



Can We Experience Nature in the Lifeworld? An Interrogation of Husserl's Notion of Lifeworld and its Implication for Environmental and Educational Thinking

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Abstract

Given the tendency for the "lifeworld approach" to be adopted in the domain of environmental theory and education without critical examination of the key concept "lifeworld", this paper attempts to elucidate the ambiguity apparent in Husserl's development of the notion and the implications of this for teaching and learning about nature. The paper consists of three sections. The first section deals with the meaning and limitations of the current lifeworld approach to nature and the implications for environmental and educational thinking. In the second section, the confusion surrounding the concept of lifeworld is traced back to the later Husserl's philosophy. Exploring the meaning of lifeworld in Husserl's philosophy reveals that there may be two lifeworld orientations: one is explicit and objective in its emphasis on the shared and universal; the other is implicit and subjective in its emphasis on the idiosyncratically personal. The final section argues that the implicit and subjective orientation of lifeworld may be more tenable experientially, and as such more conducive to helping environmental and educational thinkers envisage an attentive and responsive approach to teaching and learning about nature.

Introduction

The issue of nature is one of the most important themes for environmental philosophers and educators. A number of authors would admit that the establishment of an "agreeable" or "harmonious", rather than a "dominant" or "mastery", relationship between humans and nature could be accepted as one of the learning goals, insofar as it might alleviate the one-sidedness of taking nature as the mere object of human exploitation. What is to be explored in this paper is the "lifeworld approach" as a means to teach or learn to establish an agreeable relationship with nature (Lijmbach, Arcken, Van Koppen, & Wals, 2002; Payne, 2003; Van Koppen, 2000).

The "lifeworld approach" has been adopted by some

environmental researchers and educators without careful examination of the meaning of the key concept "lifeworld" grounded in Husserl's philosophy. It will be argued that there are two orientations towards the understanding of lifeworld in Husserl's doctrines: one is explicit; the other is implicit. The first one approaches the lifeworld as the world common to all; the second one approaches the lifeworld as the world of personal experience. However, Husserl does not use the term "lifeworld" in a very strict and consistent way, and this inconsistency on his part may thus influence later theorists' interpretation of the concept. Different approaches to "lifeworld" imply somewhat different understandings of the relationship between humans and nature, and thereby bring about different views on learning about nature. This paper therefore aims to

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examine and clarify the two meanings of lifeworld in Husserl's philosophy. On this ground, the inconsistency implicit in the lifeworld approach to nature in the field of environmental education can be resolved. Finally, we conclude with the suggestion that the concept of lifeworld based on idiosyncratic personal experiences may be the more tenable experientially, and hence more conducive to developing an attentive and responsive attitude towards nature in the educational context.

The Contemporary Lifeworld Approach to Nature related to Environmental Thinking and the Implied Confusion

While many studies related to the concept of nature in the field of environmental thinking point to the possibilities of the "lifeworld approach" or "lifeworld perspective" (Lijmbach, Arcken, Van Koppen, & Wals, 2002; Payne, 2003; Van Koppen, 2000), Van Koppen's already substantial contribution to this approach might be taken as a proper starting point for our discussion.

Van Koppen (2000) suggests that the "lifeworld approach" to nature as a theoretical framework can be taken as a "negotiation" to amend the established approaches to concepts of nature. He divides the current concepts of nature into three approaches: one focusing on the sustainable use of nature as a resource, one focusing on the arcadian interpretation of nature, and one focusing on the social construction of nature. After explicating the different approaches in detail, Van Koppen (2000) identifies particular weaknesses in each approach. The resource approach relies on scientific and technological information to a high degree because the identification of the actual and potential functions of natural resources and the determination of the carrying capacity of natural ecosystems need to be grounded in the knowledge of science and technology. However, there remains considerable uncertainty regarding the social and moral issues that cannot be solved by science and technology. The limitation of the resource approach points to the importance of its "very opposite: the arcadian approach to nature" (Van Koppen, 2000, p. 303). According to Van Koppen, the arcadian approach is characterised by the notion of the non-instrumental value of nature. This approach argues for a "re-moralisation" or a "re-enchantment" of the human/nature relationship. Nonetheless, the arcadian approach is criticised, firstly, for its inability to reject modern science as a feasible method to deal with environmental problems. The arcadian approach stresses the intrinsic values of nature and discredits modern science and technology, but it does not assist either directly or substantially in solving the practical

environmental problems. The second criticism focuses on the social construction of the concept of nature. However, this criticism applies not only to the arcadian approach, but also to the resource approach. This criticism thus directs us to the view of nature as a social construction.

