

# FUNDAMENTAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL CATEGORIES OF GARDEN AND LANDSCAPE

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## Abstract

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The current scientific methods describing gardens and landscapes all over the world are not always sufficient for the purpose of deep understanding of specific and close relations between landscape/garden and its inhabitants/visitors. A new dimension of qualitative investigation of these phenomena and relations between humans and the environment, as distinguished from the common mechanistic methods, has to be acquired. While a systematic anti-mechanistic research on the interaction of humans and living space is carried out especially in the United Kingdom and the United States, Continental Europe persist mechanistic in its core.

In Continental Europe phenomenology as well as hermeneutics are regarded mostly as the particular areas of abstract philosophical studies that do not refer enough to practical sciences such as, for example, garden and landscape architecture. However, there are some especially transatlantic centres of applied phenomenological research. This article examines the phenomenological and hermeneutical approach as it might be used to explore the specific field of garden and landscape issues. In the first step, the nature of hermeneutics and phenomenology as compared to the common mechanistic scientific methods is discussed and the parallels between hermeneutics and phenomenology are outlined. Then, using the phenomenological method helps we give evidence on the fundamental categories of garden and landscape. These categories, in contrast to mechanistic constructions, represent garden and landscape as they are intimately experienced by humans. The focus of this research is both methodological (it is an effort to articulate a method alternative to the objectivity and abstraction of strict science, to be used in the field of garden and landscape architecture and related areas) and hermeneutical (it is an effort to achieve a deeper and profound understanding of garden and landscape as the irreplaceable base for every responsible interaction, whether scientific, creative, or other, with garden and landscape).

phenomenology, hermeneutics, landscape architecture, intimate environmental experience, being-in-landscape, living-with-landscape, togetherness

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee.

(Genesis 12:1; Moses 1, Chapter 12)

Leaving his trusted country, his birthplace and home, Abram may represent the acyclic wander when the critical mind development (development of critical experience and critical thinking) started thousands years ago. This biblical picture also symbolizes every contemporary ostensibly

sophisticated and independent person, who, despite all possibilities, has an absorbing desire to anchor human existence in some essential principle. This natural need of designation is often connected with the environment – with the intimate home and its typical landscape as defined by Christian Norberg-Schulz (1994) in his masterpiece *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture. Landscape – Home – House – Garden*, these four apparently simple words should be paid more attention as the phenomena of immense importance for every human being.

The material, psychic and also spiritual sphere of every human life rely on the intimate environment and so the deep understanding of environment in each of these spheres is needed when you want to be able to do the responsible work of the garden and landscape architect.

From this point of view, although varied, both specialized and interdisciplinary investigations are carried out, the philosophical base of the garden and landscape architecture is mostly missing in Continental Europe. Absence or at least the lack of this philosophical base causes the disrespect to the field of garden and landscape architecture when compared with the established field of architecture. While the field of architecture pays a lot of attention to speculative thoughts about architectural space and creativity, produces many philosophically sophisticated works and also attracts philosophers to cooperate on architectural themes, see e.g. Heidegger (1996), Husserl (2001), Norberg-Schulz (1994), Popper (2008), Rezek (2009), the field of garden and landscape architecture cannot overcome its narrow-minded attitude of natural science.

Hopefully, this article will demonstrate that the philosophical, specifically the phenomenological and hermeneutical approach can offer an innovative way of looking at the close relationship between humans and garden or landscape environment, an innovative way for identifying and understanding the unique type of human-environment unity – the intimate unity in experience.

## 2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The cardinal idea of this theme is that the phenomenological and hermeneutical approach might be used to explore the garden and landscape issues and that this new kind of exploration could reveal a new quality of information about the garden and landscape phenomena. The special stress is laid on the contribution of this investigation to the field of garden and landscape architecture. Then, this research is carried out on two main levels: (a) methodological and (b) hermeneutical. Although introduced as separate levels, they are interconnected.

a) Methodological level of research: In the first step, the phenomenological and hermeneutical method have to be clarified, the parallels of these methods are discussed and then the method applicable to garden and landscape explorations is formed. The clarification of phenomenology and hermeneutics starts with the philosophical phenomenology and hermeneutics and continues to the phenomenology and hermeneutics applied to garden and landscape phenomena.

