

Persian translation of this paper entitled:
ادراک معماری خانه پیر شالیار
بر اساس رهیافت پدیدارشناسانه موریس مرلوپونتی
published in this issue of journal

Original Research Article

Perception of Pir Shaliar's Pouse Prchitecture Based on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenological approach

Mohammad Dana Salem^{1*}, Sara Jalalian², Manouchehr Foroutan³, Salman Mardokhi⁴

1. Department of Architecture, Marivan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Marivan, Iran.
2. Department of Architecture, Hamadan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Hamadan, Iran.
3. Department of Architecture, Hamadan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Hamadan, Iran.
4. M.A. Student in Architecture, Hamadan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Hamadan, Iran.

Received: 08/05/2023 ;

accepted: 25/01/2023 ;

available online: 20/03/2024

Abstract

Problem statement: Creation and criticism in architectural discourse are theory-oriented; Theories are also often visually oriented. The perception and lived experience of architecture have given its place to scientific experience with theories; It seems that the perception of architecture is clear and easily available. On the other hand, the same perception is not much appreciated in theories and sciences. Is the lived experience of architecture easily and clearly accessible? Is it not possible to deal with architecture without theories and consider a place for the lived experience of architecture? Is it only vision that should be considered in architecture or do other senses also play a role?

Research objective: The phenomenological investigation of the bodily perception of architecture in the form of a case study of Pir Shaliar's house is the purpose of this research.

Research method: Phenomenology, both as a method and as a philosophy, is based on lived experience. This research is phenomenological and is included in the category of qualitative research; Qualitative-descriptive and according to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, she described and used Peter Zumthor's concepts and categories to categorize the descriptions.

Conclusion: The findings show the diversity of architectural experience based on lived experience. Experiences that, although understood and experienced, are often ignored or not expressed; Either the theory precedes the experience or basically they do not value such experiences and consider them outside the scope of architecture. This research showed that the senses other than vision play a role in the experience of architecture and how Pir Shaliar's house is experienced through different senses and creates a unique atmosphere. How in perception, the logic of choosing materials, their composition, and arrangement shows itself. The findings of this research have implications for theorists and architects who are concerned with creating comprehensive and complete experiences of architecture.

Keywords: *Aesthetics, Aesthetic Experience, User Experience, Phenomenography.*

Introduction

The world of perception, or in other words, the world

that is revealed to us through our senses and during our daily life, at first glance seems to be the world that we are most familiar with; Because we don't

*Corresponding author: m.danasalem@gmail.com

need to measure and calculate to reach this world, and it seems that we can find its root simply by opening our eyes and following our lives; But this is an illusion. I hope to show that as long as we remain in a scientific or utilitarian attitude, the world of perception will be largely an unknown territory (Merleau-Ponty, 2011, 41). The generality of these words of Merleau-Ponty is such that it also includes architecture. Has the scientific attitude and architectural theories not matched our perception of architecture or architecture as revealed to us through our senses? What is architecture as it is revealed to us through our senses?

Architectural analysis and reviews can be divided into two general categories:

- Technical analysis and reviews of architectural experts (theorists, architects, critics, and historians of architecture and art history)
- Analyzes of sociologists, human geographers, and the fields of ethnology, anthropology, material culture studies, consumption studies, and environmental psychology (Searod, 2016, 21 & 22). When dealing with architecture, both groups consider the scientific experience (Erfahrung) of architecture, and the lived experience (Erlebnis) is abandoned because it is non-scientific: only the methodical research of the scientist can free us from the illusions of our senses and allows us to percept things as they are. Undoubtedly, the progress of knowledge has depended precisely on turning away from what our senses tell us when we naively refer to them (Merleau-Ponty, 2011, 42). In the book *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty writes about the relationship between lived experience and science: the whole world of science is built based on the lived world, and if we want to think about science itself firmly and understand its exact meaning and scope, we must first to awaken the experience of the world of which science is a secondary expression of lived experience (Merleau-Ponty, 2012).

Usually, these two categories mentioned above are dominant in architectural studies; in the form of theories. “Architecture as experienced and perceived” labels such as people’s opinion, personal opinion, non-expert opinion, or popular opinion have been given

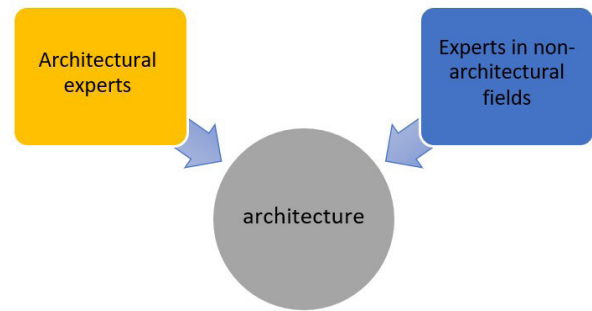


Fig.1. Architecture and theories (scientific experience) and the void of lived experience. Aource: Authors.

less attention and these cases are usually at best raw data for surveys or design studies, or ethnographic studies. Merleau-Ponty writes about this: valuing science and knowledge so much that our entire lived experience of the world seems of little value in front of it (Merleau-Ponty, 2011, 41-42). Phenomenology deals exactly with these lived experiences¹.

