

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Maurice Merleau-Ponty's concept of motor intentionality: Unifying two kinds of bodily agency

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Abstract

I develop an interpretation of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's concept of motor intentionality, one that emerges out of a reading of his presentation of a now classic case study in neuropathology—patient Johann Schneider—in *Phenomenology of Perception*. I begin with Merleau-Ponty's prescriptions for how we should use the pathological as a guide to the normal, a method I call *triangulation*. I then turn to his presentation of Schneider's unusual case. I argue that we should treat all of Schneider's behaviors as pathological, not only his abstract movements (e.g., pointing), as is commonly acknowledged in the secondary literature, but also crucially his concrete movements (e.g., grasping). Using these facts of Schneider's illness, I reconstruct a 'fundamental function' of consciousness, as Merleau-Ponty called it, in which there are two kinds of bodily agency: the power of the body to be solicited by a situation and the power of the body to project a situation. I propose that these powers became dissociated in Schneider's case, as evidenced by his abstract and concrete movements, while in the normal case, these powers comprise a dynamic unity, enacted as motor intentionality. I also discuss how my interpretation complements Merleau-Ponty's assertion that motor intentions exist between mind and matter.

1 | INTRODUCTION

In this article, I develop an interpretation of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's concept of *motor intentionality*, one that emerges out of a reading of his presentation of a now classic case study in neuropathology—patient Johann Schneider—in *Phenomenology of Perception*. I begin with Merleau-Ponty's prescriptions for how we should use the pathological as a guide to the normal, a method I call *triangulation*. I then turn to his presentation of Schneider's unusual case. I argue that we should treat all of Schneider's behaviors as pathological, not only his *abstract movements* (e.g., pointing), as is commonly acknowledged in the secondary literature, but also crucially his *concrete movements* (e.g., grasping). Using these facts of Schneider's illness, I reconstruct a 'fundamental function' of consciousness, as Merleau-Ponty called it, in which there are two kinds of bodily agency: the power of the body to be solicited by a situation *and* the power of the body to project a situation. I propose that these powers became dissociated in

Schneider's case, as evidenced by his abstract and concrete movements, while in the normal case, these powers comprise a dynamic unity, enacted as motor intentionality. I also discuss how my interpretation complements Merleau-Ponty's assertion that motor intentions exist between mind and matter.

2 | APPROACHING MOTOR INTENTIONALITY

In Merleau-Ponty's books *The Structure of Behavior* and *Phenomenology of Perception*, in his lectures on 'Nature', and arguably retained in his unfinished notes 'The Intertwining – The Chiasm', an idea of the body emerged that was radically different from the *mechanical body*—the causally determined biological system of externally related parts. Instead of conceiving of the body as a highly complex machine, or in addition to it, Merleau-Ponty developed something new, the *habitual body*—the phenomenal, the gestural, or better yet, the skilled body. And along with it emerged the equally radical correlative concept of skillful action—or *motor intentionality*.

Phenomenologists will be familiar with the notion of *intentionality*, or consciousness of something or other, a directedness or orientation of the subject towards something. At first blush, *motor intentionality* is a *bodily* consciousness of something or other, a *mobile* directedness or orientation of the subject towards something.

This strange notion is foundational to Merleau-Ponty's (1945) early work. When we begin reading him, we soon learn that normal motor intentionality subtends every aspect of ordinary human life: perception (notably) but also cognition, sexuality, empathy, even language (p. 137).¹ That said, given its importance, Merleau-Ponty wrote surprisingly little to explain this concept directly. There are few explicit references to 'motor intentionality' in Merleau-Ponty's work. For instance, in *Phenomenology of Perception*, the term 'motor intentionality' and its variant 'motor intention' appear only a handful times in the entire composition (pp. 56; 113; footnote 99 on 140; 147; 261; 331).²

Nevertheless, we find pressed into his manuscript many examples of motor intentionality. A few are these: 'I go through a door without comparing the width of the door to that of my body' (p. 144); 'Without any calculation, a woman maintains a safe distance between the feather in her hat and objects that might damage it' (p. 144); 'Knowing how to type ... is not the same as knowing the location of each letter on the keyboard, nor even having acquired a conditioned reflex for each letter that is triggered upon seeing it. But if habit is neither a form of knowledge nor an automatic reflex, then what it is? It is a question of a knowledge in our hands' (p.145); 'If I am seated at my desk and want to pick up the telephone, the movement of my hand toward the object, the straightening of my torso, and the contraction of my leg muscles envelop each other; I desire a certain result and the tasks divide themselves up among the segments in question' (p. 152). Passing through the door, protecting the feather in one's hat, typing on a keyboard, and reaching for a telephone. What these examples seem to have in common is that they are instances of everyday skillful action—what we might also call habitual practices, enactive and embedded performances, engaged and absorbed coping. They are bodily activities that fall somewhere between the poles of reflective actions (viz., movements caused by prior intentions) and reflexive reactions (viz., mere bodily behaviors).

Now, according to Merleau-Ponty, the motor intentionality operative in these examples is not easy to uncover. In his words, 'it is difficult to bring pure motor intentionality to light, for it hides behind the objective world that it contributes to constituting' (footnote 99 on p. 140). Motor intentionality permeates the *background*, making it difficult to characterize directly, without distortion. As the recent commentator Carman (2008: 101) described it, it is 'our own tacitly abiding bodily understanding, which is so basic and so familiar that we are normally unaware of it, [which is] so inconspicuous and so transparent to our ordinary perceptual sense of ourselves as to be invisible'.

Over the last few decades, there has been a growing interest in understanding motor intentionality, as a key concept in Merleau-Ponty's work, deserving its own dedicated treatment. A subset of these investigations specifically concerns Merleau-Ponty's extended presentation in *Phenomenology of Perception* of what has become a somewhat

famous case study in the field of neuropsychology: the turn of the century gestalt psychologist Adhémar Gelb and neurologist Kurt Goldstein's engagement with a brain injury patient named Johann Schneider.³

Although Schneider's case is mentioned throughout *Phenomenology of Perception* (often as 'Schneider' or 'Schn' but sometimes simply as 'the patient'), Merleau-Ponty's (1945) principal analysis occurs in 'Part I, Section III: The Spatiality of One's Own Body and Motricity'. And it is there, in a rare unequivocal moment, where Merleau-Ponty wrote that *Schneider lacked motor intentionality*:

He is missing neither motricity nor thought, and we must acknowledge, between movement as a third person process and thought as a representation of movement, an anticipation or a grasp of the result assured by the body itself, as a motor power, a 'motor project' (Bewegungsentwurf), or a 'motor intentionality' (p. 113).

As I understand this quotation, Merleau-Ponty was clearly asserting that Schneider did not have motor intentionality. Schneider could move. Schneider could think. But he could not do something else. Whatever practical 'grasp of the result' Schneider did possess, it was not the same as before his injury—it was not motor intentionality.