During this methodological attempt, some current terminological confusions and misunderstandings such as widespread random use of terms without correct comprehension are dealt with. Term *landscape phenomenology* or *phenomenology of landscape* is not understood and articulated

uniformly because there is the lack of comprehension of philosophical phenomenology. Every applied phenomenological method as well as the phenomenological method applied to garden and landscape phenomena has to start from a detailed acquisition of the philosophical phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and his followers. This should be comprehended as an important methodological precedent.

b) Hermeneutical level of research: In the second step, the phenomenological and hermeneutical method is applied to garden and landscape phenomena. Especially strong hermeneutical overlap of method is important to reach a new type of knowledge, i.e. a new type of understanding of the person-environment relationship.

It should be mentioned that in the context of this research phenomenology and hermeneutics are in a very close relation. This affinity of methods and aims is well-explained by Grondin (1997, p. 34) when the two different concepts of hermeneutics are described. In the first concept hermeneutics is the theory that teaches how to interpret (it is a normative attempt, a paradigm of interpretation). In the second concept hermeneutics is the philosophical analysis of authentic experience, authentic phenomenon (it is almost a phenomenological attempt to reveal a pure experience, pure phenomenon) (Grondin, *ibid.*).

This research, although it shows the advantages of phenomenological perspective and tries to enrich the garden and landscape investigations methodologically, demonstrates especially the second way of hermeneutical thinking. It demonstrates the phenomenology or the phenomenological hermeneutics as the alternative, not as the norm, for garden and landscape investigations.

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Garden and landscape – exact science or creative speculation?

Since 1980s the phenomenon called landscape has become the central point where interests, i.e. efforts to get a deeper understanding, directed from many spheres of human activity meet. In Central and Eastern Europe the uprise of these interdisciplinary efforts was partially caused by the unilateral collectivist type of landscape management that had been enforced during a few decades since 1950s. This type of management dramatically changed not only landscape as a whole, its significant parts such as small farms, manor houses with gardens and parks etc., but it also changed its inhabitants, their minds especially. Although the communism and the collectivism did not operate in the United Kingdom and the United States, the impact of economy growth on landscape in these countries was so big and long-lasting that it provoked a very

strong interdisciplinary reaction even about a half of a century before Continental Europe.

Nowadays, it seems to be fully understood that the complexity of landscape phenomenon cannot be acquired by any analysis of singularities and so it can be acquired only by the holistic interdisciplinary approach that can expose the deep processes, principles and relations (Sklenička, 2003). However, we should never stop asking this question: "Is interdisciplinarity really enough, can it satisfy these aims?" Of course we may easily stagnate and give ourselves the positive answer, but this question is not trivial and the affirmative answer may be given only when the verification of involved disciplines is accomplished. The spheres such as natural sciences, ecology, economy and law, many of social sciences as well as architecture and the garden and landscape architecture traditionally interact in landscape nowadays. Over the decades or even over the centuries most of these disciplines and sciences, so-called exact sciences, and most of related professions have constantly promoted variety of techniques and methods predominantly formed by experiments, evidences and falsifications based on empirical data. Although the significant progress towards the interdisciplinary landscape study has been made during last few decades, the mechanistic core of these individual efforts, as it will be explained in the next part of this text (part 3.2), stayed untouched. It is not even possible to presume that the interdisciplinary study, consisting of mechanistic attempts in its major part, would not be mechanistically restricted. Then, landscape is just a term designating sub-structure epiphenomenon that is only caused by other physical objects and powers and that has no rules of its own and causes no impact on surroundings or humans (Sádlo in Kratochvíl, 1994, p. 180). In this context landscape as a whole is not given its own peculiar existence, its own personality. Usually a current Western-educated person is not able to identify this scientific paradigm of reduced plurality and operates with its mechanistic scheme although it is not the natural mode of existence (Kratochvíl, 1994, p.160).