According to Michel Dufresne, who is one of the famous phenomenologists in the field of aesthetics, the desired aesthetic experience is the experience of the observer or the audience of the work, not the experience of the artist or the creator of the work; In other words, the phenomenology of reception has priority over the phenomenology of creativity (Oliya, 2015). Therefore, phenomenology tries to deal with architecture as it is experienced by humans. Phenomenology is the knowledge or examination of phenomena: knowledge of the manifestations of things or things as they appear in our experience or the way we experience things and hence the meanings that things have in our experience (Smith, 2013, 13). The main motto of phenomenology is the return to the things themselves (Zu den Sachen selbst!), in the sense of giving priority to how things (material objects, besides numbers, institutions, works of art, persons, etc.) present themselves in actual experience. Regarding the theoretical or systematic rules about how they should be (Brown, Collinson & Wilkinson, 2012, 406). According to Merleau-Ponty, “returning to the things themselves is returning to this former world of knowledge” (Merleau-Ponty, 2012), which means returning to lived experience. From Merleau-Ponty’s point of view, phenomenology deals with primary and pre-objective

experience; This experience is against the secondary and objective idea of the world that is elaborated and explored in the sciences (Serbon, 2022, 186). Phenomenology is descriptive and not explanatory or analytical because it deals with things as they show themselves in experience (Matthews, 2017, 16).

The main problem of this research is to deal with the lived experience of architecture itself (preceding theories) and understand how architecture is experienced. What makes this research necessary is the neglect of lived experience or perception² in architecture and the underestimation of lived experience versus the value of scientific method and experience. This research hypothesizes that apart from the theories of architecture and scientific method that deal with architecture, another type of research may be needed to deal with the lived experience of architecture and architecture as it appears. Since every experience is an experience of something, for this purpose, the experience of Pir Shaliar's house has been studied. The reason for this choice is that it is a conventional building and not a monumental architecture, and according to common understanding, it does not have architectural values, and it is placed under vernacular architecture and is more suitable for anthropological studies than architecture. On the other hand, its architect is not known to discuss his creativity, intention, and theory. Of course, this building has valuable ritual, historical, and cultural aspects that are suspended in this research so that the only thing we face is the building itself and not its ritual or historical values. The purpose of this research is to investigate the phenomenology of Pir Shaliar's house to clarify how architecture shows itself and is experienced apart from theories and disciplines. The originality of this research is both in terms of subject and method; So far, no phenomenological research has been done independently on Pirshalyar's house, and in terms of methodology, architecture as it manifests itself in lived experience has not been addressed. While examining the background of the research, these things become clearer.

Background of the Research

In the studies that have been done so far on phenomenology and architecture, two attitudes are more impressive:

- Heidegger's existentialist phenomenology through Norberg-Shulz and the subject of the sense of place
- Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology through Juhanni Pallasmaa

In some of these researches, references have been made to Peter Zumthor and Perez-Gomez, but no independent research has been done based on their method. Studies have either focused on a specific building (of course, monumental and not conventional) a building complex (bazaar), a village, or partial spaces (such as an intermediate space) or on concepts (the concept of house) or on the application of phenomenology in the design process. In the following, the research background is briefly classified in Table 1.

Theoretical Foundations

Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, was first recognized with the publication of his Logical Investigations, and the phenomenology movement was formed based on this book. Early or realist phenomenologists³ were most influenced by the call to return to the things themselves⁴. In phenomenology, the relationship between things and consciousness is explained with the concept of Intentionality, which is one of the structural characteristics of consciousness; Intentionality means awareness, it is always awareness of something, and we don't have an awareness that doesn't aim at something, doesn't intend something, or doesn't full fill it with something and is empty. Paying attention to the Intentionality feature of consciousness was what gave phenomenology the ability to confront the reduction of consciousness and human knowledge to psychological phenomena; It means rejecting psychologism according to which all knowledge, even logic and mathematics, are psychological phenomena. Intentionality is the characteristic of consciousness that connects it to things and opens the closed box of consciousness and establishes a relationship between subject and object that is neither rationalism nor

Table 1. Examples of conducted research. Source: Authors.

