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The Primacy of Movement

THE PRIMACY OF MOVEMENT

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selves. If we follow along the lines of the two insights, however, *and at the same time hew to a phenomenological methodology, in particular to a constructive phenomenology aiming at an elucidation of the phenomenon of learning to move ourselves*, we do not arrive at an epistemological impasse but remain on epistemological track. In turn, we have the possibility of clarifying not only the precedence of an "I move" to an "I can," but the precedence of movement to an "I move."

4. Primal movement and its occlusion by a natural attitude view of movement

We come into the world already moving. We are indeed either movement-born or still-born. When we learn to move ourselves, we do so on the basis of what is already there: an original kinetic liveliness or animation. It is thus not a "functioning Ego" (Landgrebe 1977: 108–109); or a body and a world (a theme throughout the writings of Merleau-Ponty, e.g., Merleau-Ponty 1962: 197–98), or "the existential *fore-structure* of Dasein" (Heidegger 1962: 195), or an "I move" that is already there; it is movement that is already there. To claim ourselves already there in any other way is to view ourselves from an adultist stance that overlooks our beginnings. When we assume that adultist stance, reflection is understandably stymied; we are caught short of being able to dredge up the originating ground of our knowledge, our capacities, our being. In each instance the beginning point of departure for reflection has been pushed forward, accelerated to a vantage point beyond the reach of primal understandings, and to that degree its claims of an impenetrable epistemological boundary are mistaken. We *can* "get back," as the expression goes. But to do so requires a reclamation of nature: our own in its originary form. Of course, this does not mean behaving like an infant again: ceasing to speak, sleeping and eating irregularly, and so on. It means turning ourselves seriously and methodically toward our genesis in nature and discovering the kinetic/kinesthetic structures of our original humanness. In particular, it means turning attention to our *apprenticeship* and to the grounding of that apprenticeship in animate form, in animation. We can specify what is already kinetically there, not in terms of so many readily performed abilities — e.g., sucking is there, blinking is there, and so on, though such abilities as orchestrations of movement are of considerable constitutive moment in the constructive phenomenological enterprise — but in terms of elucidating the

nature of that movement in whose dynamic form we, and indeed, all animate creatures, come into the world. Just as we need not wait for or turn to moments in which we meet or have met with success or failure in exercising our ability in order to understand the original nature of our power to reflect, as Landgrebe wrongly insists we must, so we need not wait for or turn to such moments in order to become aware of the ground on which our abilities emerge. To gain insight into the developing structures of an I that moves, an I that emerges on the ground of movement, we turn to movement itself, to movement that is already there and to the kinesthetic consciousness that is quintessentially and consummately attuned to it. In effect, the task is to elucidate movement as a *natal* phenomenon, and this in a double sense: the phenomenon of being movement-born and the phenomenon of self-movement as it emerges from the phenomenon of being movement-born. As indicated above, the task does not involve us in an itemization and consequent inventory of readily performed natal abilities. But neither does it involve us in an enumeration of behaviors. To pay attention to our genesis in movement is not to classify activities according to function or purpose and thereby demarcate one concerted round of movements from another concerted round of movements — inhaling from exhaling, sucking from swallowing, and so on. When creatures come into the world moving, they are not behaving; they are moving. They are, in a word, *animated*.

But what can be said about this original kinetic liveliness other than that *it is there*?

In Chapter Three, several examples were given of natural, everyday movements that we, as adults, can attend to kinetically: stretching, breathing, sneezing. The essentially *qualitative* character of movement was clearly evident in each case. We can thus appreciate that a phenomenological examination discloses a radically different experience and conception of movement from the experience and conception that hold forth in the natural attitude. In particular, the common notion of movement as a change of position, and the standard dictionary definition of movement as a change of position, find no place within the phenomenology of kinetic experience. Both notion and definition in fact stand in need of correction. At the very least, both need to be identified for what they are: factual views of movement. *As beheld in the natural attitude*, movement is the factual displacement of an object from point A to point B, thus a change of position.[3] Our first task is to confront this view of movement and show how it not only conceals the essential character of movement but impedes a clear conception of movement from the start by centering attention not on *movement*

but on *an object in motion*. (For a fully detailed analysis of the difference in the context of dance, see Sheets-Johnstone 1979). In short, to elucidate our original kinetic liveliness, we need to clear a conceptual space in which it can appear. To do this, we shall first examine the natural attitude view of movement in quite general terms and with brief but special reference to how it was confronted by Merleau-Ponty and by psychologist James Gibson. We shall then proceed to extended analyses of both Merleau-Ponty's and Gibson's endeavors to come to terms with movement, attempting to show in each case how a natural attitude view of movement precludes insight into the foundational phenomenon of primal animation.