Now it might be objected here, at the outset, that if Schneider lacked motor intentionality (as I interpret Merleau-Ponty here), and motor intentionality is the basis for all intentionality (as I interpreted Merleau-Ponty earlier), then it would seem to follow that Schneider lacked intentionality (pp. 113; 137). But since Schneider was clearly conscious, the objection continues, then he must not lack motor intentionality, and my reading of this key quotation must be wrong. The problem with this objection is that Merleau-Ponty held a more nuanced view about the relation between motor intentionality and intentionality. We should understand him as claiming that *normal* motor intentionality is the basis of *normal* intentionality and that *pathological substitutions* for motor intentionality are the basis of *pathological substitutions* for intentionality. Thus, all we can conclude from Schneider lacking *normal* motor intentionality is that he also lacked *normal* intentionality, and this was undeniably the case, as we will shortly see.⁴

But what precisely Schneider lacked is still a hotly debated question. There is a large gap between 'thought as a representation of movement' and 'movement as a third person process' (p. 113). We can label the phenomenon inhabiting that gap 'motor intentionality' and say that it is 'a grasp of the result assured by the body itself' (p. 113). But theorists are simply not in agreement about what this means. The case study of Schneider may well 'bring motor intentionality to light', in Merleau-Ponty's words, but only if we can carefully tease out what he thought had gone missing (footnote 99 on p. 140). In the subsequent sections, I hope to take important steps towards solving the puzzle. The first is to address an important *methodological* issue that I can introduce by asking an apparently simple question: 'What, if anything, can we learn about the normal from the pathological?'

3 | TRIANGULATION

Illness, deficit, dysfunction, and injury alter the features of human life, but in studying such effects, precisely what insight do we gain into what is normal? There is a common sense view, a pervasive assumption really, that pathologies *expose* normal capacities or abilities, either by spotlighting their absence or by highlighting their presence.⁵ But this common sense view should come with a caveat.

Pathologies can also *produce* capacities and abilities that are non-existent in the normal case—not features that are so obviously alien that they fool no one, but effects that are so normal-seeming, that even to the careful observer they lead to reading those dysfunctions back onto normal function. In other words, the specialness unique to the pathological situation itself can generate special effects, in which case the new characteristics, created by the illness, may be carried over and wrongly inscribed onto the list of contents of the non-pathological.

Because conclusions drawn from investigating pathological cases may differ dramatically, depending on whether we treat observed capacities and abilities as exposing or obscuring what is normal, it is crucial to determine which setting we are in when analyzing pathological cases.

Merleau-Ponty himself was aware of this concern. In an important passage in *Phenomenology of Perception*, he wrote this about pathological behavior:

How are we to make sense of this series of facts, and how should the function that exists for the normal person, but that is missing for the patient, be understood through them? It cannot be a question of simply transferring to the normal person what is missing in the patient and what he is trying to recover. Illness...is a complete form of existence, and the procedures that it employs in order to replace the normal functions that have been destroyed are themselves pathological phenomena. The normal cannot be deduced from the pathological, and deficiencies cannot be deduced from their substitutions, through a mere change of sign. The substitutions must be understood as substitutions, as allusions to a fundamental function that they attempt to replace, but of which they do not give us the direct image (p. 110).

In this quotation, Merleau-Ponty stipulated that identifying the patient's pathological activities does not thereby disclose 'through a mere change of sign' our normal activities—determining what the patient cannot do will not immediately tell us what we can do, or vice versa. Merleau-Ponty maintained that the pathological patient is, in a real sense, in a different milieu than normal subjects. The patient's life is not divided up into that which is touched by his pathology and that which is not, but rather everything in the patient's world undergoes a process of transformation. Even the 'procedures' the patient uses to compensate for illness or to cover up dysfunction must be understood as 'substitutions', and must also be treated as pathological (e.g., Waldenfels, 1980: 25; Dillon, 1988: 137; Carman, 2008: 114; Jensen, 2009: 384; Matherne, 2014: 142–144; see also Goldstein, 1934; Merleau-Ponty, 1942; Canguilhem, 1966).

What is needed is some way to draw correct inferences from the known details of the pathological case to the normal case about which we wish to know more, while taking into account Merleau-Ponty's insight that these two situations cannot communicate directly. While he never articulated a formal method that would suit this exact purpose (beyond the sentiment quoted here), I would like to offer one on his behalf, as a way of framing what Merleau-Ponty was doing in his presentation of Schneider's case. I call it *triangulation*. In its original use, triangulation was used in navigation, surveying, and astronomy to locate a heretofore unknown point in space by establishing a convergence of measurements of two other known points in space.⁶ I propose that Merleau-Ponty was performing a kind of triangulation in disclosing motor intentionality through his analysis of Schneider, gathering the details of the pathological case in order to trace the contours of an intermediate realm that opens up a relationship with the normal case.⁷ To put it crudely, we cannot draw a straight line from the pathological to the normal. But we can triangulate from the pathological to the normal through a third communicating element.

In Merleau-Ponty's work, triangulation involves three steps. A first is to take into consideration patients' whole lives—their entire 'existence'—when investigating the pathological: not only what they still do but also how they do it; not only what they don't do but also what they do in its place. This requires close observations of their basic behaviors, the manners in which they conduct these behaviors, and whether these behaviors change or adapt over time—in the words of Waldenfels (1980: 25), the progression from 'an impoverishment of structure (loss of differentiation), to an emancipation of partial structure (dissociation), to the development of replacement structures, and so on'. It also includes attention to patients' own attitudes towards these performances, for instance, their firsthand accounts of what it is like to live with their pathologies.

A second step, perhaps as important as the first, is to construct a detailed intermediate realm out of these facts, plotting another known point along our triangular geometry. In Merleau-Ponty's words, we must identify patients' pathological ways of being as 'allusions' to a 'fundamental function'.⁸ Even though pathological activities 'do not give us the direct image' of this fundamental function, no *direct* image is not *no* image. The details of the pathological case indicate the structural demands of this communicating element (e.g., its contents, internal dynamics, *etcetera*).

Here, then, is a third and final step. Having traced the contours of this intermediate realm, its differential realization in the pathological case and in the normal case must be understood, whereupon previously unknown facts of normal life are revealed.

Thus, to learn about the normal from the pathological, without being led astray, we must heed Merleau-Ponty's warnings and triangulate. As we interpret the details of Schneider's case, we must survey the descriptions of Schneider's whole existence, piece together the fundamental function that Schneider's pathological activities indicate, and then identify the ways that normal agents realize the fundamental function, revealing motor intentionality, as Merleau-Ponty intended.

4 | SCHNEIDER

Let us now turn to the case of Johann Schneider: the patient who Merleau-Ponty said lacked motor intentionality and whom so many recent theorists have scrutinized to try to say what motor intentionality is. What we know for certain about Schneider is this: At the age of 24, while a musketeer in the German army, he suffered a traumatic brain injury on June 4, 1915; Schneider fell into a coma for a period of time, but after waking, he was rehabilitated; in 1916, he began his long relationship with Gestalt psychologist Adhémar Gelb and neurologist Kurt Goldstein; they carefully recorded many aspects of his disorder, and not just with their own measurements and observations but also Schneider's own verbal descriptions and drawings (Gelb & Goldstein, 1918: 9). Even today, Schneider enjoys a certain notoriety in the annals of neuropathology as one of the earliest scientifically documented cases of apperceptive visual agnosia, although the exact details of his brain injury are still debated (e.g., Goldenberg, 2003; Farah, 2004; Marotta & Behrmann, 2004; Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia, 2007; Cole, 2008; Jensen, 2009). But the price for that fame was rather high.