From the perspective of social constructionists, "the meaning of nature is neither explained by its biophysical characteristics, nor by its intrinsic value ... nature concepts depend on their social contexts, their meaning and use can be questioned and explained in terms of social process" (Van Koppen, 2000, p. 307). To some extent, the constructionist approach provides an explanatory framework for understanding how the concept of nature is structured through history. Nonetheless, this approach makes scant contribution to the solution of physical environmental problems. Therefore, it is necessary to propose a fourth approach to nature involving nature as "a matter of narratives, symbols and social relations" and as "constituted in natural science, and ... experienced in social practices of everyday life" (Van Koppen, 2000, p. 308). In Van Koppen's view, this is the lifeworld approach. Van Koppen (2002, pp. 124–125) defines the lifeworld approach to nature as follows:

This approach indicates the view that people have of nature in their day-to-day lives. In this approach, nature is viewed as it is experienced through the senses and shared through a common language as the individual's concrete environment. The lifeworld view of nature is constantly influenced by other traditions and contains many aspects of the resource approach, the Arcadian approach, and the social construction approach. Lifeworld concepts of nature are flexible and moulded to concrete practices of dealing with nature, such as gardening, outdoor recreation, and keeping pets. Utilisation of and reverence for nature, morals and aesthetics, facts and emotions are easily combined (Leiss, 1972; Van Koppen, 2000). In education, it is of great importance that the learner's lifeworld perspective is taken into account as a basic sensual, moral, and emotional frame of reference in learning about nature.

The attempt to integrate an individual experience of nature and a collective experience of nature is implied in the lifeworld approach. However, while Van Koppen points to the importance of combining the two requirements to delineate an approach to nature and learning about nature, he loses a balanced grip on

both in the end. What is really focused on is the collective experience of nature. Van Koppen and his colleagues (Lijmbach, Arcken, Van Koppen, & Wals, 2002; Van Koppen, 2000;) point out accurately that many representatives of the arcadian approach take the wilderness as the ideal type of nature and thereby ignore the experience of nature in individuals' day-to-day lives, such as gardening, keeping pets, the change of weather, and so forth. The lifeworld approach to nature based on "the concrete practices of dealing with nature" can be understood as a highly personal and heterogeneous experience. It is the experience of nature of every individual as an embodied subject.

In our view, this is the starting point for developing an authentic and unique approach to learning about nature. However, the glimpse of the importance of individuality is soon eclipsed when Van Koppen (2000, p. 313) continues the paragraph: "the valuation of nature that emerges from these practices should not only be analysed as a particular characteristic of an individual or group, but also as a moment in the long-term movement of the social creation of arcadian nature". There is nothing wrong with this assertion if it is claimed in a context that weighs up the factors of individuality and collectivity on the same scale. However, the assertion is established on the premise of acceptance of social constructionism. If the lifeworld approach is proposed to negotiate – in Van Koppen's terms – the "symbolic interpretation of nature" and the "sensual experience" or the "resource approach" and the "arcadian approach", the social factors have already been assumed. What is lacking is the individual and idiosyncratic element. It is exactly what Van Koppen calls the "sensual" experience of the lifeworld of every particular person.

If Van Koppen is right about the involvement of the constructionist factor in both the resource approach and arcadian approach, then most of the approaches to nature are embedded in historical, social and traditional contexts. The non-individualistic elements are inextricably intertwined with the concepts of nature. Since the lifeworld approach to nature is presented as a negotiation between the constructionist approach and the individualistic approach to nature, lifeworld should be understood as grounded primarily in the individualistic context rather than in the social collective background. Then a lifeworld approach could enable us to develop a process of learning about nature which stresses the personally unique experience.

However, the discussion of the concept of lifeworld in the view of Van Koppen actually leads us to an in-depth interrogation: what is the meaning of lifeworld? "Lifeworld", a term now broadly used in philosophy

and the social sciences, is indeed an ambiguous concept. It is at first sight conceived of as the world we live in (Ströker, 1997). But what is the world that we live in? In what sense do we live in it? Is it an objective physical world (Natsoulas, 1994) or a realm of subjective meanings? Is the lived world an opposite of the scientific world? Is it an opposite of the cultural world? If so, is it an opposite of the artistic world or the moral world? What is the relationship between lifeworld and natural world? If lifeworld denotes the world in which we live, it is the world of ordinary, everyday life. In that it is difficult, however, for modern people to live in the natural world, a crucial question concerning the lifeworld approach to nature may arise: is the lifeworld approach to nature imaginary? The reflections above demonstrate that the meaning of lifeworld needs to be investigated. One question concerning the meaning of lifeworld matters especially when it is adopted to develop a learning process about nature: does lifeworld denote a world common to all or a realm of subjective meanings?