On the contrary, philosophy, one of the sciences involved in so-called humanities, as distinguished from mostly empirical mechanistic approaches of exact sciences, represents a critical and speculative form of science, a more liberal way of thinking. This important difference of philosophical position could evoke many positives to be taken advantage of in the struggle of mechanistic sciences out of the partial knowledge of the garden and landscape phenomena. Unfortunately, especially in Continental Europe some negative connotations and prejudices towards philosophical method prevail from the position of exact sciences. Numerous scientists suppose that philosophical speculations are not willing to answer the question of physical space and keep back occupied with

impractical themes. Others mean that philosophical methods in general do not even correspond with this phenomenon of real physical existence. From the point of view of natural sciences, which still shape the major part of garden and landscape studies in mainland Europe as is also discussed in the following part of this article (part 3.2), there is no serious need of dubious speculative insights into this theme. The lack of the intermediary philosophical base of garden and landscape investigations in mainland Europe is evident.

However, let us consider the nature of garden and landscape architecture a little more. We may find out that it is much closer to humanities than we can imagine right now. The humanities in general, as derived from a medieval education system called "liberal arts" (i.e. lat. *septem artes liberales*), involve besides "ways of thinking" also "skills of doing" as the integral unity. The philosophical speculation may then evoke "the creativity and intellect of mind" as well as "the creativity and skills of hands". Only when both mind and hand work together, a new type of thoughts about a new type of objects (whether just mental or also physical) based on a new type of reached information can be produced. The prototypical humanist, i.e. "literary intellectual", who looks for new notions, not simple facts, stands in contrast to the prototypical scientist (Snow in Vehse, 2006, p. 6). The term "literary" in this context does not necessarily mean to be occupied just with literature thought. It expresses "the text occupation" in general when "text" evokes every object of interest that needs to be carefully "read" and "well-understood", for example garden and landscape as well. In this case also "the language mode" is just the synonym for "the mode of understanding", in which every experience is shaped and every life is lived. Therefore, besides philosophy or literature, "literary intellectualism" can also express any other intellectual and creative work, for example, garden and landscape architecture.

Garden and landscape architecture fulfils the purpose of humanities at every single level. With philosophy it shares the speculative intellectual attitude which should not be satisfied with exact data during its investigations ever. With literature and every other art it shares the ability to create new mental objects. Just with some extraordinary arts and other human activities it shares the privilege that it is able to change or create physical objects too. And there is one more thing to say about garden and landscape architecture to fulfil its comprehension. The object of landscape architect's creative work – the object which is recreated (in the case of landscape) or even created (in the case of garden), is the structure, which is, as a human being is, living, has its own personality and proves a strong influence on human beings (Sádlo in Kratochvíl, 1994, p. 180).

### 3.2 Mechanistic core of garden and landscape studies

The systematic scientific investigation of garden and landscape that has been continuously applied in contemporary methods of the garden and landscape architecture and related areas began in late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Slowly fading scientism is characteristic for this period of the western science. Especially natural sciences celebrated facts as unchanging certainties of their researches at that time (Blecha, 2007). Tendency to scientific optimism was shared also by young discipline called later geobotanics – precursor of bio-geographical studies and studies of landscape in general in Central and Eastern Europe.