The natural attitude view of movement as change of position is in great measure fostered by a mathematization of movement, an objectification on behalf of science: a change of position from point A to point B is above all a measurable change. Moreover it is above all a change in location of a particular object which, in the absence of movement, would otherwise be at rest. When Merleau-Ponty is concerned to give an account of movement, he is concerned to foil just this natural attitude view which, with its point by point conception of movement, destroys the unity of movement, and which, with its consistent reference to an object, consistently relativizes movement. His explicit target is not actually the natural attitude view of movement; as throughout *Phenomenology of Perception*, his target is the intellectualist and the empiricist, generalized figures whom he identifies in this instance as "the logician" and "the psychologist," each with his respective rendition of movement (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 267–80). There is no doubt, however, but that the natural attitude is at the base of these renditions as Merleau-Ponty describes them, and that his aim is to overturn a mathematically-informed understanding of movement as a change of position. To this end, he ultimately calls into being a "non-thematized mobile entity" (275), a "[p]re-objective being"(275) which is not objective but whose "changes [of] position" (276, note 1) are experienced as a "style" (274) by a "prepersonal *I* who provides the basis for the phenomenon of movement" (276, note 1).[4] We shall examine this seemingly non-natural rendition of movement more closely in a moment. Let us note first that the natural attitude view of movement as change of position is fostered in equally great measure by an instrumental understanding of movement. Psychologist James Gibson's research and writings on perception — in particular, his research and writings on perceptual systems as opposed to traditionally conceived specialized sensory pathways — are geared to this understanding, but in a way that escapes its traditional outlines. Gibson subsumes

the phenomenon of movement into the structure of the perceptual systems of sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell. Thus, in his early major text he speaks of proprioception as visual proprioception, as auditory proprioception, as cutaneous proprioception, and so on, and in his later major text he speaks of, and is concerned in particular with, visual kinesthesis (J. J. Gibson 1966: 37–38, 200–201; J. J. Gibson 1979: e.g., 126, where Gibson states categorically that the pickup of information in "the ambient [optical] array ... should in all cases be called *visual kinesthesis*"; italics in original). Ultimately, he transforms the phenomenon of movement into a phenomenon enmeshed in the global phenomenon of "perceptual affordances," the key concept of his later work. His instrumentalization of movement is atypical in that it does not separate out movement *as a means* of perception. In Gibson's account, movement is clearly not merely a physical system actuated toward a perceptual end. On the contrary, movement is conceived as enfolded in perception itself. In his account of "action sensitivity or movement sensitivity," Gibson in fact speaks of "the fallacy" of proprioception; that is, no more than the "exteroceptors" — eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and skin — are proprioceptors "specialized receptors" (J. J. Gibson 1966: 34, 33, 33, 34). It is crucially important to note, however, that, unlike eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and skin, movement does not constitute a perceptual system in Gibson's view. Though no longer a mere physical means, movement nonetheless remains instrumental. It is the way we go about "pick[ing] up information" that is there in the world (J. J. Gibson 1979: 238–263). In the process of picking up information in the world, we of course "pick up information" about our own movement. Proprioceptive information provides the perceiver "awareness of *his own* motion in the world, that is, the awareness of *locomotion*" (1979: 182; italics in original). Though reduced to locomotion in the service of perception, movement is what Gibson might well have termed a "kinetic affordance."

Although both Merleau-Ponty and Gibson attempt to break out of traditional perspectives on movement, and in this sense attempt to break loose of the natural attitude, in neither case is the attempt successful. The essentially qualitative nature of movement is not given its due because it is nowhere recognized and it is nowhere recognized because the particular methodology in use precludes recognition in each instance. In effect, it is as if the essential character of movement were nonexistent. Precisely for methodological reasons, it will be helpful to spell out Gibson's and Merleau-Ponty's respective ideas about movement in greater detail. Such an exposition will allow us to appreciate in exacting terms the importance of the phenomenological methodology of bracket-

ing. (It will also of course show how we do not have to wait for the unexpected in order to arrive at insights into either kinesthetic consciousness or into our originary ability to move ourselves, as Landgrebe claims.)

