existence. The accident is absorbed into the body, as the accidental brush-mark is absorbed into the canvas, though the *phenomenological* experience is one of the impossibility of flight, not absorption.

However, I want to clarify that on my reading of Malabou’s account of destructive plasticity, subjectivity is abandoned in the moment of trauma, but the self is not destroyed; there still is a minimal self which is an emergent structure that encompasses all of the substrates: drives, forces, intentional and unintentional acts, protentional and retentional thoughts,

sensory memory fragments, etc.³⁷ An abandoning of subjectivity does occur in the immediate experience of the flashback, etc. because the relational aspect of self is “frozen.” However, once an individual begins to gain cognitive consciousness, the individual can then reflect on their experience. This is the thread of the self that remains, even while the individual is being “carried off.”

5. Conclusion

I have presented how it is that our brains/bodies produce a feeling of being alive, as human, with an ongoing sense of agency, ownership, and temporal linearity. Catherine Malabou’s account of destructive plasticity provides a way to understand how that underlying sense of agency is compromised in trauma. We find that an individual’s overall sense of subjectivity is compromised in the immediate, raw experience of the sensory memory fragment being activated. Yet, the actual whole body, that which encompasses all of substrates, still remains as the site of the traumatic experience.

My current study of trauma highlights how much we are our bodies and not just minds, and our sense of self comes from having ownership over our bodies. Both human and nonhuman animals experience trauma. What makes trauma especially painful is that it is experienced as the horror of the other living within, compromising this sense of ownership and agency. But if we can come to grasp that “other” within as very much an aspect of our being, and trust that our bodies are seeking equilibrium in the repetition of the flashback, nightmare, or chance encounter, perhaps there is a way to reconfigure ownership and subjectivity.

This is what I focus on in upcoming work on the phenomenology of writing trauma and resilience.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Melissa Burchard for organizing the Philosophical Encounters with Trauma conference and this special edition

34. David Sylvester, *Interviews with Francis Bacon* (Great Britain: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 30.

35. *Ibid.*, 199.

36. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 1945, trans. Colin Smith (Reprint, New York: Routledge, 1962), 174.

37. I develop this line of thinking about the minimal (relational) self in my upcoming work.

journal. I would also like to thank my family and partner for their ongoing support, as well as my mentor, Joanne Waugh.

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Current Publication, 13 September 2019: <https://publicphilosophyjournal.org/full-record/?amplificationid=2086>

Journal Publication, 24 August 2020: <https://publications.publicphilosophyjournal.org/record/?issue=6-18-224914&kid=6-15-224933>