In analyzing Schneider's ability to act, Merleau-Ponty was quite clear that Schneider's consciousness was not *unrelated* to his movements.⁹ For instance, if he intended to walk home, he did walk home. If he decided to light a lamp, he did. If he wanted to sew a leather wallet (he became a leather worker), he could do that too! But while Schneider was able to live a relatively full life after a time, he was left with a strange constellation of symptoms that Merleau-Ponty carefully presented. For instance, Schneider could not identify certain shapes without first tracing them with his finger. He could describe the position of his arm only after swinging it about. When viewing a drawing, he could list its elements (e.g., a complex curve, a black point) but not its form (e.g., a butterfly). He could swat at a mosquito biting him but was unable point to the sore left behind. He could be sexually aroused by a caress but not by an image.

4.1 | Abstract movements

Following Merleau-Ponty's (1945) descriptions closely, Schneider clearly had difficulties initiating *abstract movements*. Merleau-Ponty defined 'abstract movements' as Gelb and Goldstein did, as 'movements that are not directed towards any actual situation' (p. 105). Notably, Schneider had difficulties pointing to parts of his body. But he also had trouble pretending to comb his hair or tracing a circle in the air because these movements were not responses to any real demands of his actual situation.

Many interpreters of Merleau-Ponty have emphasized Schneider's problems with abstract movements, characterizing them as profoundly impaired. For example, Schneider is said to lack 'the power to reckon with the possible' according to Romdenh-Romluc (2011: 93); Matthews (2002: 81) asserts that 'patients like Schneider find 'abstract movements' difficult', because his body is no longer "the potentiality of a certain world', as it is for a normal person'; Bermúdez (2005: 300) gleams, 'the essence of [Schneider's] disorder being an inability to carry out what he (Merleau-Ponty) calls abstract movements'; and Toadvine (Fall 2016, web) concludes that, 'Schneider lacks the ability to 'project' into virtual space'. Some accounts are slightly more nuanced. For example, Hammond, Howard, and Keat (1991: 167) note that 'self-conscious and *abnormal means* are used by Schneider in attempting to perform ... abstract movements' (*emphasis added*). Dillon (1988) attributes to Schneider some minimal capacity for genuine abstract movement. Although Dillon initially claims that 'Schneider displays an inability to perform tasks of an

abstract or theoretical nature', he later corrects himself, referring to Schneider (though unnamed this time) as 'the patient who can scratch his nose easily but can point to it only *with difficulty*' (p. 135; *emphasis added*). Similarly, focusing on structures of involvement, Hubert Dreyfus notes that Schneider cannot turn to a potential task without perspicuously, self-consciously, resorting to abstract movements. For Dreyfus (2007: 60; 63), Schneider's abstract movements are pathological because they constitute a 'lessening', in which Schneider '[projects] an abstract possibility, and [decides] to act on it'. This is to be juxtaposed to the normal case, in which our bodies are 'summoned' by new tasks, and our behavior is 'modified' accordingly (pp. 63; 60). Reuter (1999: 73) writes that '[Schneider] was unable to 'project' a situation for himself in the way needed for smoothly performing abstract movements'. Along the same vein, Mooney (2011: 365) states that '[Schneider] already possesses an imaginative representation of an abstract movement in its overall form, yet this is not enough to guarantee that it will be executed quickly and smoothly'. The assertion seems to be that abstract movements must be smooth and quick to count as abstract movements, as if there are normal (quick and smooth) and abnormal (slow and inelegant) abstract movements.

Schneider's troubles with abstract movements are clear to readers of Merleau-Ponty (1945). But I believe that Schneider's *aptitude* for abstract movement has not been stressed enough in the secondary literature—that is, his very real ability to *project* himself into existing situations, or to *create* meaningful new ones.¹⁰ Merleau-Ponty claimed that the world appears organized and meaningful due to a power of projection and that this "'projection' or 'conjuring up'... is also what makes abstract movement possible" (p. 115). It is too easy to overlook the fact that Schneider repeatedly and cleverly overcame his difficulties with abstract movement by employing a variety of 'tricks' (p. 107). For example, even though Schneider could not pretend to comb his hair, he could do so if given a comb, or if pretending to hold a mirror. In another description, Schneider initially appeared unable to pantomime a military salute for fun (as opposed to being ordered to), but we soon read that he was able to pantomime a military salute for fun, if he maneuvered his arm into making the gesture, by swinging his limb until his hand lucked near his forehead. The same held true of other abstract movements, including the tracing of geometric shapes in the air. It appears that Schneider could manage abstract movements 'if he is allowed to see the limb in question, or to execute preparatory movements involving his whole body' (p. 105). In other words, Schneider's clever strategies effectively projected a meaningful and organized situation around him, in which abstract movement was possible. Priest (1998: 115) gets it nearly right when he asserts that Merleau-Ponty 'wishes us to bear in mind certain circumstances under which these disabilities can be partly overcome by Schneider'. And he goes on to list them: if Schneider is allowed to open his eyes and watch his limbs, if he first moves his whole body, and if he can rehearse the requisite movements (Priest, 1998: 115–116). But what none of these interpreters do, even the most astute ones, is recognize that Schneider's tricks were not that far off from those we use in normal life.

People (who do not suffer from this illness) often use bootstrapping techniques. It is quite commonplace. The development and practice of skill involves tricks to discover and reinforce what the right and wrong bodily movements are. In fact, if someone told you that they learned to ride a bike, or play the piano, or sew a leather wallet quickly and smoothly, without looking at their limbs, without preparing or rehearsing—that is, the things Schneider used to initiate abstract movements—you would simply not believe them. Learning like that is the stuff of fantasy. Real skill acquisition requires, among other things, tricks designed to help catch the movement. Consider the following examples: A tennis player, in order to identify why she is serving into the net, may videotape herself. Watching herself on the video, she discovers that she is pulling her head down. So she uses tricks to prevent that mistake, like holding her gaze skyward for the count of three after hitting the ball, before looking to see whether it landed in the service box; A choreographer wants a dancer to express a particular emotion but is uncertain how to describe what moves must be made, so instead she asks him to move about improvisationally (haphazardly) until he happens upon a combination that she likes; A child learning to brush her teeth discovers it is easier when looking at herself in the mirror.

Strangely, while these tricks offer a useful temporary means of achieving some behavioral outcome in the non-pathological case (as in situations of learning), in Schneider's case, he seemed unable to cast off his training wheels.