In his first book on perceptual systems, Gibson recognizes "muscular proprioception" in the form of muscle receptors that "register effort," but he states that "it is doubtful that there are sensations to correspond." In this same text, he recognizes "articular proprioception" as a "sensitivity to skeletal movement," but appears hesitant to accord it any perceptual value, saying only that "[t]here seems to be conscious awareness of the joints," i.e., a feeling of "the angles which the bones make to one another" (1966: 36–37). In short, Gibson's original notion of proprioception is both static and positional; *it is not tied to movement as a dynamically experienced bodily happening*. Running, stretching, swaying, and so on, are just such dynamically experienced bodily happenings. So also are reaching, pushing, kicking, and not just myriad other, but *all* other, bodily movements. Though muscular effort and joint angles enter into a kinesthetic awareness of movement in each instance, they enter as features of a globally felt spatio-temporal-energy dynamic. Indeed, muscular effort and joint angles shift in subtle and complex ways in the performance of movement. Hence no movement is properly characterized kinesthetically simply in terms of muscular effort and joint angles. Such characterizations are static and positional and belie the dynamic and holistic nature of self-movement. With respect to perceptual systems themselves, there is a further problem. Gibson's notion of perceptual systems coincides with "the five senses." It is thus not surprising that movement has no place as a perceptual system in and of itself, but is recognized only in terms of how it enters into the classic sensory modalities. Though Gibson refigures the latter in innovative and instructive ways as perceptual systems, they remain five in number. In effect, although his central theme is that perception is an *ecological* relationship, that is, a coalition of organism and environment, and although this ecological relationship re-echoes in theoretical ways von Helmholtz's and Husserl's descriptive accounts of the correlation between movement and perception, Gibson's preferential focus on the five senses — on what we see, hear, smell, taste, and touch — restricts his account of perception. In other words, being riveted on *what* we see, hear, smell, taste, and touch, Gibson's attention is preeminently on the side of the environment and touches only lightly on the side of the organism. In consequence, the phenomenon of movement, self-movement, as a phenomenon in its own right is elided. Indeed, Gibson's environmental focus far outdistances his focus on the organism. The affordant

properties of an environment — its support structure and its water sources, for example — are primary, not what correlatively might be termed *the affordant kinetic powers of organisms*. Gibson's uneven attention is a product of his fundamental theory of "information pickup" as well insofar as "[t]he theory of information pickup requires perceptual systems, not senses" (1979: 244). Gibson is in fact explicit about his aim. In preface to specifying particulars about his notion of "information pickup," he states quite straightforwardly, "Let us remember once again that it is the perception of the environment that we wish to explain" (1979: 239). Accordingly, although he everywhere insists on the equal centrality of living organisms in his ecological approach to perception, declaring, for example, that "Information about the self accompanies information about the environment, and the two are inseparable" (1979: 126), or that "The continuous act of perceiving involves the coperceiving of the self" (1979: 240), or that "Perception and proprioception are complementary" (1979: 157), there is no comparable, substantive elucidation of the complementary, proprioceptively-endowed organism, certainly nothing beyond the observation that "the activities of looking, listening, touching, tasting, or sniffing" are movement activities proper to perceptual systems (1979: 244). Given Gibson's uneven account of perception, it is unclear how a "coperceiving of the self" can be anything more than what Sartre would term a prereflective awareness of oneself since one's gaze is always and inexorably world-directed — all the more so when Gibson writes that "Perceiving ... is a keeping-in-touch with the world, an experiencing of things rather than a having of experiences" (1979: 239). It is worth noting that in his later work, where he introduces the concept of affordances, Gibson at one point seems to accord a slightly more robust nod to "muscle-joint kinesthesis," saying that "visual kinesthesis should be recognized along with muscle-joint kinesthesis." But he nowhere fleshes out the latter. In fact he immediately faults "muscle-joint kinesthesis" because it "does not function during passive locomotion in a vehicle." He concludes that "Visual kinesthesis yields the only reliable information about displacement" (1979: 125).