In order to clarify the meaning of lifeworld, let us go back to Husserl's philosophy. It is first through Husserl that the term "lifeworld" is highlighted in the field of theoretical thinking (Husserl, 1936/1970; Leiss, 1972; Ströker, 1997; Van Koppen, 2000). It will be argued that two orientations to the meaning of lifeworld are implied in Husserl's later philosophy (1936/1970): one denotes a world common to all; the other denotes the experiential world of personal meaning. The first orientation can be articulated as the objective orientation; the second as the subjective orientation. However, Husserl does not use the term "lifeworld" in a very strict and consistent way (Carr, 1970). With the exception of Merleau-Ponty¹, most of the post-Husserlian authors, stress the former meaning rather than the latter one. It will be argued that it is more feasible to conceive of the second interpretation of the Husserlian lifeworld as the basis of an authentic learning process about nature.

The Twofold Meaning of Lifeworld in Husserl's Philosophy

In Husserl's last work, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1936/1970)², the term "lifeworld" is introduced as a pivot

¹ According to David Carr, the translator of *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, Merleau-Ponty was one of the first scholars outside Husserl's circle to study Part III of this book on visiting the Husserl Archives in Louvain in 1939 (Carr, 1970).

² *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* is hereafter referred to as *Crisis*.

for reflections on the “crisis” of science and the humanities. Although the term “lifeworld” is key to Husserl’s later thinking, Husserl himself admits that its clarity is not easy to achieve (§33, p. 122). The translator of *Crisis* also points to two difficulties concerning the concept of lifeworld: one is related to Husserl’s overall philosophy; the other is related to scientific accuracy (Carr, 1970, pp. xli–xlii). In the first case, the notion of the “pregiveness” of the lifeworld, that Husserl insists on repeatedly, may contradict his earlier idealism. In the second case, according to Husserl, the description of lifeworld is itself a theoretical activity (or *theōria*) on the one hand. However, Husserl admits that every theoretical activity presupposes the lifeworld on the other hand (Carr, 1970, pp. xli–xlii). It is not the aim of this paper to resolve the difficulties, but to reveal the inconsistency and ambiguity of the term “lifeworld” by presenting them. In our view, there are different meanings implicit in this term. The clarification of these meanings may help us to envisage another lifeworld approach to nature and education.

In *Crisis*, Husserl uses many terms to describe the lifeworld, including “pregiven world”, “prescientific world”, “pretheoretical world”, “prepredictable world”, “surrounding world (of everyday life)”, “the intuitively given surrounding world”, “(universal) lifeworld *a priori*”, “prescientific experiential life”, “prereflective experience”, “lived experience”, and so forth. What becomes evident, however, is that two different orientations of meaning are implied in the Husserlian descriptions of lifeworld.

The first orientation is towards understanding the lifeworld as a pregiven surrounding world common to all. It is the “real world, the one that is actually given through perception, that is ever experienced and experienceable – our everyday lifeworld” (Husserl, 1936/1970, pp. 49). This orientation of lifeworld is accepted by many authors, including Landgrebe (1973), Natsoulas (1994), Ströker (1997) and Van Koppen (2000), although there are discrepancies between the interpretations of these authors. This orientation of lifeworld is explicated by Husserl (1936/1970, p. 51) as “the world constantly given to us as actual in our concrete world-life”. In the view of Landgrebe (1973, p. 6), the lifeworld is “the ‘totality of everything intramundane’ and *perception* is the ‘original object-giving experience’”. According to Natsoulas (1994), it is the world of which all components can be perceived and we ourselves are a part of it. In Ströker’s view (1997, pp. 303–304), the lifeworld, as a world “permanently present and usually unreflectedly given to us, is ... not merely a natural, but a cultural world, since we find ourselves in it, pursuing all our activities and thus realising

values and norms in any of its different fields of practical life”.