Row	researchers	The title	Method	Conclusion	Criticism
1	Raisi & Moin Kakui(2013)	Analyzing Valiasr Mosque in Tehran with Juhani Pallasmaa's phenomenological approach	Empiricism based on Pallasmaa's method against the functionalism of modern architecture	The realization of phenomenological philosophy in practice has been successful	The phenomenology of the architect's creativity has been discussed not the audience's experience
2	Hatami Golzari et al(2018)	The architecture of Tabriz bazaar from the perspective of phenomenology	Heidegger's ontologicalbiological phenomenology and Husserl's epistemological - lived experience phenomenology	Tabriz Bazaar is sustainable, Due to its genius loci	It has addressed the categories of identity and meaning, body and function, and not the bazaar as it appears and is experienced
3	Negin Taji et al. (2018)	Explaining the relationship between humans and place in the architectural design process with a phenomenological approach	Comparison of two approaches of ontology and epistemology for the phenomenology of place, the first one is more related to the soul of the place and the latter is more related to the sense of place	In the phase of understanding the problem of the design process, he finds it possible and necessary to use the soul of the place and considers the Sense of place to be measurable after use.	Solutions for the architect's creativity have been provided, not the audience's experience
4	Malek Afzali et al. (2022)	Interpretive phenomenology of interface spaces in house architecture	Opinions of Zumthor, NorbergShulz, Pallasmaa, and PerezGomez with interpretative phenomenology	The optimal functioning of interface spaces depends on the proper hierarchy from outside to inside while creating a sense of peace and being sheltered with the involvement of all senses and perceptions	The phenomenology of space creation has been discussed, not the experience of the audience
5	Shirazi (2010)	Phenomenology in practice with the subtitle of learning from cognitive phenomenological analysis Pallasmaa from Villa Mairea	A case study about the house (villa) based on the phenomenological method (Pallasmaa)	Architecture is not eye-oriented, but it is a tactile architecture that arouses all the senses and should be experienced through the body and by moving through the space	It is an excellent research that deals with monumental Buildings. The priority is on the senses, not the sensations
6	Bayezid et al. (2019)	Deep exploration of the meaning of regioanl house by the phenomenological method of the study: the rural house of Mokrian region of Iran	A phenomenological approach based on Van Manen and MST methods	The house of Mukriyan is an example of himself, a anifestation The sense of being and the xplanation of existence	The senses and sensory perceptions of materials are not relevant in it, but there is a kind of attention to them
7	Kakhdamohammadi et al. (2020)	Discovering the world of space in Horaman Takht's residential architecture (from an ontological point of view)	It is based on Heidegger's thoughts about dwelling and building, and of course there are references to Peter Zumthor	The architecture of Horaman Takht cannot be defined as a single building, but it is valuable in the form of mass and complex Egoism is reprehensible	In terms of questions, this article cannot deal with a single building and it deals with the meaning of a house in Oraman Takht.

subjectivism nor empiricism or objectivism. According to the interpretation that Merleau-Ponty borrowed from Heidegger, one of our existential characteristics

as conscious subjects is being in the world (Matthews, 2017, 23). Since Merleau-Ponty was influenced by both Husserl and Heidegger, it is necessary to mention the

general distinctions between Husserl and Heidegger. “Heidegger accepts this important phenomenological principle that the analysis of the inherent structures of meaning requires going beyond the duality of subject/object to return to the original experience of the world, that is, the experience of “things themselves”. But while Husserl interprets this original experience as consciousness-of-the-world, Heidegger recognizes this experience as being-in-the-world” (Kearney, 2022, 66). To be in the world, one must necessarily have a body; It is our bodies that grant us our place in this world, and it is also our bodies that make our engagement with this world an active intervention rather than a passive introspection. We see with our eyes and hear with our ears; We move in the world and see it from different perspectives; We hold objects embodiment is vital for the meaning of the world as we perceive it (Matthews, 2017, 26-27).

Although Heidegger rarely mentions the body (Kuifer & Chamro, 2019, 145) and although Husserl in the eighteenth paragraph of the second volume of *Ideas* (Husserl, 1989, 60) discussed the body in a special and detailed way and called it the zero point of orientation, Merleau-Ponty accepts Heidegger’s view based on the bodily nature of skills and abilities in the way we understand the world, and in the next step, he combines it with Husserl’s analysis of perception and reaches the non-distinction of action and perception (Kaufer & Chemero, 2019, 126). If we consider Merleau-Ponty’s most important book as *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty’s main thesis is that perception is an inherently bodily process (ibid.). Of course, this body is not only a material body but also a biological body: the body should not be considered only as a biological organism but also as a carrier for our subjectivity. Merleau-Ponty considers humans as “subject-body” (Matthews, 2017, 27) which is opposite to Cartesian dualism of mind and body, as well as the theories that see man as a mere material being. In a sense, we are our body (Leib)⁵, although not a biological body that can be explained based on chemistry and biology. After a brief description of phenomenology, we will discuss phenomenology and architecture.