In sum, however insightful and radically novel his notions about the directness of perception and the ongoingness of perception, and however rich and provocative his notion of environmental affordances, his account of movement does less than full justice to the experience of movement, and correlatively, to kinesthesia. What lies at the bottom of his view of movement are residuals of a still natural attitude view. Not only is movement instrumental locomotion in the service of visual perception, auditory perception, and so on; movement is itself

a quite subsidiary dimension of the informational structure of all perception. The "muscle-joint" system, Gibson says, provides only "supplementary information" (1979: 126). There is no intimation of a qualitative dynamics in this instrumental-informational view. Put in methodological perspective, one can readily and with good reason claim that what is missing is the procedure of bracketing. Without bracketing, Gibson misses the phenomenon of kinesthesia proper, a phenomenon that exists in its own right and that warrants examination in and of itself. By conjoining kinestheses — proprioception — with every other sense modality, Gibson readily misses the qualitative structure of movement. In effect, he does not do justice to the experience of movement — self-movement. His informational thematic is part and parcel of what might be termed the currently trendy natural attitude view of movement: movement is in the service of perceptual "information pickup." While one can readily appreciate Gibson's efforts to show that conceiving vision, hearing, and so on, as so many discrete sensory modalities is wrong-headed, that perception is a matter of integrated systemic functionings, one can readily appreciate even on the basis of naive everyday experiences — of stretching, breathing, and sneezing, for example — that movement is something both more and other than instrumental, and that kinesthesis may afford something both more and other than information. Children, after all, take pleasure in skipping, and adults take pleasure in such games as tennis. In addition, as shown in Chapter Three, kinesthetic consciousness is the foundational source of our concepts of space, time, and force. Moreover we do indeed need to reckon with kinesthesia because we in fact reckon with it in increasingly complex ways from the very beginning. The striking and emphatic comment — striking and emphatic because it is, or should be, so obvious — of developmental psychologists Esther Thelen and Linda Smith is of critical significance in this context. Taking a cue from Gibson's own approach to perception, they state that "*movement must itself be considered a perceptual system*"(1994:193).

One might think that if anyone could show the inextricable bond between organism and environment and elaborate kinesthesia as a perceptual system, it would be Merleau-Ponty. All the more so given his notion of the unity of movement as a certain *style*. But Merleau-Ponty is as far from recognizing the essentially qualitative nature of movement as Gibson, and equally as far from recognizing the quintessential significance of kinesthesia. To show that this is so, we need to consider both his analysis of movement and his notion of motor intentionality.

Merleau-Ponty treats movement in a separate section of his chapter on space in *Phenomenology of Perception*. As elsewhere, his method is to pit the views of the intellectualist against the views of the empiricist, showing how each is wrong and resolving their respective deficiencies through his thematic of the phenomenal body. The problem is that movement does not emerge from the fray as other topics; it is not amenable to the same kind of methodological treatment because neither the empiricist nor the logician can be suitably pinned down in such a way as to allow Merleau-Ponty to emerge victorious. The psychologist's account is especially recalcitrant to his critical strategy. At one point, wrestling with Gestalt psychologists who speak of "dynamic phenomena" apart from objects in motion, Merleau-Ponty declares that "Perception of movement can be perception *of movement* and recognition of it as such, only if it is apprehension of it with its significance as movement, and with all the instants which constitute it, and in particular with the identity of the object in motion" (1962: 271; cf. Sheets-Johnstone 1979). Clearly, Merleau-Ponty wants movement to be both all of a piece and identical with the object in motion; he wants to unify movement as against a pointillist view and at the same time to de-relativize it with respect to an object conceived separate from its movement. In short, he wants a non-objective account of movement. But that is not in fact the way he describes it. His statement about what constitutes "perception *of movement*" has contingent clauses which, in the first instance, characterize movement as basically fragmented even if unified, and in the second instance, dissolve the phenomenon of movement into an object in motion. Moreover in elaborating on just what the perception of movement must be, he later declares that "'Dynamic phenomena' take their unity from me who live (*sic*) through them, and who effect (*sic*) their synthesis," a remark that might in a temporal sense sound peculiarly Husserlian. But Merleau-Ponty leaves the notion of 'dynamic phenomena' completely unelucidated phenomenologically and in fact presses for a featureless, i.e., non-dynamical, rendering of movement (1962: 272). Indeed, he designates the phrase "dynamic phenomenon" a metaphor, and does not enlighten us as to its origin. It is not too much to say that in the thirteen odd pages in which he wrestles with movement, Merleau-Ponty valiantly struggles in particular to reconcile movement with objects in motion. There is an aura of uneasiness about the relationship. It is evident, for example, when, in discussing "dynamic phenomena," Merleau-Ponty attempts to identify movement with the object in motion by affirming that it is the perceiver who unifies movement: "it seems to us that a force itself

ensures its unity, but this is because we always suppose that someone is there to identify it in the development of its effects" (272).

