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*Emergent Life: Addressing the “Ontological-Diplopia” of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
with Merleau-Ponty and Deacon*

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In this article, I attempt to accomplish two objectives. The first is a diagnosis of our contemporary understanding of nature, which I propose to characterize (borrowing a term from Merleau-Ponty) as an ontological diplopia between the view of nature as rigidity and the view of nature as plasticity. Second, I suggest a way to address this situation that combines basic clues from what I call Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of the organism, as it can be gleaned from his book *The Structure of Behaviour*, and Terrence W. Deacon’s autogenetic model of the emergence of life from matter, such as it is set forth in his recent book *Incomplete Nature: How Mind Emerged From Matter*. I end with some thoughts on how this assemblage of a dialectical conception of the organism and an autogenetic theory of life’s emergence from non-life might enable a reconsideration of the stakes involved in the subversion of rigidity at the hand of plasticity that is underway in our times.