

Phenomenology of Place: A Framework for the Architectural Interpretation in Visual Arts (Case Study: Sohrab Sepehri's Drawings)

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ABSTRACT: Phenomenology is one of the outstanding theoretical paradigms in contemporary studies in architecture and urban planning. However, the phenomenology of place in artworks, especially painting and drawings (visual arts), through architectural modalities could be a substantial attempt and a new subject that needs more studies. The purpose of current research is to achieve a method based on which the phenomenon of place in the visual arts could interpret and explained more accurately. For this aim, a qualitative and descriptive method is applied. In this study, based on the theories of Martin Heidegger and Edward Ralph on the one hand and the ideas of Christian Norberg-Schultz, on the other hand, a framework for the phenomenological study of the place has been proposed in three stages of description, analysis, and explanation. Besides, the drawings of Sohrab Sepehri, one of the famous contemporary artists of Iran, have been studied as an example by applying this framework to show the efficiency of the proposed framework and method. The results of this study show that the interpretation of artworks based on these three stages consistent with the stage of phenomenological reduction and constitution which is common in phenomenology. Sohrab Sepehri's drawings were well in line with the phenomenological concepts of place and its components and variables introduced in this research. The challenges of applying this framework discussed and enhancing its validity by further studies in the works of other artists, recommended.

Keywords: Phenomenology, Settlement, Landscape, Sketch, Sohrab Sepehri.

INTRODUCTION

"Phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. The central structure of an experience is its intentionality; it's being directed toward something, as it is an experience of or about some object" (Smith, 2018). Hence, phenomenology in art has focused in the last decades studying and analyzing of paintings (Shute, 1968; Biemel, 1995; Ferencz-Flatz, 2011). Although in painting art, aesthetic paradigms have a great roll, other drawings such as sketches and ordinary drawings depend more on the artist's perceived and preference than on conventional styles. Nevertheless, they received less attention in researches. Drawings act as significant and valuable visual documents in architectural research. Since a sketch shows the designer's perceptions of the subject, the designer can pay more attention to and emphasize certain parts of it (Laseau, 2000). In other

words, such drawings indicate a personal experience of an environment (Lockard, 2000) and summarize a large amount of information in an aggregated situation, including implicit knowledge, with a small amount of formal and explicit data. Therefore, they can represent a kind of lived perspective that could be analyzed and interpreted by phenomenology.

Many studies have focused on artworks, and extensive literature used phenomenology in the interpretation of paintings. For example, Phenomenology of Perception, Maurice Merleau-Ponty has examined the link between phenomenology and Paul Cézanne's works. By studying and interpreting his technique, Merleau-Ponty realized that Cézanne, by avoiding painting based on linear perspective, faithfully persisted in the observed phenomenon and drew his "lived perspective" (Merleau-Ponty, 2013). The terms such as "view from everywhere," "living perceptual field" and "the emergence of the phenomenal world

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in the normal act of seeing" all refer to the same interpretations (Smith, 2013).

Other cases represent similar but not the same approaches. More recently, Thweatt and Pollio (2000) selected sixty landscape depiction from the 16th to 19th century and then asked fifty-five participants to answer what each painting would be like for them if they were in the landscape pictured. Or, Balay (2019) developed the Merleau-Ponty idea as a landscape phenomenological approach to study landscape aesthetics. Lammas (1995), seeking the spirit of place in South African landscape painting, and Lavoie (2005), considered her landscape sketches as an awareness of palace that deferred from information and understanding gathered from landscape setting to explore the sense of place. Investigating the sense of place through the eyes of local painters is another research by Phuong and Groves (2011) who tries to find the painters' personal experience of the Hanoi's architecture in Vietnam.

However, the phenomenology of place in drawings is rare. Reading these artworks acts as a method of hermeneutic phenomenology. This leads to allowing revealing the artist's lived experience from a position that can provide useful information for architects and urban planners. The artists' lived experience of vernacular and local architecture can be a valuable document for a better understanding of the place.

This study aims to develop a link between the place phenomenon in architecture and geography with art. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to perform a framework based on which the stages of place phenomenology in painting, and drawing, can be guided. The proposed method used to analyze the works of a famous Iranian artist, Sohrab Sepehri, to show how it will work. The results of this paper can be a basis for other case studies and can develop according to the circumstances of each one.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research utilizes a qualitative and descriptive method. First, the concept of place and its components introduced and briefly described. Then phenomenological methods have been explored. The emphasis in this research is on ontological phenomenology. Besides, in this study, reading of visual phenomenon as a text has been used as a method for extracting elements and components of the place. Finally, with the success of the previous steps, a framework for the phenomenology of place in visual arts was introduced and applied in a case study. This framework is only the guide to step-by-step research, and its validity and reliability have also been discussed.

Phenomenology of Place: Landscape and Settlement

The subject of the place has been raised as a central theme in phenomenology. In this regard, the two key currents of phenomenology, namely ontological and epistemological approaches, can also be identified. Ontologist scholars looking for the meaning of a place in which there is a perception of consciousness, while epistemologists are looking for what a

place is and in which the use of perception of consciousness is considered (Negintaji et al., 2018). There is a difference between space and place. While we see the space as an open and abstract issue, a place is a part of a space that is occupied by a person or something and has meaning or value (Madanipour, 1996). The phenomenon of space in Norberg-Schultz's thought is more than an abstract place; it is a whole made up of real objects and things and has materials, matter, shape, texture, and color. Together, these elements define the environmental character, which is, in fact, the nature of space. From Merleau-Ponty's point of view, space is more than anything, a structure, a network of communications that expresses specific aspects of human consciousness and experience (Partovi, 2008). As a result, "place appears in the pure movement, which first lets difference appear. In pure movement, word-traces are left that do not represent the real in any substantial way, but that would show the place of difference, both in content, that is in the play of meanings within the text, as well as formally, that is in the way of the argumentation" (Elberfeld, 2020, 47).