There are diverse interpretations of the lifeworld: Landgrebe and Natsoulas place similar stress on the key role of perception in experiencing the surrounding world, and thereby reveal the importance of the concrete materiality of the lifeworld, while Ströker highlights the intangible temporality and socio-historicity of the lifeworld. However, both interpretations agree that the lifeworld, be it as a natural world or a cultural one (but definitely not as a scientific one), is a world experienced and shared by all, in which we all live.

What kind of a world can the lifeworld be for all to live in? If we follow Landgrebe’s and Natsoulas’s interpretation, this lifeworld exists as a physical surrounding world full of perceivable components such as other people, things and creatures. As Husserl (1936/1970, pp. 50–51) states, this “actually intuited, actually experienced and experienceable world, in which particularly our whole life takes place, remains unchanged as what it is, in its own essential structure and its own concrete causal style, whatever we may do with or without techniques”.

However, on the basis of this interpretation, the lifeworld seems a universal, static and motionless world that is the same for everyone, with everything within it already structured or given in a particular way. It is difficult to find any possibility for the individual to “discover” or “construct” his or her own meaningful space, because there is no difference between every lifeworld and the individual experience of it. If we take Ströker’s path, the lifeworld is understood as a cultural world, the meaning of which depends on “a certain society” or at least “social groups”.

The meanings of the lifeworld of every group might vary. But, for those belonging to the group, it would seem impossible to define or constitute a personal meaningful sphere. It is thus difficult to find any space in the lifeworld of the first orientation for the individual to develop his or her own world of lived experience. The individual is merely part of a certain group rather than an autonomously experiencing person. As Husserl (1936/1970) describes, in the “everyday surrounding world of life ... we are objects among objects in the sense of the lifeworld, namely, as being here and there ...” (pp. 104–105).

However, another lifeworld orientation is, both implicitly and explicitly, to be found in *Crisis*. It is the lifeworld understood as a personal world of immediate and lived experience. Husserl (1936/1970)

admits that human beings are, on the one hand, objects living in the lifeworld as a surrounding world. On the other hand, he also claims that human beings are “subjects for this world, namely, as the ego-subjects experiencing it, contemplating it, valuing it, related to it purposefully ...” (Husserl, 1936/1970, p. 105). The notion of the ego-subject as a very decisive key is proposed. There would appear to be two perspectives on how to understand the ego-subject. The dominant approach to understanding the Husserlian ego-subject is to put it back in the context of the earlier Husserlian idealism and thus to view the ego-subject as a transcendental ego or a transcendental “I”. The other perspective, which we adopt as a key feature of the second lifeworld orientation, lights the path that Merleau-Ponty (1945/2003) treads. It views the ego-subject as a body-subject, a living body. While the related ideas have also been discussed by Landgrebe (1973), the lifeworld in his view, following the dominant orientation, is still interpreted as a common surrounding world. This discrepancy will be explicated in the following exploration.

According to Husserl, the ego-subject is a living body of consciousness, perceptions, acts and kinaesthetic movements:

... participating in this is our living body, which is never absent from the perceptual field, and specifically its corresponding ‘organs of perception’ (eyes, hands, ears, etc.). ... they function in seeing, hearing, etc., together with the ego’s motility belonging to them, i.e., what is called kinaesthesia. (Husserl, 1936/1970, p. 106)

This living body, as an embodied subject as well as the ego-subject, is the pivot of one’s own lifeworld. In Husserl’s (1936/1970) term, the action of the living body can be called “holding sway”. As Husserl states, “... this ‘holding sway’, here exhibited as functioning in all perception of bodies ... is actualised in the particular kinaesthetic situation [and] is perpetually bound to a [general] situation in which bodies appear, i.e., that of the field of perception” (Husserl, 1936/1970, p. 107). What is noticeable is that the living body as a unique ego-subject is holding sway a perceptual field that is idiosyncratically meaningful. The perceptual field implied, imbued as it is with idiosyncratic meanings, is the personal lifeworld that we are tracing.

In a quite unique way the living body is constantly in the perceptual field quite immediately, with a completely unique ontic meaning, precisely the meaning

indicated by the word ‘organ’ (here used in its most primitive sense), [namely, as] that through which I exist in a completely unique way and quite immediately as the ego of affection and actions, [as that] in which I hold sway quite immediately, kinaesthetically (Husserl, 1936/1970, p. 107)

This view of the living body and its world, which is rarely elaborated on, is crucial for us to understand the lifeworld in the sense of authentic lived experience. The lifeworld, in this view, can be understood as the assembly of personal lived experience. This lived experience is a so-called “unthematic” world. It is a ground for human beings to constitute different “thematic” worlds, such as a theoretical world, a cultural world, a scientific world, and other worlds in accordance with their particular interests or projects. On this ground, the lifeworld can, in Husserl’s terms (1936/1970, p. 140), be understood as “the lifeworld a priori” and, as such, as the “founding of validity” of all the so-called objective sciences.

