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*Merleau-Ponty, Whitehead, une pensée de la vie*

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Merleau-Ponty concluded his first lectures on the concept of nature in 1956-1957 with a commentary on Whitehead's philosophy. He asked Whitehead for a new concept of nature which took the recent discoveries of physics – the theory of relativity and quantum physics – into account. The main ideas are these: there is a passage of nature, a creative advance of nature, a process of nature; when we consider nature, we should thus refuse the idea of simple location; we can't consider nature as matter which exists at a definite moment in space. Those elements are essential to consider nature without life, but they are even more important perhaps when we consider nature alive. For Whitehead, there are three characteristics of life: absolute self-enjoyment, creative activity, aim. In my paper, I've tried to show that all these Whiteheadian ideas are relevant to understand contemporary biology and the meaning of organisms: embryology, morphology, behavior studies, which are themes of the 1957-1958 lectures. In his research, Merleau-Ponty never forgot Whitehead's concept of nature. Studies on nature alive are also definitively essential for Merleau-Ponty to elaborate his new ontology, which is an ontology of the *Sensible*.