Kate Nesbitt considers phenomenology, along with aesthetics, linguistic theory, Marxism, and feminism, to be one of the main paradigms that shape postmodern architecture (Nesbitt, 2016, 36). Unlike modern architecture, which was indifferent to place and making (especially materials), this philosophical branch pays attention to postmodern approaches to site, place, landscape, and making. Modern architecture, according to modern philosophy and Descartes, which led to the division of reality into two essences; thought (*res cogito*) and extension (*res extenda*), and placed the body under the essence of extension, had an object-like (objectivist) understanding of the body and building, which made them According to dimensions and size, in the form of a type of mechanism. Modern architecture did not give a place to the body and embodiment, but phenomenology in architecture studies the relationship between the body and the unconscious with architecture and considers the perception of sound, smell, and hearing in addition to visual perception (ibid.). Perhaps phenomenology can be considered the biggest criticism of formalism, Nesbitt writes that form can be considered the fundamental concern of modern architecture, but in the 1950s and after the translation of the works of Martin Heidegger and Gaston Bachelard, the phenomenological view of architecture replaced formalism (ibid.). Phenomenological architects have expressed the same thing:

Modernity has largely been more interested in form than in feeling, more in surface than in materials and texture, and more in focused images of the building than in surrounding space, environment, and atmosphere, modernity was interested in form (Pallasmaa, Böhme & Zumthor, 2021, 55).

Among the architects who both think phenomenologically and have worked on architecture, we can mention Peter Zumthor and Johani Pallasmaa. Pallasmaa’s phenomenology has many aspects, one of the most prominent of which is the idea of “multi-sensory architecture”. He criticized the superiority of vision over other senses in the field of Western philosophy and architecture and believes that this “dominance of vision” has caused us to have an

incomplete perception of our environment. But the reality is that the experience of architecture is a multi-sensory case. The qualities of matter, space, and scale are measured in the same way as eyes, ears, nose, skin, tongue, body, and muscles. Contrary to the architecture of the eye, which stays at a distance and measures from a distance; Multi-sensory architecture takes a close-up view than a long shot (Shirazi, 2010).

Pallasmaa mainly emphasizes the sense of touch⁶, but both Pallasmaa and Zumthor are critics of an approach that starts with the building as a whole and then goes to the details, both of whom believe that design should be user-oriented and have a special respect for craftsmanship and craftsmanship (ibid., 106-107). If for Pallasmaa the idea of the body is the most important concept, the main idea for Zumthor is the priority of materials⁷, which implies corporeality; How the materials are really experienced. Materials are first experienced through touch, but they are also perceived by their appearance and vision. Zumthor emphasizes that materials can be sensed through sound resonance. Taking materials seriously by Zumthor mainly relies on the experience of the body, and this is the reason why he considers man in his embodiment and physicality as the reference point of architecture. It means that man is the main criterion for measuring the quality of architecture since he has a body and is physically fit (Pallasmaa, Bohme & Zumthor, 2021, 106-107). Form is not something to work on, we involve ourselves in other things; Such as sound, abnormal sounds (noise), materials, construction, architectural components, etc.

Research Methodology

The phenomenological research method is one of the qualitative methods and deals with meaning. Meaning in phenomenology is generative and constructive and not found and exploratory. Phenomenology reveals how meanings are consistent in experience (Serbon, 2022, 58). When phenomenology talks about the constitution of objects in consciousness, there is no wonder to talk about the construction of meaning. Husserl considers humans to be creators of meaning in his Logical Investigations, and he

believes that we create the meanings of signs with our meaningful actions, and signs (signs, words, and symbols) do not have meaning by themselves, but they gain meaning when we give them meaning (Husserl, 2001, 191). Although Merleau-Ponty saw some shortcomings in Husserl's description of meaning-making and to solve them, he came to meaning reconstruction from meaning-making, despite this, it is clear that meaning in phenomenology does not have a heuristic aspect. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology differs from Husserl's in terms of method: Merleau-Ponty does not use Husserl's eidetic reduction nor his transcendental reduction (Pazuki, 2019, 78-79). Despite this, Merleau-Ponty agrees with Husserl and Heidegger that: phenomenology consists of describing, not explaining or analyzing (Merleau-Ponty, 2012). As stated in the fifth chapter of the Phenomenological Research Methods, this research method consists of steps of epoche, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis (Moustakas, 1994). This research does not take advantage of this articulation because reduction or epoche are not accepted by Merleau-Ponty, and in addition, Husserl's meaning is not the same as Merleau-Ponty's. In the book, Contemporary Research Method in Human Sciences (Mohammedpour, 2021, 238-239), the main question of phenomenology, which is close to Merleau-Ponty's approach, is introduced as follows:

In phenomenological research, the main question of every phenomenologist is: What is the way to experience a phenomenon? For example, "what" questions in phenomenological research are: How do you feel about that phenomenon? What do you think about it? (Ibid., 238). The important thing to mention here is that the question of feeling about a phenomenon may cause phenomenology to be confused with psychology, or it may lead to the meaning that I am dealing with personal feelings, which differ from person to person and are partial and therefore invalid. Husserl, in his book Logical Investigations, while criticizing psychologism, discusses the matter that "psychology deals with mental states and events, but logic or phenomenology deals with meaning, which is a special

realm... though every image as a psychological event, is partial and individual, meaning, its spiritual content can be general (Naqibzadeh, 2019, 166). Therefore, phenomenology tries to achieve the meaning of the phenomenon and the meaning of its experience and goes beyond psychological states and events. This article is discussed in more detail below.