He always needed them in order to perform abstract movements. As a consequence, Merleau-Ponty (1945: 136) reported that

[Schneider] never sings or whistles on his own ... He never takes the initiative sexually. He never goes out for a walk, but always to run an errand, and he does not recognize Professor Goldstein's house when walking by it 'because he has not gone out with the intention of going there'. Just as he needs to gain a 'hold' on his own body through preparatory movements prior to executing movements that are not traced out in advance in a familiar situation, so too a conversation with another person fails to constitute for him a situation that is meaningful in itself and that might solicit impromptu responses. He can only speak according to a plan settled in advance ... There is something meticulous and serious in all of his behavior, which comes from the fact that he is incapable of play-acting.

For Schneider, abstract movements are, in a sense, bound by a contradiction—for him, acting without a plan demands 'a plan settled in advance'. But, to be clear, he could perform abstract movements, if given a wide allowance to initiate them, creating situations in which those behaviors are achievable.

In sum, the significance of *Schneider's tricks for initiating abstract movements* is often overlooked. Merleau-Ponty was careful to describe Schneider's clever adaptations, attempts to project around him a coherent world—or the resemblance of one. And, in this way, Merleau-Ponty established an interesting similarity between Schneider and us. Primarily in situations of play or learning, we use comparable tricks to project ourselves into an existing situation—to create a world suitable for our actions. But resemblance is not equivalence. What most interpreters have accurately identified in the text is that there is pathology in Schneider's abstract movements. Tricks can be cast off, once playtime is over, or once the performance is learned, in the normal case. And it is understood among most interpreters that this is most unlike Schneider's situation.

4.2 | Concrete movements

Merleau-Ponty also reported that Schneider seemed capable of performing 'concrete movements', again understood as Gelb and Goldstein did, as 'the movements that are necessary for life ... provided they are habitual movements' (p. 105). For example, Schneider could easily grab a part of his body, brush his hair when handed a mirror and comb, or give a military salute when ordered, when he found himself in a familiar situation in which these habitual actions would be appropriate. A striking example of this, retold by Merleau-Ponty, finds Schneider employed constructing leather wallets after the war, and from all accounts, he was quite good at his job.

The workbench, the scissors, and the pieces of leather are presented to the subject as poles of action; they define, through their combined value, a particular situation that remains open, that calls for a certain mode of resolution, a certain labor. The body is but one element in the system of the subject and his world, and the task obtains the necessary movements from him through a sort of distant attraction, just as the phenomenal forces at work in my visual field obtain from me, without any calculation, the motor reactions that will establish between those forces the optimum equilibrium (pp. 108–109).

The bench, scissors, and pieces of leather are not mere objects; even for Schneider, they have a motor significance—objects are 'poles of action' that 'obtain the necessary movements' by 'a sort of distant attraction'. We can understand the communiqués from object to body in this vignette as *solicitations* (dispatches that call for sitting, cutting, and sewing), and their 'combined value' comprise a situation for Schneider, in this case, a wallet-making situation, in which needle and string solicit particular movements from his fingers—say, to thread the string through the eye of the needle.¹¹

It is easy to be impressed with Schneider's capacity for concrete behaviors. Here, too, many scholars in the secondary literature have noted Schneider's apparent ability to perform concrete movements, even complicated ones, quite well. Hardly anyone seems to locate the pathology in Schneider's concrete movements. For example, Dillon

(1988: 132) writes, '[Schneider] is capable of grasping (*greifen*) various objects which are immediately present and significant to him within the practical context of a concrete project'; Dreyfus (2007: 63) claims, 'Schneider can see objects and can switch tasks from cutting to sewing as he makes his wallets'; Kelly (2000: 168) observes 'Schneider, like a normal subject, will quickly move his hand to the point on his body where a mosquito is stinging him'; Siewert (2005: 272) writes, 'Schneider had no trouble engaging in routines with which he was already familiar ... as the occasion for them arose'; Cerbone (2006: 125) notes that 'the damage to Schneider's brain does not manifest itself to any great degree, as long as the actions in question are performed in a reflexive, routine fashion'; and after an extensive analysis of Schneider, an entire chapter in fact, Romdenh-Romluc (2011: 100) concludes that 'the only motor skills he can access are those that are relevant to his current project and actual environment'. It seems clear to these interpreters of Merleau-Ponty (1945) that Schneider could perform concrete movements. Sometimes they note, as did Merleau-Ponty, that Schneider had become a slightly slower in his concrete activities after his injury—supposedly, when making wallets, 'the output of his work reaches three-quarters the output of a normal worker' (p. 105). But, if nothing else, he was fully capable of being solicited by the real demands of his actual situation, if we believe the vast majority of the secondary literature.

Here, too, some accounts are more nuanced than others. Carman (2008: 116) writes that Schneider 'can perform concrete movements, but he lacks the perceptual background that ordinarily imbues such movements with their worldly significance'. Jensen (2009: 386) makes a similar point when he claims that 'we should not expect the concrete movements of Schneider to be of the same phenomenological kind as those of the normal person moving under similar circumstances'. And while neither Carman nor Jensen extensively examine the similarities and differences between Schneider's concrete movements and our own, Mooney (2011: 376–377) takes up this line of investigation by positing two kinds of concrete movement—the habitual kind (which Schneider could perform) and the creative/transpositional kind (which he could not). This move, although insightful, strikes me as unnecessary. We do not need an extra (sub)category of concrete movement to understand Schneider's pathology. I believe that all his concrete movements were pathological, as I will explain now.

Once concrete movements began, once Schneider was solicited, Merleau-Ponty (1945) felt it important to note that any interruption caused Schneider to lose all dexterity, thereby upending the gesture. He could not *modify* concrete movements. As Merleau-Ponty described it, 'if the patient is directed to interrupt the movement before it reaches its goal ... then the movement becomes impossible' (p. 106). And again, 'if his trick is interrupted and he is reminded of the experimental situation, all of his dexterity disappears' (p. 107). Merleau-Ponty further reported that even in the most intimate moments of Schneider's life, 'if foreplay is interrupted, the sexual cycle does not seek to be continued' (p. 157).

This inability to modify concrete movements is connected to Merleau-Ponty's intriguing portrayal of those movements as *non-voluntary*. When describing Schneider's sexual performances, Merleau-Ponty suggested that 'things happen at each moment as if the subject did not know what to do' (p. 157). Schneider was, as it were, along for the ride. But more revealing might be Merleau-Ponty's inclusion of Schneider's supposed own self-report of concrete movements generally: "'I [Schneider] experience movements as a result of the situation, as the sequence of events themselves; my movements and I, we are, so to speak, merely a link in the unfolding of the whole, and I am scarcely aware of any voluntary initiative ... everything works by itself'" (p. 107; *quoting Schneider*).¹²

We, too, have difficulty coping with interruptions in the execution of habits. Slipping on an icy sidewalk can disrupt a mindless stroll; a driver can be distracted if he takes a sip of coffee that is hotter than expected. There are countless ways to interrupt a sexual encounter. We are, nevertheless, generally capable of continuing the behavioral sequence in spite of disruption. Most able-bodied adults can continue to walk on an icy sidewalk; most drivers can drink unexpectedly hot coffee and stay in their lanes. The sexual act can be resumed. We modify our behavior accordingly.