In sum, the problem of instants and the problem of the relationship of movement to objects in motion are played out in terms of unity and identity, but the critical discussion of intellectualist and empiricist views eventuates in no clear solution. On the contrary, one has the sense that Merleau-Ponty's linguistic recourse to "a mobile entity" is a way out of a tortured reasoning process that has gone and is going nowhere. On the one hand, Merleau-Ponty finally agrees with the logician when the latter "demands some constitution of the 'dynamic phenomenon' itself," but faults him for "present[ing] the identity of the object in motion as an express identity" (1962: 272); on the other hand, he finally agrees with the psychologist when the latter "is led in spite of himself to put a moving body into movement," but faults him for being unclear about the relation between movement and moving body (272). It is at this very end juncture of the discussion that a most unusual series of remarks occurs in which the intellectualist and empiricist positions present themselves as less straightforwardly malleable as in his other investigations of space and spatial phenomena, and in which the underlying aim of Merleau-Ponty's investigations of movement and his seeming impatience in realizing it come to the fore. In uncharacteristically exasperated fashion, Merleau-Ponty remarks, "In the discussion which we have just followed, and which serves to illustrate the everlasting debate between psychology and logic, what, in the last resort, does Wertheimer [the psychologist] mean?" When he goes on in his own words to say precisely what Wertheimer means — "He means that the perception of movement is not secondary to the perception of the moving object, ... and that in short the identity of the object in motion flows directly from 'experience'" — Merleau-Ponty appends a footnote at the end of the sentence, which reads: "It is true that Wertheimer does not say in so many words that the perception of motion embraces this immediate identity. He says so only implicitly" (272). It is odd, of course, to give a final summation of precisely what someone is saying and at the same time note that the person is saying this "only implicitly." But this interpretation clears the air, so to speak. Merleau-Ponty moves immediately from this point to embrace the notion of "a mobile entity" that "is not identical *beneath* the phases of movement, [but] is identical *in* them" (273). Presumably, this move allows a reconciliation of the idea that unity is a function both of the object in motion and of the perceiver: "Motion is nothing without a body in motion which describes and provides it

with unity" (272); at the same time, "dynamic phenomena take their unity from me who live (*sic*) through them, and who effect (*sic*) their synthesis" (272).

Though Merleau-Ponty strives to overcome it, the natural attitude view of movement in fact dominates: there is nothing to movement apart from an object in motion. In consequence, movement is nowhere recognized as a qualitative happening but as an event that must in some way be harmonized with moving objects and with points in space and points in time. There is no appreciation of movement *tout court* because, in spite of all efforts against the natural attitude view, movement remains tied to the notion of change of position, the displacement of an object *through* space and *in* time. Even though later affirming that "movement does not necessarily presuppose a moving object, that is, an object defined in terms of a collection of determinate properties" (and adding the following peculiar adequation: "it is sufficient that [movement] should include 'something that moves', or at the most 'something coloured' or 'luminuous' without any actual colour or light") (274), Merleau-Ponty never actually considers and reflects upon the phenomenon of movement itself except momentarily and in the most fleeting way in the midst of his searchings. Interestingly enough, in this instance, the object in motion is himself — the one instance, we might note, in which he considers the phenomenon of self-movement. "And yet I walk," he states, "I have the experience of movement in spite of the demands and dilemmas of clear thought, which means, in defiance of all reason, that I perceive movements without any identical moving object, without any external landmark and without any relativity" (269). An awareness of the qualitative structures of movement is latent in just such natural everyday experiences, but only when those experiences are examined outside the natural attitude toward movement, which, as is evident, precludes such an awareness. Moreover even when Merleau-Ponty declares that "If we want to take the phenomenon of movement seriously, we shall need to conceive a world which is not made up only of things, but which has in it also pure transitions," he does not pursue the nature of "pure transitions" but connects them immediately and simply to the style of an object's "passing": "The something in transit which we have recognized as necessary to the constitution of a change is to be defined only in terms of the particular manner of its 'passing'" (275). Thus a bird in flight across his garden is "merely a greyish power of flight" (275). When he finally ties movement by way of a mobile entity to his thematic of the phenomenal body, it is notable that he uses the notion of time to do so. But he does not flesh out any connection between time and movement; he merely avows their dual inherence