The role of the researcher in phenomenology is that of an empathetic observer who wants to achieve a kind of objectivity... In fact, the role and goal of the researcher is to enter the experience of the participants and see the experience in their way (Mohammadpour, 2021, 239), which is further referred to as intersubjective meanings. The data collection tool is direct observation (ibid., 139). According to the motto of phenomenology, which is to return to the things themselves, it is clear that direct observation and experience have a high place. Data analysis is done by placing observations under concepts or categories and then writing textual and structural descriptions (ibid. 239).

In this research, the concepts and categories of Peter Zumthor are used, which emphasizes the embodiment of architectural experience. Although Zumthor did not directly use the word phenomenology, by examining his works and statements, it is found that the basis of Zumthor's thoughts is phenomenological (Jiaojiao, Songfu & Xiaojuan, 2013). According to Zumthor, the atmosphere is our first impression of a person, thing, or building that we understand with our senses, it works very quickly and is opposed to linear thinking. This atmosphere, which is perceived by embodiment presence, is caused by the interaction of people and things. The priority of sensory perception⁸ over reflection and linear thinking, movement, embodiment presence, things, and people are some of Zumthor's key concepts and terms, which are also very central to Merleau-Ponty, and therefore Zumthor's interest in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy is clear; In addition, when Zumthor talks about "perception", "atmosphere" and "embodiment presence", he is referring to the phenomenology of architectural perception and not the phenomenology of the architect's creativity. In nine sections, Zumthor deals with what

in his opinion constitutes the atmosphere (quality) of architecture in Table 2. It has investigated the components of the atmosphere (quality) of architecture from the Zumthor point of view. In this research, which is based on Merleau-Ponty's analysis of meaning, the meanings of Zumthor's words and categories are reconstructed here. "Reconstruction happens when we give meaning to a word (by saying it) and give a new direction to its meaning. We bring the existence of the word to our situation and accompany it. We bring the words to our time and place, we help them grow and live, just as the word helps us" (Primozić, 2009, 40). Since phenomenology deals with meaning and meaning means a spiritual content that is general and common, therefore, in terms of methodology, this research has not dealt with mental states and events that are partial and individual, and to maintain general and intersubjective validity, it has not entered the field of psychology. The validity and generality of the discussion should not be distorted. Therefore, everything that is individual and partial and related to feelings should be put aside and should be focused on the meanings or matters that have general and intersubjective characteristics. Related to this research, Sokalowsky in his introductory book on phenomenology has discussed the perception of the building in an example:

Imagine looking at a building from the front. In this case, I see a certain aspect of the front of the building. Let me tell you: this view from the building is very attractive; Come and see it from this point. As soon as you are in my place, you will see the same side that I have seen before. But you will experience profiles that are very different from what I have experienced. This is because profiles are ephemeral renderings and are never images, landscapes, or aspects that are seen by different viewers as the same. An aspect, a facet, and of course a building are intersubjective things, but a view is private and subjective. It is even possible that a view depends on my state at a time or on the condition of my sense organs; If I am sick or dizzy, the profile may appear static or blue sky, shaky, and tend to gray. However, one should not conclude from the relative or subjective nature of profiles that the aspects or aspects

Table 2. Components of the architectural atmosphere (quality) in terms of Zumthor. Source: Authors.

Row	Indicator	Description
1	The body of architecture	It means the material presence of things in an architectural work. Things have a special sensory effect on me, and that effect is what I consider to be the first and greatest secret of architecture, which collects different Things from the world, and combines different materials to create a space. What I am talking about is a kind Of anatomy for me, the body in the strict sense of the word, like our own body... This is what gives me the meaning of architecture and I try to think of it in the same way (Zumthor, 2014)
2	Coordination of materials	There is a critical affinity between materials that depends on the type of material and its weight. Sometimes you see that two substances are too far apart to react, and sometimes they are too close to each other, and this Causes them to be destroyed (ibid. 94).
3	Sound of space	Interior spaces act like large instruments. They absorb sounds, amplify them, and transfer them to other Places. This feature is related to the specific shape of each room, and the levels of its building materials and The way of using the materials.
4	Space temperament	I believe that every building has a temperament... for example, steel is cold, this type of material lowers the temperature; But when I think of my own work, the verb “to adjust” comes to mind, something like tuning a piano, perhaps; A search for finding the correct mode in tuning musical instruments as well as atmospheres; So temperament in that sense is physical but maybe also psychological and it’s in what I see, in what I feel, in What I touch, even with my feet.
5	Things around	I am very impressed by the things that people keep around them in their living spaces in their apartments or at their workplace Sometimes you see certain things put together in a very sensitive and loving way and there is A deep connection between them.
6	Between relaxation and seduction	This point is related to the way architecture is involved in movement. Architecture is a spatial art. but it’s also An ephemeral art... it means thinking about the way people move through a building.
7	Internal and external Tension	Architecture takes a small piece of the world and makes a small box in it, and suddenly the inside and outside Space is formed. Now you can be inside or outside... and that means thresholds, passages, small escape Doors... a wonderful sense of place.
8	Levels of intimacy	It is related to proximity and distance. A classical architect calls it scale, but this title is too academic and Scientific for it. I mean something more physical than scale and dimensions. What I mean deals with different Aspects: including the size, dimension, scale, and volume of the building versus the volume of my body...What I’m talking about is the size, volume (mass) and gravity of things
9	Light on things	What part of the object and how does the light shine on it? Where do the shadows fall? How is the quality Of gloss or matte surfaces? Choose materials based on their light reflection and their harmony with other Materials.