And even when we are deeply engaged in habitual performances, we do not experience our movements as non-voluntary. 'Being in the zone' and 'feeling the flow' are not expressions of the absence of volition. Quite the opposite. So-called 'flow states' involve the feeling that your intentions are effortlessly manifested in your movements. We are not (nor do we feel like) 'a link in the unfolding of the whole'. It is not as if we do 'not know what to do'.

Merleau-Ponty's inclusion of this peculiarity in Schneider's experience of agency should be emphasized: Actions that we would experience as voluntary (however minimal or different the sense of agency is that accompanies most skills and habits), in Schneider's hands, feel controlled from the outside. This attribution to Schneider of a felt lack of volition more closely resembles feelings associated with extreme forms of repetitive behaviors (such as compulsion and addiction) in which subjects report that their will has been suppressed or overtaken by their bodily movements—'it's like my body had a mind of its own'. But unlike these extreme and uncanny scenarios, Schneider's concrete movements retained their purposiveness; there is no hint to the contrary in Merleau-Ponty's descriptions. When solicited by a runny nose, Schneider *did intend* to blow his nose; when it was dark, he *did decide* to light the lamp; when surrounded by leather and needle and thread, he *did want* to make the wallet.

In sum, although it may appear that the capacity for concrete movements is something we share with Schneider, this is only a mere appearance. If we are being careful with the text, it is crucial to see that *Schneider had trouble with concrete movements too*. This may seem odd to say because, with a comb and mirror, for instance, he is—to our eyes—combing his hair. But what he was doing is not what we are doing when we comb our hair. Again, resemblance is not equivalence. To know this, we only have to listen (again) to what Merleau-Ponty heard in Schneider, "I experience movements as a result of the situation, as the sequence of events themselves; my movements and I, we are, so to speak, merely a link in the unfolding of the whole, and I am scarcely aware of any voluntary initiative" (p. 107; quoting Schneider).

5 | ANALYSES OF SCHNEIDER

I have argued that Merleau-Ponty was *not* of the opinion that Schneider could perform concrete movements but not abstract movements—an interpretation commonly posited in the secondary literature. In other words, it may seem natural to conclude that Merleau-Ponty claimed Schneider could grasp but not point. But I believe this is only the beginning of a dialectical analysis of the patient's pathology. Along with possibly a handful of other scholars, I have proposed, instead, that if we consider the presentation of the case study in its subtle totality, Merleau-Ponty was attempting to convey that Schneider's pathology manifested itself equally in both types of behavior. First, Merleau-Ponty recounted Schneider's difficulty initiating abstract movements and his attempts to solve it by using bootstrapping techniques. Schneider used these tricks of projection to create a meaningful situation around him in which abstract movement was possible, but he was forever beholden to these artifices. Second, while Schneider was responsive to the solicitations of his situation, Merleau-Ponty documented Schneider's difficulty modifying concrete movements. Once solicited, they could not be interrupted; otherwise, the action was lost. And then there were Schneider's supposed self-reports that his concrete movements were non-voluntary. Thus, I believe we should interpret Merleau-Ponty as portraying Schneider as having two very real, but also quite distinct, deficits.

Merleau-Ponty's presentation of Schneider's case has generated a variety of truly divergent interpretations of motor intentionality. They can be apportioned among one of three categories:

- 1) Schneider exhibited *pure* motor intentionality;
- 2) Schneider *lacked* motor intentionality completely;
- 3) Schneider presented a case of *partial* or *weakened* motor intentionality (where motor intentionality admits of *degrees*).

Curiously, these interpretations do *not* quarrel over the basic details of the case study. Instead, they differ over which of Schneider's supposed abstract inabilities or concrete abilities is the key to unlocking motor intentionality.

For instance, some theorists equate motor intentionality with concrete movement: Thus, Schneider was snared in a milieu of pure unrelenting motor intentionality (e.g., Braddock, 2001; Kelly, 2002). While other theorists draw the opposite conclusion, claiming that motor intentionality is equivalent to abstract movement: thus, Schneider lived a life devoid of motor intentionality (e.g., Haas, 2008; Romdenh-Romluc, 2011). But the most common view finds that motor intentionality takes part in (or of) both abstract and concrete movements: thus, Schneider suffered from

weakened motor intentionality (e.g., Baldwin, 2007; Carman, 2008; Cerbone, 2006; Dillon, 1988; Dreyfus, 2007; Hammond et al., 1991; Jensen, 2009; Kojima, 2002; Mooney, 2011; Siewert, 2005).¹³

These are well-wrought interpretations. But there are two specific problems I mean to raise with all of them. First, as I have already argued, there is significant pathology manifest not just in Schneider's abstract movements but also crucially in his concrete movements. Any account of motor intentionality that flows from a misinterpretation of the details of Schneider's case will be incomplete—particularly those that credit Schneider with (nearly) normal concrete movements.

Second, and this may be easy to miss, even if you accept my analysis that Schneider's abstract and concrete movements were equally pathological, we have *not* just learned what two kinds of normal behavior are. In other words, if we start asking ourselves which normal behaviors we possess (*vis-à-vis* abstract and concrete movements), then we have already made a mistake. I believe we must read Merleau-Ponty as claiming that *there are no normal versions of abstract and concrete movements—they are pathological adaptations*. To be certain, from the outside, even to the not-so-casual observer, some of Schneider's movements may appear indistinguishable from normal behavior. But this is the nature of a *doppelgänger*—the near perfect appearance of sameness. Thus, for all the theorists who share in common their use of Merleau-Ponty's analysis of Schneider to understand the concept of motor intentionality (whether they think he reveals it positively, negatively, or by degree), I must repeat that motor intentionality is not directly disclosed by Schneider's performance of abstract and concrete movements.

Precisely, because of the warning about what we can learn about the normal from pathological that I introduced earlier, we must understand abstract and concrete movements as pathological aftereffects of a brain injury, compensatory 'substitutions', to recall Merleau-Ponty's own description. Following his council, we must *triangulate*: to treat all of Schneider's behaviors and attitudes as allusions to a 'fundamental function' that his pathological substitutions strove, but failed, to make good on; to discover what Schneider's pathology indicates but which finds different manifestation in normal life. Therefore, only after articulating that fundamental function will we be in a position to understand what motor intentionality is in the normal case. So how do we piece together this intermediate realm, this communicating element, this fundamental function?

6 | FUNDAMENTAL FUNCTION

In (re)constructing the fundamental function implied by Schneider's pathology, it seems like we might be back at step one. But Merleau-Ponty supplied us with the blueprint in his selective presentation of the details of Schneider's case. Two things immediately emerge from the text that relay information about the fundamental function. First, in all Merleau-Ponty's descriptions, Schneider's behaviors have in common the same basic constituents: *his body and his situation*. These allude to a fundamental function that contains body and situation. Second, in Merleau-Ponty's recounting, Schneider's body and situation have two original ways of relating to one another: *projection and solicitation*. This alludes to a fundamental function in which projection and solicitation serve as intentional threads.