Geobotanics alias phytosociology rose from descriptively comparative methods of natural sciences, botany and geography especially, of early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Moravec *et al.*, 1994). The aim of researches of geobotanics was facts strictly abstracted from deep human-environment relations that are admitted as provably existing in these days. Despite of its limited mechanistic stance, geobotanics has occupied the creative sphere of landscape management, planning and architecture for many decades until now. It established a mental model of abstract nature where a human is either a strictly dependent inferior entity and fades away in nature, or a strictly antagonistic entity that causes nature troubles. This mental model then represents a high appreciation of untouched nature which is embodied in some important terms of geobotanics used in the field of garden and landscape architecture such as for example *reconstructed natural vegetation* and *potential natural vegetation*. A group of these scientific terms may be supplemented by some more literary terms, in which nature, garden and landscape are often thought about, such as for example *wilderness*, *virgin nature strength* or *idyllic landscape (bucolic landscape)*, etc. Although some of the mentioned terms may take into consideration also a positive human impact on landscape and not only its negative side, the narrow-minded mental scheme stays unchanged. These terms represent the unreachable but still adored standards of landscape and garden in general, in which human beings and environment are seen in the “subject-object perspective” as opposites. In this context, humans and the environment stand as two individual elements and their possible interactions happen in causal series.

Landscape ecology, on the same natural scientific basis, has brought a little deeper understanding since 1960s. This discipline does not carry out its investigations only at the level of vertical physical and biological relations in the sense of geography and botany. It adds systematic research into horizontal relations that exceed the limited space of one quasi-homogenous, i.e. epiphenomenal, unit (Forman and Godron, 1993). Integral ecological principles of landscape ecology extended our knowledge of landscape and for the first time

actually opened the discussion at the level of human-environment relations. Instead of the early uniform geobotanical research, a complicated *geosystem* became symptomatic for every deeper and interdisciplinary study of landscape especially in Central Europe since 1970s. Although it seems more appropriate to see landscape as it is seen by landscape ecology – as the summarization of living landscape attributes such as fields, meadows, woods and forests, etc., instead of summarization of physical powers and separate physical objects (Sádlo in Kratochvíl, 1994, p. 180), it is still not a satisfying stance for a philosopher or a phenomenologist.

When a garden is studied from the architectural point of view, different preferences are held than when landscape is studied. Although garden is a specific part of landscape, its significant enclosure marks an artificial space different from landscape where some naturalness, as it was already mentioned, is always either aimed or a subconscious value. Nevertheless, descriptive methods rising from mechanistic stance of natural sciences are often used even when the phenomenon of the artificial garden is studied. Clear factual account of the garden disposition or also factual comparison of disposition changes in the context of history is very often the only offered information.

If we want to think philosophically, critically about the garden, the landscape and about the core of garden and landscape architecture studies we should take into critical account philosophy itself. Of course, not only natural sciences but also philosophy has stagnated in the paradigm of modern science. In the context of scientific paradigm, every lived experience gets a scientific value no sooner than it becomes a fact and that is not possible without rigorous acquisition of mental model of abstract nature. Since 17<sup>th</sup> century until now many philosophical conceptions have appeared inside of this scientific paradigm or inside a paradigm that is very similar. There are also many contemporary philosophical thoughts in which humans and the environment are detached – a subject and an object, see e.g. Šmajš (1998, 2003). The garden and landscape in this context are still very different from the phenomena of garden and landscape in the context of phenomenology and hermeneutics.

### 3.3 Garden, landscape, hermeneutics and mutuality

As it was explained in the previous parts of the discussion (part 3.1, 3.2), however important interdisciplinary studies of garden and landscape are, the creative work and the intellectual speculation of different kind than exact solutions should not be missing either when the garden and landscape phenomena are investigated. Like every other investigation, also the intellectual and creative field such as the garden and landscape architecture has to start with a close study of its object. “The creative work of both mind and hands” can start only on the firm base of a sufficient number of credential