or objects given by them are somehow relative and subjective (Sokalowski , 2005, 66-67).

Therefore, the research method is as follows:

- Relying on the embodiment and direct lived experiences,
- Descriptive and pre-objective,
- Paying attention to the general and intersubjective meanings and not partial, individual, and subjective meanings,
- Suspending architectural theories, historical and cultural issues and focusing attention on the building itself,
- Reconstruction of the phenomenological meanings of architecture (Peter Zumthor) for the current situation.

Pir Shaliar’s House

One of the most ancient festivals held in Kurdistan

province is Pir Shaliar’s wedding, which is held twice in the second week of Bahman and Ordibehesht months every year in the village of Hevaraman Takht. Ha-Varaman or Oraman-Takht is one of the dependencies of Sarovabad city and it is built on the slope of the mountain and is a stepped village. Pir Shaliar ceremony has a special place among the people of Kurdistan especially in the Oraman region (Organization for Educational Research and Planning, 2016, 85). Today, people from different parts of Iran and the world come to see this ceremony. For the phenomenology of Pirshalyar’s house and to see it, as it shows itself, in the first step, “house” and “Pir-shaliar” are bracketed and suspended to focus only on the building and architecture itself. Consciousness must discard any consideration of the source of experience (Serbon ,2022, 58). Figs. 2. It has shown the atmosphere of space.

Findings

I am now in the village of Oraman Takht, I am concerned about architecture and I have come here to be in Pir Shaliar's house and experience it. I have categorized my bodily experiences and perceptions of being there, according to Zumthor, in the following order:

The body of the building: I am in the atmosphere of a stone building (and "not in front of a building". Because such descriptions are based on subject-object dualism), a stone body that means firmness, strength, and durability. From outside I see a wall, smooth and with two windows; Wooden windows. The windows are almost reached to the ceiling. The wall is two-colored, as if the stone of the new protective wall was prepared from a different mine than the original wall, or it is from the same mine, but the stones of the original wall, are more weather-beaten, and that is why it is bicolor⁹. The building tells my height that it has two Oshkoob¹⁰. The entrance is on the first oshkoob and this is a confirmation that there is a second oshkoob, but why only the upper oshkoob has a window and the lower has no windows? This is a question that requires an answer, and the exterior cannot complete and fill my perception, so I must go inside and see; The answer is inside and this is how it motivates me to move. **Fig. 3.** It shows the body of the building in Pir-shaliar's house. The entrance door is on my right, up a few steps. Prior to the building, I am standing in front of the foothills; A foothill with buildings on it. This steep has requirements based on which the buildings are sitting on it step by step. I already know that the floors of the buildings are smooth and flat (due to material priorities alongside formal priorities), so these stairs are steep as required. The fact that the entrance is on my right when entering the building means that the building is not symmetrical. I enter; I am surprised to see that the building, unlike my previous Adumbration, is a single-oshkoob building, but with a height of two oshkoob. All around, there is a platform as high as an oshkoob. There are three wooden columns in the middle of the space, which are connected by bridges and platforms in the middle of their height. The columns are big and at the top, there is a headstone that prepares the seat for the



Figs. 2. The atmosphere of space. Source: Author's archive.

wooden beams. **Fig. 4.** The columns show the pillars of Pir-shaliar's house. There are no walls or dividers and the whole house is visible at once and there is no place or anything hidden from me. It's as if they have made pillars so that there is no need for walls and the space is integrated. According to Pallasmaa's analysis of Villa Mairea, it can be said that there is no central point; The receiver himself is the moving center of his own experience and situations unfold as a continuous flow of observations and opinions (Pallasmaa, 1998), **Fig.5.** **Levels of Intimacy:** Two-step height with a middle belt, i.e. height adjustment. This house is intimate to me, the sizes are not too big and not too small; Not so small that it restricts me and not so big that it requires too many steps and something to see less distance. Everywhere is available. The general form is cube-shaped with a unified space; Integration with unification creates a kind of intimacy, a kind of purity. **Fig. 6.** It has shown the interior of Pir Shaliar's house in an intimate atmosphere.