The Structure of Place

The structure of place described in the knowledge behind the terms such as landscape and habitat (or distinction between natural phenomena and artificial phenomena) and then it could analyze by the classifications of "space" and "character". In the phenomenology of place, instead of distinguishing between space and character, a more general concept such as lived space could be used (Partovi, 2008). Perception of the lived space in Merleau-Ponty's thought is the relationship between physical space, motion, and space perception. According to him, all spatial determinations, including the top, bottom, left, and right, etc., depend on an absolute reference or "here," and that is nothing but the body as a point-horizon in space (Shokry, 2016).

In her book, *Phenomenology of Place*, Parvin Partovi (2008) presents a model for analyzing the structure of place (Fig. 1); the first step in which is the distinction between the natural and human-made phenomenon which are in a figure-ground relationship. In her model, lived space consists of two parts: landscape and habitat or settlement, and each of them has a structure that includes "space" and "character". Spatial organization influenced by concepts such as "insiderness-outsiderness", "border- threshold" and "enclosure-concentration", and the character shows itself in "orientation" and "identification", all of which result in a sense of place (Partovi, 2008).

Christian Norberg-Schulz (1926-2000) is held responsible for introducing a phenomenological concept and its method into architectural criticism and theory (Christophe Van, 2012, 29). Therefore, it is necessary to examine his views. Norberg-schulz (1980) considers natural places to be influenced by five factors: thing, order, character, light, and time. Based on this, he has identified four species of natural places, which are:

- Romantic landscapes (environment full of change, diversity,

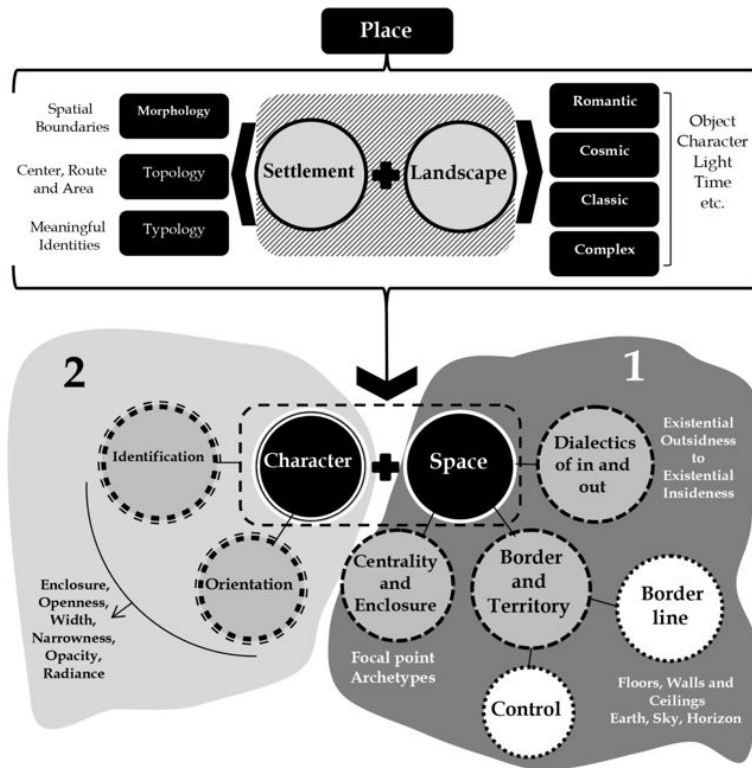


Fig. 1: The structure of the place and its constituent elements (based on Partovi, 2008)

and details such as Scandinavian forests);

- Cosmic landscape (wide, uniform, and continuous environment such as a desert);
- Classical landscape (balanced environment in terms of diversity and continuity like the Greek landscapes);
- Complex landscape (an environment composed of three previous examples that represent the real places, which are not pure and are a combination of natural expression and description).

Habitats are the result of human intervention to settle in the landscape. Their scale can range from a simple hunt to today's big cities. Habitat represents the establishment of a meaningful connection between man and the presumed environment and may be categorized into four categories: village, urban space, institution, and home. Together, these four categories represent the whole environment, that is, where the natural, complex, public and private forms of residence occur (Norberg-schulz, 1985).

In addition to relying on the phenomenology, the ideas of Norberg- Schulz and many other phenomenologists in architecture also rely on a kind of Gestalt thinking. For this

reason, the three divisions that Norberg-Schulz presents in his books for studying architectural phenomena are all based on the Gestalt theory. These divisions are as follows (Norberg-schulz, 1985):

- Morphology, related to the shape of the artifact, which examines the material structure of the floor, walls, and roof or, in short, the spatial boundaries.
- Topology relates to the spatial system and integrates into a spatial arrangement. This concept is derived from the Greek word topos meaning position, and place, and has nothing to do with absolute mathematical space. The "center", the "path" and the "region" together form a simple structure on the horizontal plane that is divided by the paths, bounded by a horizon, and crossed by a vertical axis. Basic concepts in positioning are topics such as proximity, coherence, and dependence.
- Typology suggests that places do not gather a myriad of fundamental differences, but form a world full of meaningful identities.