Piecing together these elements, an image of a fundamental function emerges in which body and situation are connected through the vectors of projection and solicitation. Although Schneider was unable to play act (so always turned a pretend situation into an actual one), Merleau-Ponty (1945) also acknowledged that all skillful action involves something like this kind of transformation. The bodily power of projection 'creates' or 'conjures' or 'summons' a situation, as if by magic, as Merleau-Ponty liked to say (p. 115). The body constitutes something *as* a situation, imbuing it with meaning, through the power of projection. On the flip side, while Schneider lacked a sense of agency in the performance of familiar tasks (when sewing leather wallets and such), Merleau-Ponty also acknowledged that all skillful action involves something like this kind responsiveness to situational demands—'as the invitation to these very gestures and as the theater of these very actions'—to which the body can rejoin in the affirmative or the negative (p. 261). There must also be the bodily power of solicitation, in which the body is sensitive to the demands of the situation and is able to respond.

But this is where things begin to differ between Schneider's lot and our own. The fundamental function, described here, is a *general schema*. Its constituents, and the threads that connect them, comprise potentialities that, while poised for action, nevertheless must be *enacted* (viz., ensured, realized, and actualized). Merleau-Ponty was clear that Schneider's pathology was not merely behavioral. It was nuclear—Schneider had a 'fundamental disturbance' (p. 121), a 'fundamental disorder' (p. 126), that lay at his 'personal core' (p. 136). That is, there is a disparity between Schneider's fundamental function and ours, which generates a corresponding difference in the ways Schneider's actions attempt to furnish his fundamental function, and the way that we enact ours. And this is exactly what we find.

In Schneider's case, Merleau-Ponty wrote that the fundamental function 'goes limp' (p. 137) and has been 'leveled out' (p. 132) by his illness. I propose we characterize this by picturing a split within the fundamental function. Within this general schema, the daily activities required for living Schneider's life are artificially shunted into one of two autonomous streams. Projection from body to situation is enacted by his abstract movements. Solicitation from situation to body is realized by his concrete movements. But the two remain vitally separate, and any action that normally would involve all of these elements together must align itself imperfectly with one side or the other (see Figure 1).

In the normal case, however, no such bifurcation exists. We succeed in enacting the whole of the fundamental function at once, by realizing the dynamic flow of projection and solicitation between body and situation, with performances that unite these two intentional orientations within a single action—which is nothing other than *motor intentionality*. We launch into skillful action when we want to, though pulled in by bodily solicitations; when deep in the performance, we feel we are in the flow, responding to demands of the situation by progressively modifying our behavior; bodily projection conjures a horizon of meaning around the situation, so we retain the feeling of agency as we proceed; and when we stop, we project out, reallocating our absorption, by responding to the solicitations on the periphery of our involved activity. Therefore, when the entire fundamental function, elements interconnected and threads encircling, is realized by the body itself, undisturbed by illness, we find motor intentionality, enacting both a bodily power to be solicited by a situation and—at the same time—a bodily power to project a situation (see Figure 2 on the next page).¹⁴

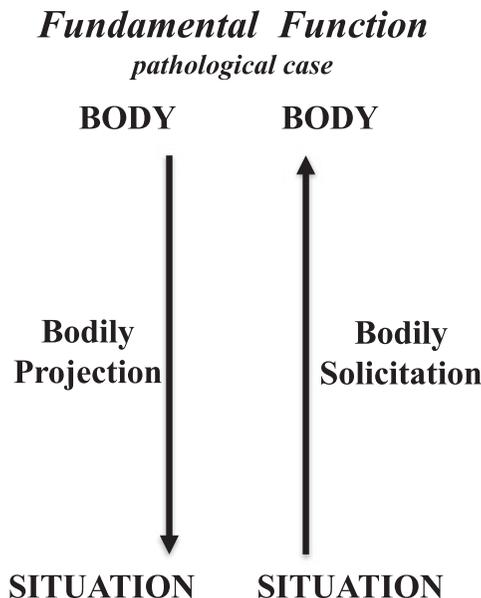


FIGURE 1 The fundamental function in Schneider's case. Projection and solicitation are realized by abstract and concrete movements, respectively

Notice here that if we merely had transferred to the normal case what Schneider either possessed or lacked, then we might be lead to certain conclusions about motor intentionality: First, we possess two distinct schemas of action—projection and solicitation; second, we realize these schemas by performing two distinct kinds of action—abstract movements and concrete movements; and third, motor intentionality is abstract movement or concrete movement, or some combination of the two.

On my view, motor intentionality is none of these things—indeed, not even a ‘normal unity and integration’ of abstract and concrete movements, as shrewd interpreters like Carman (2008: 117) conclude in his extended treatment of Schneider’s case. The problem with the notion of a normal unity *qua* integration is that its parts must be separate insofar as they can be combined. What is pathological in Schneider’s case was the very fact of his separate abstract and concrete movements, no matter how successfully he managed to integrate them (and we read that the longer Schneider lived with his illness, he became increasingly good at doing so). But what exactly is the alternative to integration that I am proposing? Dillon (1988: 146) writes that, in Merleau-Ponty’s work, the ‘active, constituting, centrifugal role of the body, its transcendental operation, is inconceivable apart from its receptive, responsive, centripetal role before the givenness of the world’. Here too we are moving in the right direction. These two *roles* must be unified. Though, technically, they cannot be ‘inconceivable apart’ from one another (*viz.*, conceptually contained)—as Schneider’s case so vividly proves.

What is needed is a framework that does not involve integrated spatiotemporal events or conceptually contained roles but still allows for bodies and situations to be equally ‘centrifugal’ and ‘centripetal’ within a single performance. My interpretation offers in detail the internal architecture of such a supernormal unity of roles. Motor intentionality realizes a dynamic fundamental function, composed of body and situation, joined through projection and solicitation. And this is why Schneider’s case is so significant for the understanding of motor intentionality, precisely because it reveals a profound dissociation where ordinarily these two kinds of bodily agency would be merged into a unified whole.¹⁵

7 | MOTOR INTENTIONS IN CONTEXT

Merleau-Ponty repeatedly stated that motor intentionality exists *between* mind and matter. For instance, in ‘Part 1: The Body’, Merleau-Ponty wrote, ‘we must acknowledge, between movement as third person process and thought as a representation of movement, and anticipation or grasp of the result assured by the body itself as a motor power,

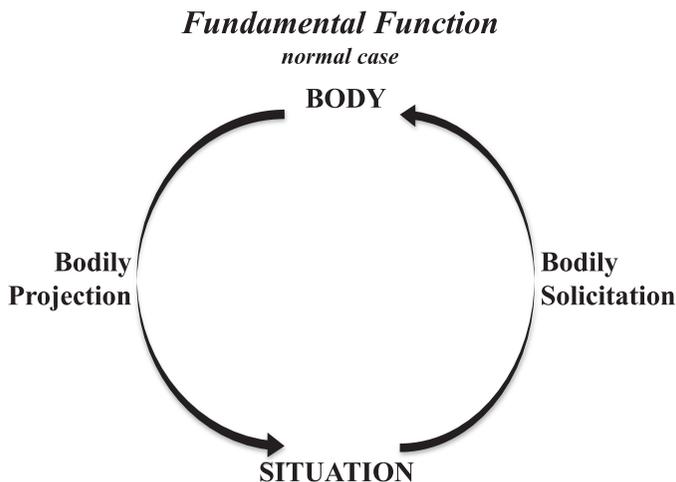


FIGURE 2 The fundamental function in the normal case. The dynamic connection of projection and solicitation is realized by motor intentionality

a 'motor project' (*Bewegungsentwurf*), a 'motor intentionality' [*intentionnalité motrice*] (p. 113; see also 80; 87; 138; 158). How does my proposed interpretation of motor intentionality help us to understand Merleau-Ponty's suggestion here?