Between peace and seduction: inside the house, there

is neither a corridor nor a wall, but the wooden bridges between the columns and the middle belt invite me to go towards them. from above them, which is the middle of the ceiling and the floor; Inside and outside are connected through the window and you can stand next to the window. Stepping on wooden bridges requires more caution and the steps tremble on it; The sound of wood can also be heard under the steps; Walking on the bridge and walking on the wood and walking on the height and walking in the middle of the space are special feelings that I have experienced only here; A bridge between space, being between floor and ceiling. You have almost the same distance from the ceiling as from the floor. On this bridge, you can go from one side to the other without stepping on the ground. You can touch a ceiling this high Fig. 7 It has shown the interior of Pir Shaliar's house.

The tension between inside and outside: A door and two windows in the south wall connect the inside and outside. The windows do not give a view from the alley and passage to the inside (from the outside to the inside), but they allow light and air. From inside, the alley and the passage are not visible from the windows, but the sky is visible, and when you stand on the round platform or the bridge between the columns, you can see both the alley and the passage and the sky. The platform and bridge are phenomenal places. The inside of the house gives me the feeling that I am not seen from the outside and I am sheltered. But the fact that it cannot be seen from the inside creates a kind of tension between the two. It creates the same tension from the outside to the inside; A building that looks like two floors, but the first floor does not have a window, and it is to get rid of this tension that the building calls us from the outside to the inside. Fig. 8. It shows a fresh view of the interior of Pir Shaliar's house.

Space temperament: The stone is cold and hard and rough, but the wood of the columns and ceiling is warm and soft. The warmth of the wood moderates the coldness of the stone and creates a moderate and pleasant temperature. Also, the color of the walls is light like day and the ceiling is dark like night. During the ceremony when pottage is cooked in this house,



Fig. 3. Pir Shaliar's house. source: Source: Author's aechive.



Fig. 4. Headstone author's. source: Source: Author's aechive.

despite the cold outside, the temperature of the space becomes warm and ethereal. The coldness of the green color of the carpet seems to extinguish the red heat of the fire. Fig. 9. It shows the temperature of Pir-shaliar's house.

Architecture and Surroundings: The house is on the foothills and is made of stone. A mountain is made of stone, sedimentary rocks that are made from the compression of layers of sediment and the internal



Fig. 5. Oraman Takht village. Source: Source: Author's archive.

forces of the earth, and the house is also made from the stacking of layers of stone blocks together, without any mortar (glue) and only relying on shape and friction. The stones are cut for the wall. The stones are not round or lumpy or river, but they are carved and mineralized. They are layered on top of each other as they are formed by the sedimentation of alluvium through time. The village has steps and the houses are arranged like stone blocks or stone steps (Salem et al., 2019a). The house that is the lowest step or the first step; Pir Shaliar's house is the cornerstone of the village. The layered arrangement can be seen from the stone inside the wall to the entire buildings of the village; They are all interwoven. Materials, houses, and the village have the same construction logic (Salem et al., 2019b).

Sound of Building: The stone is cold and hard, heavy and strong. You can touch it but you can't rub your hands on it. If he speaks, his voice must be hoarse and treble. The sound of plaster is smooth and soft. The sound of wood is also soft and is lower than plaster. Stone, due to its cold nature, speaks less, but wood is warmer and speaks more. The outside of the building is silent and the inside is speaking. The house is dark-light from the outside (the recesses are dark) and has

on its own like a rod and a column, only trees rise up as a single trunk, that's why they become columns. It is possible to make a column out of stone, but the stone column in this building is not compatible with the logic of the layered layers of stone in this building and region. In addition, the stone column lowers the atmospheric temperature of the house and the building becomes cold. The stone has a long life, it is old. It compares the life of the building with the mountains. Wood (tree) is young in comparison and its life is short. But the stability of the columns tells about their long life. The roof is also wooden; The lightness of wood versus the heaviness of stone is the same logic that placed one over the other. Phenomenology illuminates the living and organic logic of materials and why these things have come together and related to each other in this way.

The columns are carved; The corners are chamfered and made an octagonal prism. The headstone is a piece that is made separately from the column and is an incomplete pyramid. The main beams of the roof are also carved (especially from the top) and are square, but the secondary beams are not carved, they have their natural shape with round sections. The roof



Fig.6. Inside Pir Shaliar's house. Source: Author's aechive.



Fig. 7. Inside Pir Shaliar's house. Source: Author's aechive.

light shadow, and the interior is monochromatic. The outer skin is as if it absorbs light and sound, but the inner skin reflects both light and sound. The wood of the ceiling also absorbs light and sound.