Components of Space Analysis

From a phenomenological point of view, as stated by Edward Ralph (1976), space is a part of the lived space, in other words,

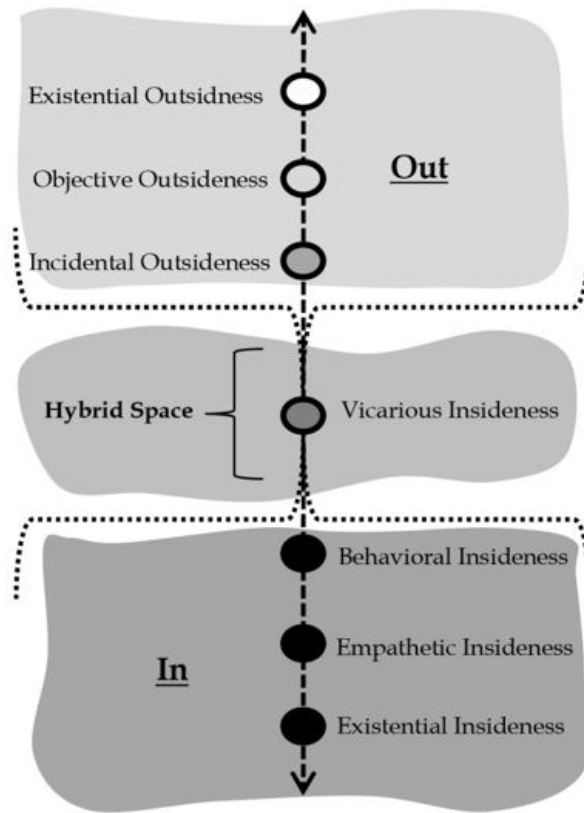


Fig. 2: In-out dialectics based on the division of Relph (1976)

space is neither in the mind nor in the world, but as part of our daily experience in the world. In his view, human existence is essentially spatial and includes features such as closeness, separation, distance, and direction. For this reason, the defining factors of space can be divided into three types; a) dialectics of insideness/outsideness, b) border and threshold, and c) enclosure.

Internal and external dialectics have always been considered in place phenomenological studies. Relph (1976, 59-65), suggested a series of references to this subject; in his categories, existential outsideness is at one end of the spectrum and existential insideness located on the other side. Among them are objective outsideness, incidental outsideness, vicarious insideness, behavioral insideness, and empathetic insideness, respectively. Although insideness may provide an in-depth experience of the place, it is hybrid because it is not the personal experience of that place. Although Relph does not explicitly mention this, since the place is not directly related to one's experience, it differs from other cases in the diagram represented in Fig. 2.

To build more than anything else is to create, and to create, one must explain and limit a part of the earth to separate forms from the rest of the environment to give it a definite role. In

this sense, the region or realm creates the outer and inner spaces, so the area of each place implicitly indicates the control of the individual or group over the place (Meiss, 2013). They show their inner and outer meaning in the word territory. It is possible to define and express the characteristics of people and defend their territory physically and mentally by creating a separate and specific area (Carmona et al., 2003). Territorial behavior requires personalization, which in many cases used to monitor the borders (Altman, 1975).

In this case, the boundary line separates the inner space from the outer space. Boundaries in architectural space include "floor", "wall" and "ceiling". While in the landscape, the borders will include "land", "sky" and "horizon". "Every natural place has a certain width and height, which gives it a definite demarcation. Hence, the knowledge of topography is of particular evaluate, because it involves this demarcation; the positional structure of a place depends on the vegetation, materials, and other details of that place (Norberg-schulz, 1985).

For architectural phenomenology, the main feature of artificial places is concentration and enclosure. Each enclosure becomes a center and maybe the focal point of its surroundings. It is from the center that space expands with varying degrees of continuity and rhythm in different directions. The notion of the

center is an essential element of the existential space concept, and wherever the meaning is revealed is a center (Partovi, 2008).

Components of Character Analysis

When a man dwells, he/she is, in fact, at the same time placed in space and exposed to the character of the environment. At this time, two psychological functions occur, which can be called "orientation" and "identification" (Partovi, 2008). The environmental character also considered the spirit of the place. The quality of natural or artificial places determined by their formal expression and defined by concepts such as closure, openness, width, narrowness, somberness, luminosity, and the like; these are qualities that are embodied in visual design and modeling. Proportion, rhythm, analogy, dimension, material, texture, and color are dependent.

The character has more real and general meaning than the concept of space; on the one hand, it refers to a comprehensive and general atmosphere, and on the other hand, it refers to the real form and nature of the defining elements of space. Landscapes also have characters. They can be fruitless, fruitful, joyful, or scary. The character can change as a result of time; however, it is determined by the material and formal structure of the place (Norberg-schulz, 2000; Partovi, 2008).

Orientation is a process by which a person is established in space and time, and can use the environment and anticipate it. "Visual analogy" and "kinetic sense" are the two perceptual systems used in orientation. The sensory movement influenced by the balance organs and muscle sensations and created by the force of gravity, and as a result, in any position of the body, the upper, lower, front, and back, and the left and right can be distinguished. In visible analogy, a visual origin is used (Pakzad & Bozorg, 2014). Recognition means "making friends" with a particular environment. Identifying places as well as organizing them in mental structures not only allow people to be more effective in the environment but also provide security and enjoyment of the environment. In places that are physically distinct and recognizable, people feel joy and pleasure and combine their feelings and meanings with those places.

