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Interpreting the Natural Environment. Paul Ricoeur's Directions for an Eco-Hermeneutic Phenomenology

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*Abstract: Interpreting the Natural Environment. Paul Ricoeur's Directions for an Eco-Hermeneutic Phenomenology*

Human being occupies a special place in nature as interpreting being. By focusing on the interrelation between human being and the natural environment, this essay considers the possibility of extending Paul Ricoeur's thought in the direction of environmental hermeneutics. Through reference to his hermeneutic phenomenology, this paper aims to discuss the complex bond between humanity and the natural sphere as one of passivity and activity. I begin with a broad framing of the possible encounter between Ricoeur's oeuvre and environmental philosophy, and then turn to his phenomenology of embodiment, considering it as offering the basic features for the elaboration of what I will call an eco-hermeneutic phenomenology. These reflections will lead to examine the interplay of belonging and distanciation in the relationship between human being and the natural environment, and to open up the discussion of the hermeneutic dialectic of being-situated, situating and resituating ourselves in nature.