To animate my answer to this question, allow me to present an example that inhabits this middle ground. Consider Merleau-Ponty's description of greeting his friend:

When I motion to my friend to approach, my intention is not a thought I could have produced within myself in advance, nor do I perceive the signal in my body. I signal across the world; I signal over there, where my friend is. The distance that separates us and his consent or refusal are immediately read in my gesture. There is not first a perception followed by a movement, the perception and the movement form a system that is modified as a whole (p. 113).

In one sense, the motor intention manifest in this example involves two aspects that *can* be articulated in isolation from one another because they are two aspects of a unity: the feeling or experience of excited welcoming and the bodily movements involved in waving. That is, we can describe Merleau-Ponty as having a particular intention, or we can record in detail his specific bodily movements. But, in another more important sense, this motor intention involves two aspects that *cannot* be fully understood in isolation from one another because they are two aspects of a unity. Neither his consciousness nor his movements can be articulated in isolation from the other without losing the full significance of the motor intention of which they are a part. To detach Merleau-Ponty's excited greeting from his waving motion is to transform that welcome or those movements into something they are not. For if it were simply a feeling with some behavioral effects downstream, then Merleau-Ponty's movements would not be immediately responsive to the subtle changes in his friend's response as they interact—his body would not be solicited by his situation. And if it were just the movements of the body orchestrated by some prior mental event, then Merleau-Ponty's behavior would not be a manifestation of spontaneous delight and acknowledgment—his body would not project a situation around him. This is the nature of an emergent unity: his is both a bodily greeting and an emotional greeting at the same time, a feeling-in-the-gesture. Understanding motor intentionality as enacting the dynamic circular flow of projection and solicitation between body and situation helps to make sense of the ideas brought forth in this example. Motor intentions are forthcoming when our intentions are clothed in movements and are manifested in them. And, likewise, motor intentions are forthcoming only when our movements embody intentions and manifest them.

And if they were not? If motor intentions were too *intentional* (if they were not *between* the psychical and the physiological, and thus too much on the 'psychic' or mental side of the equation), then there would be no role for *bodily solicitation*. The body would lack its ability to be solicited by a situation. Consequently, any bodily behavior (that was not the result of a reflex) would have to be initiated by a pure consciousness, perhaps as a less extreme version of Schneider's abstract movements. On the other hand, if motor intentions were too *motor* (if they were not *between* the psychical and the physiological, and thus too much on the 'physiological' or behavioral side of the equation), then there would be no place for *bodily projection*. The body would lack its ability to project a situation around it. Consequently, all bodily behavior (that was not the result of a consciously intended act) would be nothing more than a mechanism, a physiological reflex in response to internal or external stimuli, not unlike Schneider's concrete movements.

Thus, because motor intentions make good on the entire fundamental function at once, generating unities that are more than their operative elements and connections, they can exist between mind and matter.

8 | CONCLUSION

I have presented an interpretation of Merleau-Ponty's concept of motor intentionality as it emerges in his *Phenomenology of Perception*—namely, that it enacts two kinds of bodily agency in one and the same performance. My interpretation moves the discourse forward in certain key respects. I proposed that Merleau-Ponty was

performing a kind of triangulation in revealing motor intentionality through his analysis of Schneider's case. Then, after showing that Schneider's abstract and concrete movements were both pathological, I demonstrated that Schneider's deficiencies allude to a fundamental function containing two schemas for action—projection from body to situation and solicitation by situation of body. I proposed that while Schneider's abstract and concrete movements made good on a fundamental function of dissociated powers, normal motor intentionality realizes a fundamental function in which body and situation are dynamically interconnected through projection and solicitation. Finally, I described how my interpretation of motor intentionality elucidates a most mysterious yet essential characteristic bestowed upon it by Merleau-Ponty—that motor intentionality inhabits the space between mind and matter.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ All references to *Phenomenology of Perception* are to the 2012 English translation by Donald A. Landes.
- ² Other terms like 'motor possibility' and 'motor power' are used on occasion, though we cannot assume they denote the same phenomenon as 'motor intentionality'.
- ³ An important issue I do not address in this article is whether this case study approach generates the same concept of motor intentionality as other approaches (e.g., close readings of examples).
- ⁴ An analogy drawing from recent cognitive science may be helpful. Merleau-Ponty (1945: 105; 116–118; 226) sometimes likened Schneider's condition to 'psychic blindness' or what we now call 'visual neglect'. For example, Schneider would not recognize Goldstein's house if he happened to walk past it (p. 136). Likewise, patients with visual neglect do not eat food on the right half of their plates because they report not seeing it. However, Schneider can recognize Goldstein's house, if he sets out with the intention to go there (136). And patients can be made to see the food (and eat it), if their attention is directed to the right side of the plate. I believe that patients with visual neglect lack *normal* visual consciousness, and therefore, they lack *normal* consciousness. This is exactly my point about Schneider: He lacked *normal* motor intentionality, and therefore, he lacked *normal* intentionality. A natural next question to ask is what the alternative to normal motor intentionality is: diminished motor intentionality or no motor intentionality? I will argue the latter—that Schneider substituted something else in motor intentionality's place (see Section 5).
- ⁵ We might prefer to speak of a diversity of bodies, better or worse suited for the situations in which they must live (e.g., Canguilhem, 1966; see also Davis, 1995). In the context of this paper, however, I will use the conceptual binary of *normal-versus-pathological*, as it appears to be a necessary tool for interpreting Merleau-Ponty's text. But I do acknowledge that it implies a normativity about embodiment—that is, the superiority of certain bodies (male bodies, able bodies, heterosexual bodies, *etcetera*) over other ones—for which Merleau-Ponty has been rightly criticized (e.g., Allen, 1982; Butler, 1989; McMillan, 1987; Osaka, 2006; Shusterman, 2005; Sullivan, 1997; Young, 1990).
- ⁶ Donald Davidson uses the notion of triangulation in his work to answer a question: when an organism responds to a stimulus (understood as a causal chain from world to organism), which part of the stimulus *qua* causal chain is the organism responding to (e.g., Davidson, 2001)? We cannot answer this question for a single organism, Davidson claims, but we can for multiple organisms. That is, if multiple organisms produce the same response to a stimulus, then we can trace each causal chain from organism to world until those lines converge, thereby determining to which part of the stimulus *qua* causal chain the organisms are collectively responding. As applied to multiple speakers of a language, Davidson argues that triangulation makes communication possible, so long as the speakers are also capable of observing and responding to one another. I did not have Davidson in mind when developing my interpretation of Merleau-Ponty. And Merleau-Ponty would reject any causal analysis of the relation between the fundamental function and its various realizations. But there is a superficial similarity of note—namely, the idea of introducing a communicating element in order to establish a relationship between a known entity and a to-be-disclosed one.
- ⁷ The general issue of whether triangulation is a superior method for determining the normal from the pathological is an intriguing subject, but it is beyond the scope of this article, and I will not be defending this methodology against others here. What matters for my purposes is that Merleau-Ponty had both prescriptions and proscriptions for how to use the pathological in determining what is normal—and I claim this approach, though never explicated or formalized in his work, is best captured by triangulation.
- ⁸ It is an odd term, 'fundamental function', but it surfaces often in the text. Different from its traditional meaning (e.g., basic facts and first principles), it appears to be a structural notion in Merleau-Ponty's work (Waldenfels, 1980: 24). After the first reference to a fundamental function on page 110 in the extended quotation about pathology, we find numerous references to a fundamental, general, personal, existential, or core function that becomes disrupted in illness. For instance, Merleau-Ponty (1945: 121) wrote, '[Schneider's] psychic blindness, deficiencies of in the senses of touch, and motor disorders are three expressions of a more *fundamental disturbance* by which they can be understood, not three components of morbid behavior' (*emphasis added*). 'We must acknowledge a *personal core* that is the patient's being and his power of