Methodologies of Phenomenological Research; a Brief Review

This section provides a brief overview of phenomenological methods to finally make the necessary preparations to propose a methodological framework for the study of place in artworks. There are two main trends in the phenomenology of the art: "subjective phenomenology" (based on Husserl's views on the discovery of meanings, and essences in the realm of consciousness) and "non-subjective phenomenology" (based on Heidegger's and so on, pointed out the nature of art and its relation to the truth) (Mostafavi, 2012). The transcendental

approach of phenomenology is a Husserl tradition; in a sense, it is epistemological and known as transcendental since it focuses on mere and pure (rather than individual phenomena) (Rajabi, 2017).

To avoid deviations from the phenomenological approach, Husserl has proposed steps, the most important of which are phenomenological reduction or suspension of the natural attitude, and the other is transcendental reduction. Phenomenological reduction means that we abandon the external existence of the objects of the universe and pay attention only to their nature and the transcendental diminution refers to the essence of the phenomenon under study, which is a kind of bracketing (Epoche) of all scientific, philosophical, cultural and everyday assumptions. By proposing phenomenological reduction, Husserl seeks to gain consciousness into the nature of phenomena independent of scientific and argumentative assumptions. In general, "the phenomenological reductions were articulated as devices for understanding whatever was under investigation without a determination as to the investigator's assumptions about, or the existence of, the object of inquiry and with an identification of the meaning or pure essence of the object of inquiry (Silverman, 1980, 704, 405). The phenomenological stages in Husserl's view can be divided by as follows (Ihde, 1986):

1. Carefully look at objects as they appear to us;
2. Epoche or phenomenological reduction means deviating from the usual methods of observation and abandoning common assumptions;
3. Describe the phenomenon under review, not explain it (because the explanation depends on the judgment and should be postponed until all evidence has been collected);
4. Horizontalization of the phenomena in the sense that at the beginning of the study, all phenomena must be considered equally real;
5. Search for structural configuration of the phenomena under the study.

The important point here is to describe, "If a phenomenological description of work of art discloses an ontological category that is neither subjective nor objective, then there is indeed a sense in which there is an art world. But this art world is placed concerning the world of the subject and the object so that the art world is seen in its dependence as well as its independence" (Townsend, 1997, 138).

Another approach in phenomenology, that is, existential and hermeneutic, is ontological. This method, of which Martin Heidegger is one of the principal commentators, is more suitable for studying architecture and urban issues than any other method. Heidegger begins by meditating on the Givenness of Existence; an irreducible existence of human being, or as he calls himself, Dasein, and therefore his work, unlike that of his master, Husserl, who was essentialist, called existential (Dehghani, 2010).

Heidegger believed that Dasein was not only provable but even showable. Rather, it is the mere being (se sein), and in general Dasein's interpretation is under the control of everyday life (Heidegger, 2008). From Heidegger's point of view, phenomenology is possible in three stages:

- Phenomenological reduction;
- Phenomenological constitution;
- Separation and destruction.

According to him, the separation and destruction (Destruction) is a stage for returning to the sources of the present understanding of existence. Destruction through the tradition of the history of philosophy, according to Heidegger, is a method by which he seeks not to destroy but to loosen and disintegrate the established tradition (Safian & Hosseinmanesh, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

By examining the role of sketches in transmitting information, Martins (1999) identified two different species, including "eye sketches" and "memorial sketches," which mean the direct drawing of the subject or drawing based on memories from the environment remains in mind. The sketches also show the spatial and aesthetic features of the context and the location under study, and the density of the lines and the amount of detail in the image alert the viewer to the various levels that can be read from the sketch (Brand, 2004).

Reading paintings and sketches is the opposite of the process that the artist went through consciously or unconsciously. In this conscious process, the focal points of the image, the emphasized elements, the landscape, the skyline, the symbols and signs, the accumulation of natural and man-made elements, and its vista and panorama can be examined. Undoubtedly, the presence of each of these elements in the image means that it is preferable to other visual elements and the amount of attention to detail in drawing or even exaggeration in their dimensions and proportions indicates the value and importance of those elements to the artist. Another part of the reading process of these drawings will be possible with a topological approach (Faizi & Asadpour, 2013). This approach deals with the proportions between the components and displays concepts such as here/there, far/near, inside/outside, and the like that have been experienced.

It should be noted that the reading of each image is a kind of selection. Just as the process of drawing takes place in a selective attitude, the interpreter's perceptions in the reading process are based on a particular approach, too (Tok et al., 2010). However, this does not mean that the interpretation of the selection is invalid. The designer's experience is based on personal experience, but the choice of the interpreter as a phenomenologist must be based on the phenomenological delivery and in the bracketing of the assumptions and accepted theories. Reading each drawing can be done in several suggested steps:

- The first stage: identifying the elements and components

that make up the artifact (natural phenomenon / man-made phenomenon);

- The second stage: identifying the details, amount and method of drawing components and visual qualities of the phenomena in the artifact;

- The third stage: identifying the character of the elements and the totality of the phenomena in the artifact;

- The fourth step: Identifying the configurational structure of the elements and their positioning relative to each other and the whole of the drawing to explain the existing structural patterns.

In this way, the process goes from the whole to the part and vice versa in these four stages, and as a result, the artifact is divided into different layers of its components. These steps correspond to three sections of Fig. 3. That is, they include "Phenomenological reduction," or bracketing, "Horizontalization," and, finally "Structural configuration," respectively. The first and second stages emphasize what, and the third and fourth stages emphasize how. So the process of reading an artwork could be a kind of phenomenology itself, but it is not perfect, because basically, the reduction is never complete and self-contained. For this to be fully consistent with phenomenology and its process, it is necessary for the "phenomenological reduction" and the "phenomenological constitution" to occur correctly in its stages. However, obtaining additional data from written sources, examining the various views on nature, concept, and technique used in the creation of the work of art and examining social and cultural structures, the face-to-face experience of the places depicted and the study of other works of art can deepen the researcher's involvement, but in the correct time and stage. In this way, it can help to reveal the existential meaning of the lived experience by identifying the main structures of the phenomenon in question. As is clear, such a profound understanding of the phenomenon requiring a constant reversal between the various stages of hermeneutic phenomenological research.