However, while what cannot be denied is that the descriptions of the lifeworld in *Crisis* can be mainly understood in the first orientation, and the lifeworld therefore taken as an objective and universal context, the trace of understanding the lifeworld as a subjective and personal realm can still be detected in passages such as the following:

... everything objectively a priori, with its necessary reference back to a corresponding a priori of the lifeworld. This reference-back is one of a founding of validity A certain idealising accomplishment is what brings about the higher-level meaning-formation and ontic validity ... of every other objective a priori on the basis of the lifeworld a priori What is needed, then, would be a systematic division of the universal structures – universal lifeworld a priori and universal “objective” a priori – and then also a division among the universal inquiries according to the way in which the “objective” a priori is grounded in the “subjective-relative” a priori of the lifeworld (Husserl, 1936/1970, p. 140)

All considered, the meanings of the lifeworld in Husserl’s philosophy can thus be analysed in terms of two orientations: one is to view the lifeworld as a common and objective surrounding world (various interpretations of which nevertheless exist); the other

is to view the lifeworld as a personal, subjective and embodied experience. It is not the aim of this paper to answer the question of whether the two orientations of lifeworld can be reconciled in Husserl's philosophy or not, or whether there are discrepancies in Husserl's thoughts. The central goal of this paper is to reveal the different meanings of lifeworld in Husserl's thought, given the influential role of the Husserlian lifeworld in environmental theory and education and the need for its interpretation to be critically examined. The equivocation of the concept of lifeworld in Husserl's thought may perpetuate the current confusion. In our view, if nature is a goal to be conceived of or learned about, the second orientation of the lifeworld, with its emphasis on the subjective-relative *a priori* of the living body, should be taken as prior to the first orientation of lifeworld. First of all, the lifeworld of any individual human being should be construed as being lived as an unthematic perceptual field of bodily experience, and only then as the world common to and shared with other people. Because the second, or the subjective, lifeworld orientation focuses on the unique and heterogeneous parts of individual experiences, while the first, or the objective, orientation targets the common and homogeneous parts of experiences, the subjective orientation may be more appropriate as a *starting point* for environmental and educational thinkers to envisage a lifeworld approach to nature and education, as will be argued in the next section.

To Experience Nature in our Lifeworld

It has already been argued that the meaning of lifeworld as a personal realm of lived experience is included in Husserl's philosophy. This orientation of lifeworld may be more feasible than the understanding of the lifeworld as a common world for constructing a process of learning about nature. Since the prevalent understanding of lifeworld is based on the first or the objective orientation, which interprets the lifeworld as the everyday world common to all, the lifeworld approach to nature in this orientation takes nature as a common natural world (Landgrebe, 1973; Van Koppen, 2000). According to this orientation, the ordinary life experiences of nature can be taken as references for environmental and educational thinking about nature. As Van Koppen (2000) describes, the experience of keeping pets and gardening can be taken as the lifeworld approach to nature and as references for environmental thinking about the human/nature relationship. Nonetheless, according to the objective orientation, the daily life experience is common to all. It is the experience constructed and interpreted by the group. The process of social construction and interpretation is also a process of collective selection and sifting. Through

this process, the common, general and universal elements are left within the sphere of the lifeworld, while the private, "trivial" and authentic parts are ignored. For example, the objective approach to keeping pets puts the focus on the objective parts such as the general knowledge of the companion animals. Viewed in this light, the knowledge of the animal has already been examined and generalised by certain collective mechanisms. The idiosyncratic, peculiar, personal and trivial parts may be sifted out. However, these are the very parts valued by the second or the subjective orientation of lifeworld. In our view, these trivialities are the ground for any individual to experience nature and establish a unique relationship between oneself and nature, or, more accurately, between oneself and any part of nature. Because any one person's lifeworld experience of nature cannot encompass the experience of nature as a whole all at once, the experience of nature is a process of continuous accumulation of innumerable experiences of nature.