information. Garden and landscape phenomena are not trivial objects of trivial study and cannot be sufficiently understood when scientific mechanistic reduction is applied. The information reached inside the scientific paradigm does not count now or at least this information cannot be taken as a new type of information – the cardinal information. The key to a new type of information must come from the outside of the paradigm or at least it must be based on proper recognition of the limits of paradigm, see e.g. Kuhn (1997). These limits in which the scientific stance on the entire reality is gripped and which are so well established now that they are considered to be the limits of reality itself, represent a sort of epistemological “*chorismos*” – limits of knowledge. Phenomenology and in some sense also hermeneutics try to overcome the paradigmatic limits which may be possible because, as it was already noticed and will be discussed in more detail in the next part of this text (part 3.4 especially), these limits are unwitting human constructions, they are not natural, they are not the reality or the experience. For this reason, it may be either phenomenology or hermeneutically oriented investigation that could offer a new type of information about the investigated object.

The hermeneutics, when defined in a narrow sense, is the normative theory of text interpretation. It may seem to be the secondary act of interpretation of primary human textual experience, i.e. secondary but standardized understanding. However, when we consider that every human activity requires some preceding experience, which itself requires some kind of preceding out-of-norm understanding, hermeneutics attains the generality (Grondin, 1997, p. 34). More broadly, the hermeneutical way of thinking is the practice of ...*linking the essential meaning of human existence with language, understanding, interpretation ...* (Hroch *et al.*, 2010, p. 7). In this wider and we may say also cardinal context “the text” may be everything – every material object or tangible expression that is defined and bound with human meaning (Seamon, 2000, p. 19). It is not only an article written on a paper but it is also for example every artwork, every garden or every landscape, everything where human beings left some traces, everything that is given some meaning.

Fully comprehended, every object or expression speaks its own language to every person who is experiencing it, but that language or even that object or expression itself is at the same time somehow formed by the person's intention. This applies also backwards because if the object or expression shall be understood, it must focus on the experiencing person as well. However, this preceding ability to understand, i.e. meaningfulness, is not a boundary in a negative sense. This *a priori* intentionality of the experiencing person and of what is experienced is actually the fundamental prerequisite of experience, i.e. it makes experience happen. In this broad hermeneutical concept it is the positive knowledge achieved in the mutual process of experience that

represents a new type of information. Every human experience with garden or landscape cultivates the mutuality of these phenomena and human beings. Instead of the objectivity and abstraction of the strict scientific point view, the preceding mutuality of the entire reality is introduced. The acceptance of mutuality, i.e. “togetherness”, of humans and the environment is the key to the huge area of qualitatively new knowledge that includes also new knowledge about garden and landscape. In the scientific society the relation between humans and the environment has never been thought over as a real constitutive relation. This may change when hermeneutics and phenomenology are taken in account.

### 3.4 The history and nature of phenomenology (Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Barbaras)

Phenomenology shares with hermeneutics of the above introduced kind one cardinal challenge, although the ways to accomplish it may vary. Both ways of thinking are looking for authentic experience which is not obscured by scientific paradigm. Simply said, also phenomenology may be introduced as a philosophical attempt to systematically interpret primary human experience.

Philosopher Edmund Husserl, the father of phenomenology, formed his conception around the central idea of human consciousness structures that need to be reflected and interpreted as the determinative factors of every human experience and knowledge (Seamon, 2000, p. 3). These structures are basis of the changing flux of experiences and thoughts because they link these experiences and thoughts with the cardinal sphere of primary meaning. Everything that can be present in consciousness is meaningful because of the primary understanding. However, Husserl did not persist in the sphere of primary meaning investigations but soon he focused on the very structures of consciousness which, as he finally claimed, are an invariant region separate from the flux of experiences and thoughts, see Husserl (1972, 2001). That is the reason why his phenomenology is called transcendental. Although Husserl gave philosophy a completely new impulse and established a very important philosophical branch, which is searching for authentic experience and criticizing scientific experience, his transcendental phenomenology finally failed because it places certain structures of consciousness out of the actual experience.