A Framework for a Phenomenology of Place in Artworks (Sketches)

In practice, there are no well-defined and pre-defined steps for any phenomenological research, and its reduction to positivist methods does not correspond to the nature of phenomenology. An important challenge in phenomenological studies also arises from the type of data and their analysis methods. In this strategy, a large amount of data generated, and there are no guides or step-by-step processes developed to advance research such as positivist and post-positivist research (Groat & Wang, 2013). The phenomenology in artworks, especially in the visual arts, makes it possible to experience the artist's lived perception through the hermeneutic phenomenology of place. To achieve this goal, a model of the phenomenological process can be obtained using the components of the place and the concept of representation. This is an abstract structural model for the phenomenology of an artwork that can be modified

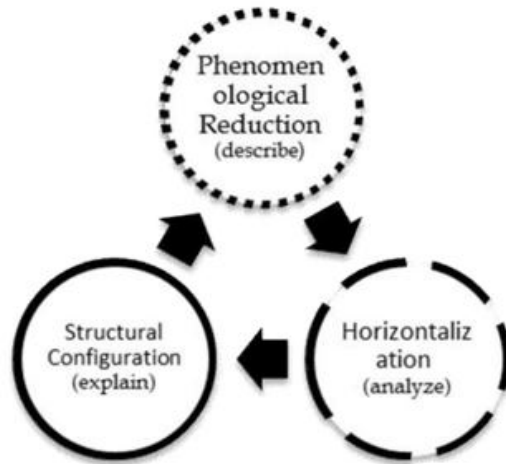


Fig. 3: General stages of phenomenological research

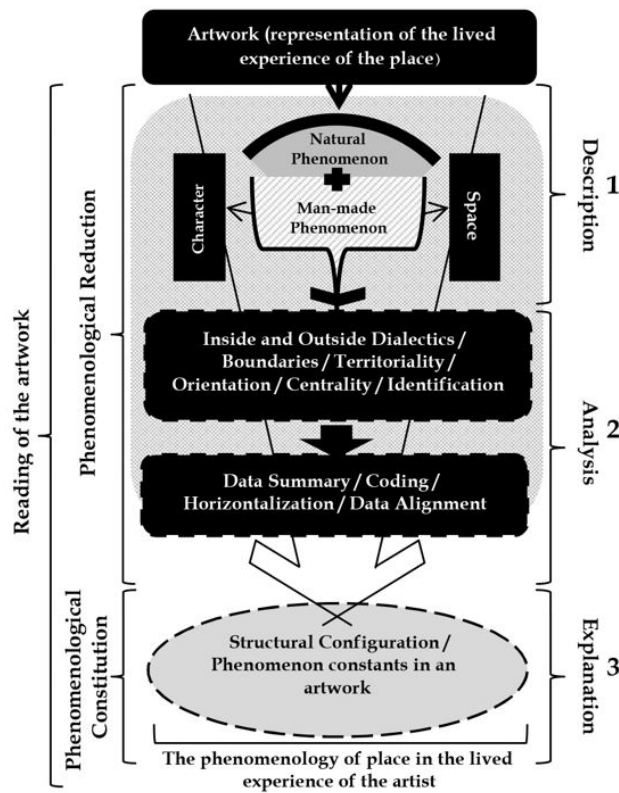


Fig. 4: The process of a phenomenology of place in visual arts for architects and urban planners

according to the needs of each research (Fig. 4).

This proposed framework relies on the phenomenon of place and pays attention to these certain aspects of the lived experience, and therefore cannot represent the totality of the artist's experience. However, its emphasis on the place as phenomena makes it possible to use this framework to reread

artists' perceptions of place.

In this framework, three different stages are suggested. The first step is the description. In this step, the content of the artwork is divided into natural and human-made elements. The natural phenomenon refers to the landscape, and the artificial one belongs to architectural objects. Each of them has attributes

as space and character, which are discussed before. In this step, reading of the artwork will lead to summarizing the content of the case under study, and it will answer the questions regard to what one could see in the drawing as an object without any attempt to explain it. The second step is analysis in two main parts. The first one belongs to the dialectics of topological aspects of the scene or sketch (inside/outside, boundaries, territoriality, orientation, centrality, and identification), and the second part is more about summarizing data by coding and horizontalization. By alimending the data in this phase, bracketing will acquire. As it can be argued easily, the mentioned two steps of describing and analyzing represent the phenomenological reduction. So the last step, explanation, is more about the phenomenological constitution. This step emphasizes more on how the artwork is. Trying to find the structural configuration and constant elements of the phenomenon means trying to establish a holistic explanation of how is the sketch or painting (in this study). In this framework, three different stages are suggested. The first step is the description. In this step, the content of the artwork is divided into natural and human-made elements. The natural phenomenon refers to the landscape, and the artificial one belongs to architectural objects. Each of them has attributes as space and character, which are discussed before. In this step, reading of the artwork will lead to summarizing the content of the case under study, and it will answer the questions regard to what one could see in the drawing as an object without any attempt to explain it. The second step is analysis in two main parts. The first one belongs to the dialectics of topological aspects of the scene or sketch (inside/outside, boundaries, territoriality, orientation, centrality, and identification), and the second part is more about summarizing data by coding and horizontalization. By alimending the data in this phase, bracketing will acquire. As it can be argued easily, the mentioned two steps of describing and analyzing represent the phenomenological reduction. So the last step, explanation, is more about the phenomenological constitution. This step emphasizes more on how the artwork is. Trying to find the structural configuration and constant elements of the phenomenon means trying to establish a holistic explanation of how is the sketch or painting in this study.