This paper agrees that the ordinary life experience and the experience of nature in ordinary life are important for environmental and educational thinking; however, what we doubt ultimately is that the meaning of the lifeworld has already been determined by the so-called "common" world, be it a physical surrounding world or a cultural world. Environmental and educational thinking about the lifeworld approach should start with the subjective lived experience rather than with objective knowledge, because every lifeworld begins with every particular experience of every particular person.

To return to the example of keeping pets: What the subjective orientation of the lifeworld approach emphasises are the particular interactions between the living body and one's own pet – another living body, whether it be a cat or a dog. For the person who is keeping a pet, what is significantly experienced is not the general knowledge common to all, but an irreplaceable relationship between the person and the pet. In this sense, his or her own dog or cat is not *any* dog or *any* cat, but rather a particular living creature, a dog or a cat different from all the others. Among all of the particular species, it is not *any one* of them, but *the one* for the person only. The relationship between the pet-keeper and the pet is unparalleled. These unparalleled interactions are the components of the experiences of lifeworld. They may be trivial, but they are significant. For example, the pet's eccentric habits or movements do not belong to the common animal world, but may mark out a certain moment shared with the keeper in their shared lifetime. This is the very significance that the subjective orientation of the lifeworld approach to nature values most: the

irreplaceable individual experience and the unparalleled lifeworld that constitutes it.

It is important to acknowledge that the particularity of the lived experience, according to Husserl (1936/1970) and Merleau-Ponty (1945/2003), is rooted in the living body. The significance of the perceptual body is obscurely addressed in Husserl's philosophy, since his philosophy pursues transcendental idealism. It is Merleau-Ponty (1945/2003) who argues more systematically and coherently for the significance of embodiment. Everyone lives as a body that is living and constructing one's own unique world. This does not mean that every living body is a monad. There are interactions between human beings and their worlds. The dynamic interactions are the origins out of which the common and thematised worlds are extracted or constituted. However, the common worlds are constructed on the ground of infinite individual lifeworlds which are pregnant with senses and meanings, idiosyncratic and universal. Viewed in this light, the following descriptions by Husserl seem to make more sense:

But being an ego through the living body [*die liebliche Ichlichkeit*] is of course not the only way of being an ego, and none of its ways can be severed from the others; throughout all the transformations they form a unity. Thus we are concretely in the field of perception ... each of us as full-fledged "I-the-man". ... we, each "I-the-man" and all of us together, belong to the world as living with one another in the world; ... for our consciousness as existing precisely through this "living together". (Husserl, 1936/1970, p. 108)

In other words, every living body is an individual I-the-man, or I-the-person, and his or her living is actualised through his or her being as a body with others. Viewed in this light, the subjective orientation of lifeworld (or the subjective lifeworld approach) assumes the priority of the authentic and unique realm without rejecting the common social worlds.

Finally, we may consider our question at the

beginning: how can we experience nature in our lifeworld? If the lifeworld approach to nature could be reconceived in the bodily subjective orientation, it might be possible for human beings to re-envisage nature from a perspective that is different from the objective one, that is stressing the importance of every experience of nature. The experiences of nature could be in the wild or in the garden, unique and particular, authentic and meaningful. The approach to nature in the subjective orientation may be a more feasible starting point than the objective orientation for us to incite the authentic, personal and intimate relationship between ourselves and nature. In this sense, nature could be experienced at a particular moment as a particular place imbued with particular meanings for particular individuals. This human/nature relationship is one and only. In this light, nature could be experienced, lived and learned in our own – or, *my own* – lifeworld.

This approach illuminates a new understanding of environmental learning: learning in nature is not only to take nature as a physical and objective surrounding world, but also to engage with it as a personal and private territory. In other words, the learning of nature is not merely a matter of learning *in* nature, but a reciprocal process between leaning and nature, namely learning *through* nature. In the process, the meaning of nature is gradually constructed by the individual him/herself. What teachers should bear in mind is that all pupils' experiences are different from each other, even though they are in the "same" place, or in the "same" natural environment. Pupils should be encouraged to connect with, understand and learn about nature from their *own* perspectives rather than in terms of conventional or established views. Such cognitive and affective learning through nature could become an ineffaceable and significant part of living experience and memory. Nature, therefore, rather than being encountered as an indifferent and detached field, can be one's own lifeworld, intimate and irreplaceable. The subjective lifeworld thus calls for a more flexible, personal and responsive attitude to learning. If the lifeworld approach to nature could be conceived of as a process of learning about nature through engagement with the personal and individual, the hope for developing a more attentive and responsive attitude towards nature is may be realised.

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