in the "thickness" of "[t]he lived present" (275). Movement thus turns out to be by declaration rather than by demonstration what it was intended to be from the beginning: something tied to the phenomenal body. Thus Merleau-Ponty writes that "The relation between the moving object and its background passes through our body" (278); "If we can ever speak of movement without an object in motion, it is pre-eminently in the case of our own body. The movement of my eye towards the thing upon which it is about to focus is not the displacement of an object in relation to another object, but progress towards reality" (279); and so on. But a path leading outside the natural attitude view of movement cannot be carved with words. Neither, of course, can a path to the qualitative character of movement. Put in methodological perspective, one can, as with Gibson, readily and with good reason claim that what is missing is the procedure of bracketing. Without bracketing, Merleau-Ponty misses the phenomenon of movement itself. Indeed, from a methodological perspective one can readily and with good reason claim that a phenomenologist investigating movement is remiss if he/she does not consult his/her own experience of movement. It is through such consultation that Merleau-Ponty would have been led to discover precisely those qualitative structures of movement that inform a notion of style, as in the style marking the "passing" of a bird. Moreover he would have been led to discover the cardinal structures of kinesthetic consciousness. In this respect, it is not sufficient to speak of a "motor intentionality" as Merleau-Ponty does. In order for there to be a bona fide motor intentionality in the sense Merleau-Ponty describes, there must be a resonant tactile-kinesthetic body. In effect, to recognize the quintessential significance of kinesthesia, it is necessary to turn to the actual experience of self-movement and to give a phenomenological account of that experience.

More specific justification of this claim is required, for Merleau-Ponty's notion of a motor intentionality would seem already to include an awareness of the quintessential significance of kinesthesia. But in fact Merleau-Ponty devalues kinesthesia in his exposition of a motor intentionality. He states forthrightly, for example, that the body, "[a]s a mass of tactile, labyrinthine and kinaesthetic data," gives us no special spatial orientation whatsoever. Verticality is simply one "spatial level" among all other possible ones. Kinesthesia is thus not privileged in any way: as a sensory "function" or "content," it gives us no definitive ups, downs, tilts, horizontals, or whatever. In a word, it offers us nothing in the way of kinetic meanings: "Our bodily experience of movement," Merleau-Ponty says, "is not a particular case of knowledge" (140). Its only office is to "[provide] us with a way of access to the world and the object," and in this sense is no more than a purely practical kind of knowing (140). Though Merleau-Ponty states that this "praktognosia" "has to be recognized as original and perhaps as primary" (140), and though he goes on to quote neuropsychologist A. A. Grünbaum to the effect that "Already motility, in its pure state, possesses the basic power of giving a meaning," and that "Motility is the primary sphere in which initially the meaning of all significances is engendered in the domain of represented space" (142), he neither stops to reflect upon the conjunction of meaning and our bodily experience of movement nor to account for the foundational significance of the latter. In effect, kinesthetic consciousness is, save for practical purposes, a still-born consciousness, and moreover one that, while acknowledged "as original and perhaps as primary," is nowhere seriously thought of as ever having been vitally present. Clearly, the ready-made mesh of body and world that is always already there, as Merleau-Ponty describes it, and that marks an impassable barrier to knowledge of how things come to have the meaning and value they do, makes movement merely a bridge between body and world, merely "a way of access" by which we reach "the world and the object."

This practical instrumentalization of movement obviously overlooks the apprenticeship we all serve in becoming the bodies we are. When Merleau-Ponty writes that "My body is wherever there is something to be done" (250), he is describing a consummately *adult* body that has passed through its apprenticeship, and, having passed, no longer finds it necessary to look back upon its beginnings or wonder how it all came about, that is, for example, how its fluidity of movement was earned, how its dexterity was attained, how its agility was achieved, or, in a broader and deeper sense, how we first came to discover both ourselves and the world through movement. The past is opaque because it is made opaque, and not because there is no method by which to recover those beginnings in which we learned to move ourselves. In this respect, it is of interest to note that when he introduces his notion of a motor intentionality, Merleau-Ponty does so by linking it with an "I can," i.e., ostensibly with Husserl's notion of an *organ*-ic body, a living body of affections and actions in which, as Husserl says, "I hold sway quite immediately, kinesthetically" (Husserl 1970a: 107). But in fact Merleau-Ponty's "I can" has a decisively different point of reference and meaning. It is already anchored to a world of objects, and its meaning is specified in terms of that ready-made mesh of body and world. Thus, when he writes that "Consciousness is being towards the thing through the intermediary of the body," or more elaborately, that "A movement is learned