Contrary to conventional positivist methods, the phenomenological one is an empirical, holistic, qualitative, interpretive-descriptive method with an emphasis on "what" and "how" and seeks to know and comprehend. Therefore, the nature of it requires another type of criterion to measure the validity of the research. While in the methods of positivist research, we talk about internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity, in phenomenology we have to say credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirm-ability. The credibility in phenomenology depends on the richness of the information collected and the ability to analyze by the researcher. Transferability is also a feature that is used to transfer the hypotheses under consideration to other similar situations.

However, the researcher cannot identify this capability but only provides sufficient information to other researchers.

Applying the Suggested Framework on Sohrab Sepehri's Drawings

Sohrab Sepehri (1928-1980) is one of the most outstanding figures of contemporary art in Iran whose works in the fields of painting and poetry has been profoundly influenced by Oriental intellectual ideas, and his particular vision and thought should be evaluated in this context. He was born in Kashan, a city on the edge of the central desert of Iran. He enrolled in many schools and colleges; for instance, Fine Arts College of Tehran (1948) and Paris School of Fine Arts (1957). He also enrolled in the Biennial of Venice and San Paula and had a group or solo exhibition in Iran, France, the United States, and Switzerland.

One of the most important aspects of analyzing his works is his belonging to the Romanticism in Iranian artists, which makes it important to consider his view of the landscape and vernacular architecture, especially the Iranian rural landscape of desert areas. His diverse collection of drawings and paintings has left a legacy that is well worth the study. However, unlike his paintings, his drawings have received less attention from art critics. In this study, a series of drawings by Sohrab Sepehri was selected in the last years of his life. These are 32 scenes from 145 drawings made from various landscapes which including architecture elements from 1976 to 1979 (Fig. 5).

Using a non-subjective phenomenology and hermeneutical perspective, a three-step process including "phenomenological reduction (Epoché)", "horizontalization" and "finding structural forms" has been adapted to read these works by applying the proposed process for a phenomenology of place in visual arts suggested in Fig. 4.

Description (Stage One)

This step includes identifying the components and elements of each drawing and identifying the details, method of designing, and display qualities of each phenomenon in the drawing. Each drawing considered separately and according to the elements that can be seen in it, grouped in two general parts, including natural and human-made elements as following:

- The composition of mountains in the scene;
- Status, position, and amount of details in drawing of trees;
- Presence of plants such as shrubs and lawn;
- The presence, position, and amount of details in drawing of stones;
- Status, position, and amount of details in the drawing of the buildings;
- Kind of architectural elements in the design (such as roof, window, doorway, etc.);
- Presence of route in drawings;

The data obtained from the reading of each design, finally summarized, so we can find the relevant data that had the highest frequency among the studied samples.



Fig. 5: Examples of selected Sohrab Sepehri's drawings for studying in this research (Source: Sepehri, 1992)

The highest status of building drawings is in the form of a mass. After that, the individual building is in second place with a slight difference, and group drawing is in third place. The position of the building shows that most of them had been drawn in the middle ground. Buildings, like trees and rocks, are drawn in little detail. And in only a quarter of the drawings, the buildings are drawn in medium detail. Another important point is the vernacular architectural elements that are represented in the drawings. In general, drawings consist of the roofline or the roof-scape, openings (including doors and windows), and walls. It can be said that in most cases all buildings are in the form of simultaneous drawings of openings, walls, and facades. The roof has the highest frequency in these designs (Fig. 6 and 7). Drawing the walls alone or drawing the roof-scape or its silhouette alone were jointly in the second place. Drawing of openings alone was seen in only 3 cases.

The structure of the drawings in which any kind of vernacular architecture (human-made environment) shows that in them, the composition of the mountains in most cases was the horizontal and right diameter of the scene. The condition of the trees in these samples is such that in one-quarter of the cases the trees are drawn in groups (Fig. 8). In the second place, trees are seen in the form of both groups and mass. Trees in "mass" and "single and mass" are also in third place. The position of the trees is considerably in the middle ground and still drawn

in little detail. Only in 3 cases, the trees have a lot of detail. In the majority of the drawings, the stones did not draw, and in most of the cases, no path could be seen. The structure of the vernacular architecture representation can be considered as follows:

- Mountains often have been drawn horizontally and in the right diameter in the scene.
- Trees are in the middle ground of the scene in groups.
- Rock and path not drawn in most drawings.
- The buildings are in the form of a mass and are in the middle ground.
- Drawing of roofs, walls, and openings (doors and windows) all in one scene has been the most common representational components.

Thus, the vernacular architecture is in the form of a mass of interconnected buildings with curved and domed roofs in the middle. This part is covered by a group of trees, and in the background, mountains are drawn, most of which have a general horizontal composition.