From the point of view of common science, where also later phenomenological conceptions agree with Husserl's phenomenology, there are two attitudes to the world, or garden and landscape. First, a natural attitude – changeable, we could say subjective; second, a scientific attitude – measureable, stabilized, we could say objective. For common science, the difference between these two is essential and we need not say which is considered the determining one by scientists. However,

phenomenology looks for a deeper similarity between these seemingly contrasting positions and indicates their origin that is in principle inauthentic. Subjectivity-loaded, biased, 'natural' attitude to the world, as Husserl shows in agreement with the philosophical tradition of the time, occurs through differentiation by contrasting. Although this differentiation through contrasts is a kind of abstraction from reality, it is applied primarily in the specifically experienced world, landscape or garden. The scientific attitude obviously grows from the natural attitude and maintains its differentiation through contrasts; but important is that it absolutizes the abstraction from the lived world and objectivises the world, landscape and garden. Thus it creates the objective image of the world, landscape or garden, as Patočka (2008) says, *the world of natural mathematical rules*, which is considered more real than reality itself.

Husserl's phenomenology refuses the contrast between the subjective and objective views of the world, criticizes their origins and finally comes up with his own alternative solution. To be able to regain the unity of a human and the environment, Husserl demands a step outside the 'subject-object perspective'. It is necessary to go back before the scientific and even the natural attitudes based on contrasts and penetrate to a clean attitude that encompasses a deep unity of the experiencing body, i.e. a human being, and the experienced body, i.e. the environment, landscape or garden. In the clean phenomenological attitude, a human and the environment show unerasable mutual conditionality, mutuality, and not 'contrasting' positions. As Patočka (2008) commented, this is *... a solution that does not transfer – reduce – the natural world into the scientific one or vice versa but transfers both to something other, third*. The 'something other, third' means the attitude phenomenology reached.

Husserl's ideas were critically followed by many other thinkers, most notably Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. They base their thinking on Husserl's critique of the scientific attitude (which has expanded so much that it has become a universally human attitude), i.e. the critique of the 'subject-object perspective', but they refuse Husserl's transcendental basis of phenomenology. The 'existential' phenomenology of Husserl's followers arose in response to Husserl's transcendental structures of consciousness, see e.g. Heidegger (2008) and Barbaras (2005). These 'existential' phenomenologists argue that *... such transcendental structures are disputable as Husserl based their existence on speculation and intellectual reflection only, rather than actual human experience which is a part of the everyday lived world...* (Schmidt in Seamon, 2000, p. 3).

Therefore, an 'existential' phenomenologist proclaims: the only possible attitude to the world, environment, landscape and garden is human experience itself. *I am sure that there is being here – on condition that I do not search for another way of being than being for myself*. (Merleau-Ponty in Barbaras, 2005)

Phenomenologically cleaned experience of the '*being for myself*' does not remind us of the 'subject-object contrast perspective'; its structure is rather a continuous co-presence of a human and the environment in the consciousness and as such is called phenomenality. This special mode of mutual being that is phenomenality at the same time directs the widespread simplified ideas of a human being as an exclusively active element within the environment. Where the idea of the superiority of human beings sneaks in, in fact we encounter the above criticised 'subject-object contrast distinction', or objectivization of the world and its parts into the position of graspable facts and essences. From the 'subject-object perspective', a human being and the environment are two independent elements, out of which only a human being is autonomous, and their unilateral interaction thus begins with human's activity and develops as a causal chain. On the contrary, phenomenality poses a pattern of mutual conditionality against this unilateral pattern of dependence.

### 3.5 Humans, environment and phenomenological categories

To describe in short the phenomenality of the landscape and garden, i.e. the mutuality of these phenomena and a human being, even partially, is not easy. An analysis of the phenomenality of any 'object' can be directed in two directions. Either focus on the experience of one specific 'being for myself', i.e. a specific 'object' as a clearly defined figure in a foggy background; or watch the 'horizon consciousness' shifting the attention from the object in the background, which is this time filled with various references, to the most distant horizon of possible experience (Barbaras, 2005). The most distant horizon vastly surpasses a human. Not only the distant horizon of possible experience, but even a specific 'being for myself', i.e. landscape or garden, nor any common specific thing can ever be seen in its absolute fullness. Where the mode of being is phenomenality, i.e. the mutuality of humans and the environment, and where the mode of recognition is outlining, the objectivised thing and its full grasp by a human being as we know it from the scientific attitude, lose any sense.