when the body has understood it, that is, when it has incorporated it into its 'world', and to move one's body is to aim at things through it; it is to allow oneself to respond to their call, which is made upon it independently of any representation" (1962: 138–39), he is affirming a basic bodily unity with the world, a unity achieved not by way of a constituting consciousness, that is, not by way of a building up of knowledge through experience, but by an already intact and functioning "motor intentionality" — a body that "projects" itself into the world.[5] What is lost in the translation of the "I can," so to speak, is the "I move" and the "I do," and the kinestheses that are both their foundation and their unity.[6] In other words, when Merleau-Ponty appropriates the "I can" and translates it into a motor intentionality, he does so without reference either to Husserl's fundamental "kinestheses" or to kinesthesia. In consequence, a motor intentionality "inhabits" our bodies (1962: 139–40), but its dimensions are neither kinetically nor kinesthetically fleshed out. We are given no clue, for example, not only as to the process whereby a body learns a movement and comes to incorporate it into its 'world'; we are given no clue as to how a body *learns to move itself* to begin with. For there to be a motor intentionality, the tactile-kinesthetic body must in fact be constituted. Indeed, we all progressively learn our tactile-kinesthetic bodies on the basis of movement that is simply there, that is, on the basis of that original kinetic liveliness or primal animation with which we come into the world. Moreover we forge our kinetic union with the world on the ground of our progressive kinetic-kinesthetic apprenticeship. It is through having lived and lived vitally in dynamic experiences of movement, through a rich and complex kinesthetic-kinetic past, that we in fact understand Merleau-Ponty's adult notion of a motor intentionality. We grasp what he is pointing to because we have all learned our bodies and because we have all forged a kinetic bond with the world. We can thus agree with Merleau-Ponty that we dwell in our bodies and toward a world. Our bodies are where our kinetic aliveness is that carries us through the day. But that we are at all, and that we are at all disposed in the way we are, is rooted foundationally in our being movement-born; our being-in-the-world is rooted in an originary kinetic liveliness that is there still, residually, at the core of our adult being. Without the procedure of bracketing, the phenomenon of primal animation, of our apprenticeship in learning to move ourselves, and of our kinetic bond with the world, all remain captive of the natural attitude. In consequence, the originary and dynamic structure of movement never comes to light. It is ironic that the quintessential union of body and world that pulses its way poetically through Merleau-Ponty's philosophy is in the end unanimated because animation has been methodologically blocked from view.

Investigations of movement in the natural attitude are prey to beliefs and attitudes that, at bottom, perpetuate misunderstandings of movement, that tie it to objects in motion, to pointillist notions, to a change of position, to information, to instrumentalist conceptions, and so on. What the phenomenological procedure of bracketing allows is precisely a suspension of these encumbered and encumbering understandings of movement. The shift in attitude from the natural to the phenomenological is particularly crucial to an understanding of movement as a *natal* phenomenon. A newborn is not changing position or gathering information: it is animated. It may be making a fist, thus changing the position of its fingers; it may be kicking, thus changing the position of its leg; or it may be crying, stretching, sucking, or doing any number of other things and thereby be said to be changing the position of this or that body part, and certainly to be aware of doing so, but "changing position" or "gathering information" does not properly describe the basic phenomenon of animation. Moreover although each of the above movement examples relies on what we easily and quickly label as a behavior, each is in fact a kinetic episode that we, as adults, partition off from the global phenomenon of animation; each is a kinetic happening occurring along the continuum of a primal kinetic liveliness. Gibson underscores the ongoingness of perception; so should we underscore the ongoingness of a primal kinetic liveliness and a foundational kinesthetic perceptual consciousness. The foundation of perception in fact lies in just such a liveliness. Primal animation is the bedrock of learning to move oneself, and learning to move oneself is the foundation of perceiving the world. To appreciate these relationships requires not *just* phenomenological analyses; it requires the light of empirical studies, and thus what may rightly be called a constructive phenomenology of infancy. In this constructive endeavor, we draw upon our own adult experiences of newborn infants, upon our experiences of self-movement — including what Landgrebe describes as "[our] most elementary form of spontaneity" — and upon scientific studies that illuminate the significance of self-movement in infancy. In so doing, we proceed phenomenologically, that is, by bracketing. It will be helpful to begin with to clarify what this procedure means methodologically with respect to scientific studies of infancy. In particular, we need to show how scientific findings may be used as a point of departure for phenomenological studies, and how, in utilizing such findings, we are in fact following close upon the first methodology Merleau-Ponty used in his study of perception. While we might

well proceed on the basis of the precedent Merleau-Ponty set in using scientific findings, a more rigorous explanation is called for, not only to show the adequacy of such a procedure but to make the methodology explicitly available to others. In what follows, it will be helpful at times to advert to "existential analysis" (1962: 136), as Merleau-Ponty specifically termed his method of using case studies of the abnormal in his pursuit of the phenomenology of perception.