Analysis (Stage Two)

The structure of the place, as suggested in Fig. 1, consists of two major components, landscape, and architecture, which have attributions as space and character. Based on this, Sohrab Sepehri's drawings can be analyzed based on the representation



Fig. 6: Roof-scape in a Sohrab Sepehri's drawing (Source: Sepehri, 1992)



Fig. 7: Roof-scape in a Sohrab Sepehri's drawing (Source: Sepehri, 1992)



Fig. 8: Combination of trees and buildings in a Sohrab Sepehri's drawing (Source: Sepehri, 1992)

of place (Fig. 9).

The landscape (natural phenomena) represented in Sepehri's drawings shows the geography of the land of Iran, which is located in semi-arid regions. In this perspective, the lack of vegetation and its dispersion is evident. In addition to the settlements through which horticulture has flourished,

the greenery in the landscape separately covers parts of the mountain range. Based on four divisions of Christian Norberg-Schulz, landscape represented in drawings show intertwined and complex ones; they represent real places. These landscapes represent places that are not pure but a combination of diversity and continuity, sometimes as vast and uniform as the cosmic

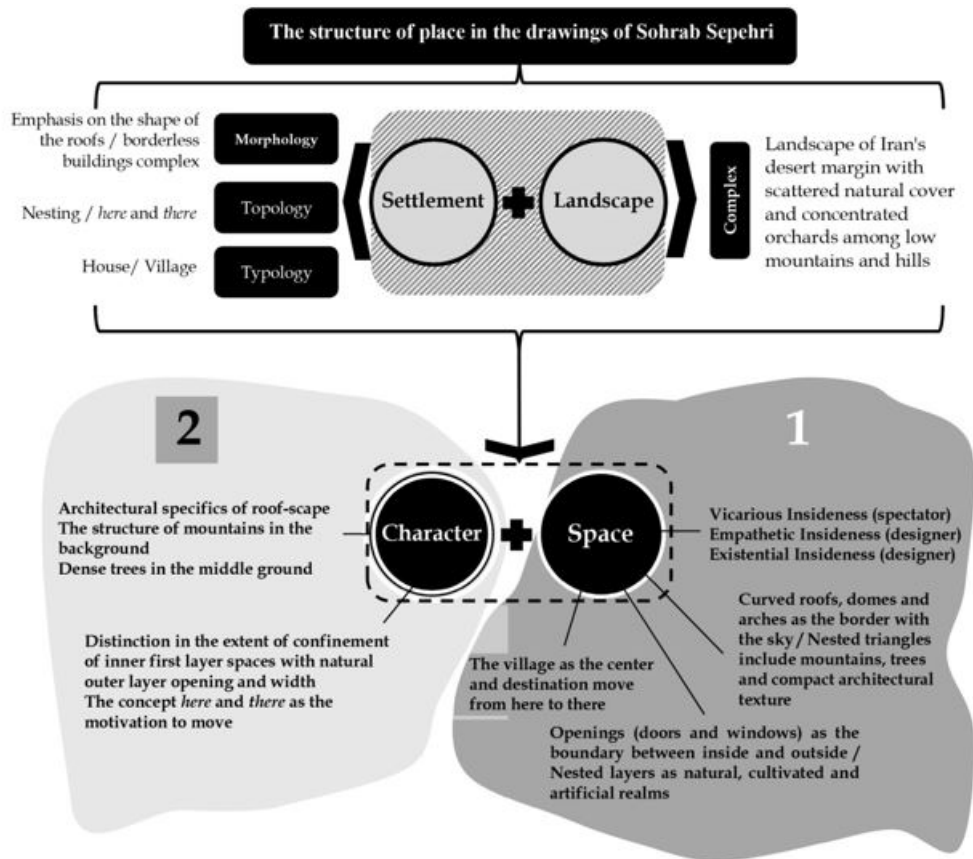


Fig. 9: The structure of the place and its elements in the landscape and architecture represented in the drawings of Sohrab Sepehri

landscapes, and sometimes full of change and diversity. Trees are an important part of this landscape, often with leaves and shadows below; As if they show the summer season. No animals or personage could be seen in his drawings.

Sohrab Sepehri's drawings from the vernacular landscape of the semi-arid regions of Iran show a kind of "empathetic insideness" which, according to Edward Relph, can show his desire to feel the place, to know and respect its symbols as essential elements of identity and full of meaning. These drawings give the audience a sense of "vicarious Insideness." This means that the audience will experience these places in a second hand because the goal of the designer is to convey such experiences.

Vernacular architecture is the result of human intervention in the natural environment, can be seen in Sepehri's works in two parts. The first is the "village" as the "point of arrival", and the second is the "house" as the smallest unit of Schulz's quadruple divisions of settlements, representing an involved and private way of living. From a morphological point of view, an important part of the "spatial boundaries" that represents the material structure of architecture emphasizes the shape of the roof. In Sepehri's drawings, the roof is not only flat, but it is

full of arches and domes. The boundary between the roofs is not clearly defined, as if the eye slides from one curved surface to another. This creates a kind of movement in the viewer. The boundaries between the houses blurred in favor of creating a residential mass and show a kind of connection. The boundary between the building and the ground is also blurred. The way the building has been connected to the ground, unlike the way it was connected to the sky, pays much less. It seems that the boundary of the building with the earth was less valuable than the boundaries of the building with the sky, and therefore, the roof received more emphasis than the wall as a border.

There is a kind of connection between the village and the land. In the representation of the house in the studied drawings, there is a kind of proximity between man-made elements and natural elements. These types of drawings show the house as a distinguishing feature of natural elements, but in the representation of the village, the neighborhood has given way to the connection between trees and houses.