existing. Here is where the disorder resides' (p. 136; *emphasis added*). And again, 'the *core function* we are speaking of here—prior to making us see or know objects—first more secretly brings them into existence for us' (p. 137; *emphasis added*). Then later, 'every habit is simultaneously motor and perceptual because it resides, as we have said, between explicit perception and actual movement, in that *fundamental function* that simultaneously delimits our field of vision and our field of action' (p. 153; *emphasis added*). There is good textual support for believing that Merleau-Ponty equated the fundamental function with the *intentional arc*. In yet another reference to a fundamental function, he wrote, 'we discover beneath intelligence and beneath perception a more *fundamental function*: 'a vector moving in every direction, like a searchlight' ... But again, the comparison to a searchlight is not a good one ... So let us say instead, by borrowing a term from another work, that the life of consciousness ... is underpinned by an '*intentional arc*' that ... creates the unity of the senses, the unity of the senses with intelligence, and the unity of sensitivity and motricity. And this is what 'goes limp' in the disorder' (p. 137; *emphasis added*). Zaner (1964: 173–174) also argues for synonymy between the 'fundamental function' and the 'intentional arc'.

- ⁹ Merleau-Ponty seemed to have read all that was available about Schneider's case at the time, but he repeatedly referenced a specific subset of scientific texts (viz., Gelb & Goldstein, 1920; Goldstein, 1923; Gelb & Goldstein, 1925; Gelb, 1926; Goldstein, 1931). For the bulk of Merleau-Ponty's discussion of Schneider in *Phenomenology of Perception*, see pages 105–139. Shorter mentions occur on pages 157–160 and 201–202. And there are passing references to Schneider as 'the patient' throughout the text.
- ¹⁰ 'Projection', as both a term and an idea, is found in the texts of major figures in the phenomenological tradition (e.g., in both Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger) and occupies an important place in Merleau-Ponty's work. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty observed that we do not make self-conscious efforts to perceive the world as organized and meaningful. Instead, the unreflective power of projection does the work for us. What kind of work? In his words, 'marking out borders and directions in the given world, of establishing lines of force, of arranging perspectives, of organizing the given world according to the projects of the moment, and of constructing upon the geographical surroundings a milieu of behavior and a system of significations' (Merleau-Ponty, 1945: 115).
- ¹¹ 'Solicitation', as both a term and an idea, also is found in the texts of major figures in the phenomenological tradition (for instance, in both Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger) and occupies an important place in Merleau-Ponty's work, where it first appeared in his *Structure of Behavior*. There, solicitations are portrayed as aspects of the perceived world that 'call for', 'initiate', and 'guide' an organism's behavior without the intervention of self-conscious thought (Merleau-Ponty, 1942: 168). The perceptual field contains solicitations, meaning that the perceiver is presented with opportunities and hazards that demand particular kinds of behavior, and the appropriate bodily responses are pulled forth, without any intervening reflection.
- ¹² Jensen (2009: 382) points out that Merleau-Ponty misattributed this quotation to Schneider—'the quote does not contain the words of Schneider'. Jensen argues that it was Goldstein's own description of the particular feeling of agency experienced by 'the normal person performing movements of everyday life' (Goldstein, 1923: 175). It may be that this is a misattribution. But it is plausible that Schneider did describe himself in this way as well. Schneider worked closely with Goldstein for many years and likely adopted his doctor's language. Goldstein and Scheerer did describe pathological patients' concrete behavior (including Schneider's) in this way. According to Goldstein and Scheerer (1941: 3), in certain cases, normal behaviors can take on either 'an extreme susceptibility to the varying stimuli in the surroundings' or 'the characteristic of rigidity' and 'lack of shifting' *well known in abnormal psychology* (*emphasis added*). They even claimed that this extreme susceptibility and/or hyper rigidity produce the same result—the absence of awareness of voluntary initiative. In their words, 'the individual is being shunted passively from one stimulus to the next' (p. 3). This was exactly Schneider's predicament and justifies describing his concrete behaviors (as Merleau-Ponty did) as non-voluntary.
- ¹³ Sometimes the analysis is put into terms of solicitation (or sedimentation) and projection (or spontaneity), though the basic ideas are arguably the same: Schneider could not project a situation around him, but he could be solicited by a situation. Then, motor intentionality is defined in these terms accordingly—as the power of projection, which Schneider lacked; as the power of solicitation, which Schneider possessed; or as some combination of these two powers, as motor intentionality is a matter of degree, and Schneider's motor intentionality was partial or diminished.
- ¹⁴ The normal fundamental function depicted in Figure 2 is circular and unbroken. The pathological fundamental function depicted in Figure 1 is split and flattened. These visual displays are compatible with Merleau-Ponty's metaphors of Schneider's fundamental function having gone 'limp' and been 'leveled out' (Merleau-Ponty, 1945: 137; 132).
- ¹⁵ My interpretation explains away a supposed lacuna in Merleau-Ponty's description of Schneider's concrete movements—the absence of what Mooney (2011: 376) calls 'practical creativity'. It is not that Merleau-Ponty has overlooked it but that Schneider's fundamental disturbance does not allow it. Motor intentionality, which includes adaptability, can only exist when there is a dynamic unity within the fundamental function.

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