5. Methodological clarifications for a constructive phenomenology

In hewing to a phenomenological approach, we use our adult observations of newborns, (including, if we have them, observations of newborn nonhumans as well as humans), our experiences of self-movement, and scientific findings as a "transcendental clue"; that is, we use each of these sources as our point of departure for doing phenomenological work. In the course of detailing the method of phenomenology, Husserl speaks of an intentional object as a transcendental clue (1973: 50–53). By an intentional object, he does not mean only items such as coffee cups or houses, for example, but a friend we meet on the street, or the experience of joy, or a work of art, or a disagreeable person, and so on. Whatever presents itself to us straightforwardly in experience as meaningful can serve as the point of departure for a phenomenological analysis. What needs clarification in the present context is the use of scientific findings as a transcendental clue. While Merleau-Ponty never speaks of a transcendental clue in conjunction with his use of clinical and experimental scientific material, the scientific literature he consults could indeed be utilized as a *transcendental* clue rather than as a springboard to "existential analysis." Husserl explicitly remarks in fact upon the possibility of utilizing scientific knowledge — in particular, "medical knowledge" — in the pursuit of phenomenology. In the process of considering how we come "to *understand someone's development*" (italics in original), he writes that we must take the person's relationships and their particular temperament into account, and also any vicissitudes that might affect their development such as falling and becoming crippled. He says that "We are not interested here in a real-causal analysis of these consequences. But medical knowledge can be of service toward an integration, in the correct way, of the psychic effects that are relevant for subjective development and consequently toward giving an account of them in the attempt to clarify subjective motivations and subjective development. *Here the physical is serving as an indication of what is to be integrated*" (1989: 288; italics added). Certainly Husserl's specification of the use of scientific knowledge in the service of phenomenology may be construed straightaway as the methodological point of departure for Merleau-Ponty's seminal use of pathological material in forging his phenomenology of perception. Through such material, Merleau-Ponty attempts to illuminate normal "subjective motivations and subjective development"; that is, through an existential analysis of the behavior of a neurologically disabled person, he attempts to show by default the nature of our relationship to the world. The utilization of scientific findings in the context of a constructive phenomenology of animation situates us on a quite different terrain. The quest is to understand the normal directly rather than to deduce it from the abnormal. In large measure the quest is precisely "*to understand someone's development*," to understand how primal movement underlies the phenomenon of learning to move oneself, and in reverse terms, how learning to move oneself emerges on the basis of movement that is already there. In this endeavor, the physical will indeed serve as an indication of what is to be integrated. Scientific descriptions of observed infant behavior, of observed infant affects, and so on, together with scientific descriptive accounts of infant experience, will serve as transcendental clues as to what kinetically transpires in infancy such that an "I move" emerges. The descriptions will thus help us to flesh out a constructive phenomenology of animation.

There is a feature of this enterprise that some may well find troublesome and that should be singled out in the context of methodological clarifications, namely, the claim that "the background," as it is consistently referred to in contemporary discourse, not only is not a forever obscure and impenetrable reservoir of capacities or "know-how," but is for all normal humans ultimately and always a basically kinetic background. Though we cannot remember doing so, we all lived through our infancy. Primal animation *is* the background; learning to move ourselves *is etched* on this background. Learning to move ourselves includes not just learning to reach, learning to walk, and learning to pull a toy, for example, but learning to articulate with our tongue and mouths, and with our fingers with respect to their dexterous possibilities. Philosopher John Searle defines background — which he in fact capitalizes and uses "as a technical term" — as "the capacities, abilities, and general know-how that enable our mental states to function." He states categorically that "Background capacities … are not themselves intentional" (Searle 1992: 175). In other words, we have never been explicitly aware of Background capacities as meanings or values discovered in the everyday world. But how do we know that Background