What challenges the inner and outer boundaries in the architectural represented components in the drawings, are the openings. In these drawings a kind of contradiction has been created between artificial elements and trees; trees are dark,

and buildings are light contrary to that. However, in general, all the openings are intentionally dark. Doors and windows are dark and not only visually emphasized, but also reflect the designer's attention to the possibility of visual and physical control between inside and outside. In other words, the two realms of private and public have been connected by these same doors and windows (Fig. 10). Control over these two modes of communication, one visual and the other physical, also refers to the demarcation between two settlements or buildings and trees. In this way, while maintaining some kind of connection with each other, they also preserve their independent identity.

From a topological point of view, the concept of here/there can be recognized in the drawings of settlements. In this sense, the village as a settlement is the destination of movement, and there may be considered to be located in the middle of the field, and here is the location of the observer or designer. There is a movement going on between the two. Although a specific path cannot be recognized in most of the drawings, there is still a way to reach the village or the settlement. What Sohrab has drawn, shows that he has dealt with this duality here/there from another angle. The drawings show that he does not consider the usual routes, but located in a place where few people may observe the settlement. In this way, the village realm is clearly distinguished from other realms such as mountains.

In his works, trees have pervasive areas located around the settlement area as a barrier. Thus, the three parts of the place, settlements, mass and grouped trees, and finally, mountains

surround each other and nest. The observer or designer is in the outermost realm, the point that may be called here. The settlement is the focal point and center of these areas, surrounded by trees, and the trees are the focal point of the wider landscape, surrounded by mountains. The existence of borders, the definition of territories, and centrality as a visual center help to strengthen the concept of here and there and as a result strengthens the sense of orientation. Thus, the observer is at a certain point in the world and is not out of nowhere.

Vernacular architecture in these drawings all show domed roofs. Buildings rarely have two floors, and in most cases, they have one floor. In the drawings, sometimes one can see the attic or significant arches and domes that help to identify the represented architecture uniqueness. These architectural forms not only highlight a part of the image and are the focal point of the scene, but also refer to a kind of watchtower for viewing the surrounding landscape. Here, the path of the observer or designer in the drawing, which is from the outer realm to the inner realm of the scene and, in other words, looks from here to there, encounters another meaning in the lived experience, and that experience is a kind virtual or mental watching from the inside of the scene to the surroundings; That is, the experience from there. Although Sohrab does not represent this experience in any of his drawings, it conveys to the audience the feeling that from that arch or attic, the opposite experience can be achieved.



Fig. 10: Openings in dark colors in two of Sohrab Sepehri's drawing (source: Sepehri, 1992)

Explanation (Stage Three)

Analysis of the structure of place in the studied drawings shows, on one hand, Sepehri tries to creating vague borders between objects of the scene; For instance, villages and houses are two types of represented artificial elements that blur the boundaries between themselves and the trees. On the other hand, there is an emphasis on the border between the insides and outsides in the architectural spaces. The curvature of the roof created the boundary between the sky and the building, and the walls, with their openings, connected the inside with the outside and controlled it. At the same time, there is a kind of communication between inside and outside; the concept of here as the point where the observer (designer) stands and the concept of there as the point where the settlement or house was located are evident in the drawings.

The structure of his drawings is based on three fundamental layers that are made from a fresh and natural environment (outside) to the architectural and completely human-made environment (inside). In the middle are the orchards, which are a combination of both layers. For a better explanation it should be said that in the meantime, three different nested layers have been formed together. The innermost layer is the man-made layer of architecture, the middle layer is massive trees, and the outer layer includes mountains and hills. The designer/observer is always on the outside layer. Architectural forms often have features on the roof on the second floor in the form of arches that received visual centrality of the place of visual reference. In this way, the concept of orientation strengthened. The confinement of the spaces of the inner first layer is distinguished by the openness and width of the natural outer layer, and this distinction balanced by the dark color of the trees and as a joint between the phenomenon of man-made (architecture) and pristine nature (mountains). The trees that represent the orchards around man-made environments are the result of natural management and are located between two natural-artificial poles.

CONCLUSION

Hermeneutic phenomenology, as a form of non-subjective and ontological phenomenology, is based on the thoughts of Martin Heidegger and makes it possible to capture lived experience in an interpretive approach. Besides, place, which has been a central theme in phenomenological studies in the fields of architecture and urban planning, may reveal itself through hermeneutic phenomenology through artworks and texts. In this study, a three-step framework for reading the paintings or drawings proposed, which stands on the bases of the basic concepts of phenomenology. This model is also based on the thoughts of Christian Norberg-Schulz, Edward Ralph, and Parvin Partovi.

One of the most important challenges ahead is moving from interpretation to explanation. This will be an essential subject for the researcher with architectural goals as it may differ from

the objectives of other professionals. Another issue concerns the validation of such studies; the line between simply describing a phenomenon and its phenomenology can be an important challenge. However, it seems that simultaneous attention to all three stages of description, analysis, and explanation at the same time can be somewhat helpful.

By using these three steps, a deeper understanding of artists' paintings or drawings with a focus on the phenomenon of place can be achieved. This study framework can be adapted easily to the phenomenological reduction and the phenomenological constitution. This can take a fresh look at place studies and provide a smoother way for researchers. This framework is not the only way, but it can be an efficient and guiding model. To show the effectiveness of this framework, the collection of drawings of a prominent Iranian contemporary painter, Sohrab Sepehri, was also briefly studied. The results were well adapted to the proposed method and helped to have better interpretation and explanations of his works. Future research can be done in the study of other artists or architects sketchbooks. Any profound research can also be done in the future to prepare better understand each of the three stages of description, explanation.

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