Instead of fact and substance of the scientific attitude, the basic phenomenological category of experience is giving outlines. Instead of subject and object, the basic phenomenological horizon category becomes distance and vicinity (both in space – physical – and in understanding). And finally, instead of 'naturalness' (represented by nature), the basic phenomenological category of a specific 'being for myself' is the unfulfilled desire and instead of 'artificiality' (represented by the garden) there is feasibility. The feasible/desire ratio in the landscape as in a specific 'being for myself', at least in Central Europe, is often balanced, while a garden as a specific 'being for myself' has more feasible options. The Central European landscape,

as one of good examples of classical landscape (Norberg-Schulz, 1994), provides a lot of feasible options for human beings to gain material security; at the same time, it provides a balanced number of transcending 'objects' which their desires can focus on. The Central European garden is very hospitable for a human, it is the realm where opportunities are taken from purposefulness to purposeless 'aesthetics'.

The type of satisfaction the landscape cannot provide to an inhabitant of Central Europe is made up for by the garden – various, even purposeless, fulfilling of mundane opportunities. On the other hand, the type of satisfaction the garden cannot offer is provided by the landscape – especially the permanent revival of the desire for transcendence. Landscape in the horizon context stretches from the closest horizon, the living horizon, to the distant horizon that surpasses the human knowledge and thus commands deep humility. The landscape in the close living horizon has more feasible options; at the same time, through the landscape a human

being is attracted to the incomprehensible. Besides familiar things, the phenomenality of the garden is expressed by what forms the closest living horizon and inspires us to take various opportunities.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

Phenomenology- and hermeneutics-oriented research into the phenomenon of the garden and landscape is not easy. It requires a deep knowledge of philosophical bases that need to be followed as well as practical knowledge of the field of garden and landscape architecture. Speculative and critical mood of this type of study is supplemented by constitutive research into the landscape and garden which brings a new type of knowledge. At the same time, the applied phenomenology and hermeneutics do not intend to disprove the practical information; they only wish to enrich it providing a highly significant component – meanings, hidden deep, that common scientific methods can hardly reveal.

#### SUMMARY

Then central point of the presented study is the idea that phenomenological and hermeneutical approaches enrich our possibilities when exploring various issues regarding the landscape and garden, and that their application can bring new qualitative information in the current knowledge. The phenomenological and hermeneutical ways of thinking combine the resistance to the common mechanistic scientific attitude and the effort to overcome it and find an alternative approach that would reveal a different, original and authentic understanding of the reality.

Thanks to hermeneutics, we can reach the comprehension that every authentic human experience of a garden or landscape deepens the mutuality of these phenomena and the human being. Instead of objectivity and abstraction of a strict scientific attitude, hermeneutics presents a primary mutuality of all reality, which is evident in each authentic experience. The acceptance of the mutuality of humans and the environment is a key to a vast sphere of a new type of knowledge, comprising also new knowledge about the garden and landscape. Similarly to hermeneutics, phenomenology can be presented as an attempt at a systematic interpretation of authentic human experience. From a clean phenomenological perspective, revealing the authentic experience, a human being and the environment manifest an unerasable permanent mutual conditionality, mutuality, not contrasting positions as the common scientific attitude holds. Phenomenologically viewed garden and landscape phenomena are grasped in a very different way as living structures with an essential effect on humans, or even more radically, as an inseparable unity of a human and the environment in a lived authentic experience. This mutuality is a basic mode of human existence and is also a condition of existence of all reality; at the same time it demonstrates a radically and uniquely conceived phenomenological empiricism.

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