Coordination of materials: This house is made of stone, wood, and soil (white soil). Two types of coordination can be seen; Coordination of materials with each other and coordination of materials with the environment. From inside and outside, this building addresses the touch in different ways with its skin. It has an inner garment and suitable outer garment and skin. The skin is rough on the outside and soft on the inside. It is full of holes on the outside and smooth and uniform on the inside. The outer skin is rough; It is as if it has dried up under the sun, cracked due to heat and cold, and worn by wind and rain, but it is still strong and suitable to resist them; It builds and sustains with light, temperature, wind and rain. But the inner skin (soil and wood) is soft and weak, it cannot withstand water and moisture; The clothes are not outside, but the soft clothes of inner comfort. Fig. 10. From the outside, the components (stones) can be seen separately, they are separate from each other, discrete and textured, but inside, the components cannot be separated from each other and the texture is smooth and continuous. The outer skin attracts the eye and has movement and variety. The outer skin is picked but the inner skin is rubbed. One is pasty and soft and plastic, and the other is hard and breakable. Only the soil, which is a paste, can fill the voids of the stone wall. The size of the stones is different; Small stones have filled the empty space between the larger ones. The size and weight of the stones are so that they can be moved by hand. The stones are fastened together with their roughness, they are interwoven, and if there was no friction between them, they would not settle together. Each part shows what role it has in the whole and how it takes the load and forms the whole, nothing can be removed from its place. The stone that is on this wall has a different identity than the same stone when it is not in that building. The stone of this wall is no longer a piece of stone, it is a part of the building, a cell of its body.



Fig.8. Inside Pir Shaliar's house. Source: Author's archive.



Fig. 9. Space temperament. Source: Author's archive.



Fig. 10. The stone wall of Pir Shaliar's house. Source: Author's archive.

Materials have a living and organic relationship with each other and are not mechanical and dead. The cut stones are stacked up layer by layer; They grow tall in the form of a wall, but wood can stand

boards are all hewn and smooth. Although the columns are carved to change their character and not look like a tree trunk anymore, and to emphasize the fact that they are columns, you can see the structure of a tree in the arrangement of the wood. The logic of the nature of wood and its embodiment can be described as follows: the main beams of the roof (especially the top) are cut to provide a better bed and seat for the secondary beams, the distance between the columns is due to the length of the main beams, and the headstone's dimensions prepare a reliable seat for the main beams. Headstone can be considered the joint point of the main branch to the trunk or the branch in trees, the secondary beams can be considered the same as the secondary branches, and the boards on them can be considered the same as the leaves. The arrangement of the roof is such that its load reaches the ground with several 90-degree rotations. Fig 11. It shows the rotation and hierarchical arrangement of the wood from the floor to the roof:

- The rotation of the main beam with respect to the column (from vertical to horizontal) through the forty-five degrees of the headstone
- Ninety-degree rotation of secondary beams compared to the main beam
- Ninety-degree rotation of the boards with respect to the secondary beams

At the end of this section, it can be said that the main form of the building is something like a spreading tree (pillars and wooden beam roof) with a stone wall around it.

Light on things: the light that shines on the outer wall, as if the unpointed distance between the stones always absorbs part of the light and shows some degrees of darkness even though the stones are bright; The light on the wall is divided into darkness and light. The windows do not allow to look out the window, the windows are not touchable and are out of my reach except from the middle belt and this calls me to stand on the belt, look out the window, and touch it. Windows reaching the ceiling means that the window is only for lighting. Lighting from above creates short shadows, except at sunset, which means the shadow at noon and when the sun is waning. As if the windows and the way

of lighting are to induce this special time. Fig. 12. It shows the light on the objects.

Discussion and Review

After the phenomenology of Pir Shaliar's house according to Merleau-Ponty's approach and with Zumthor's meanings and categories, we put this phenomenological study against one of its different methods so that the subject and method of the research show itself better in these differences. Among the various methods, for this part, we chose vision-oriented formalism as a different method. Another reason for this choice is a promise from Kate Nesbitt, which appeared in this article; In the 1950s, the phenomenological view of architecture replaced formalism.

The book, *Architectural Procedures* (Clark & Pause, 2005) has analyzed the form of buildings by various architects from the past to the present; Structure, natural lighting, massing, plan to section, unit to whole, circulation to used, repetitive to unique, geometry, symmetry and balance, additive and subtractive and hierarchy are among the things that need to be analyzed. Figs. 13 & 14 formal analysis of Hotel Montmorency the work of Nicolas Ledoux.

It is clear that formal analysis, unlike phenomenology, does not have much to say about Pir Shaliar's house, which does not have a special geometry and plan, nor a special form. The reason for this can be investigated in several cases, which can be obtained from the comparison of formal analysis with phenomenology, which is shown in Fig. 15.

In Fig. 16, the differences between the formal analysis method and the phenomenological method are discussed

Conclusion

This research hypothesized that apart from the theories of architecture and other methods that research architecture, another type of research is possible that deals with the lived experience of architecture as it appears. This research showed the richness and variety of architectural experience in Pir Shaliar's house; Those experiences that are understood and

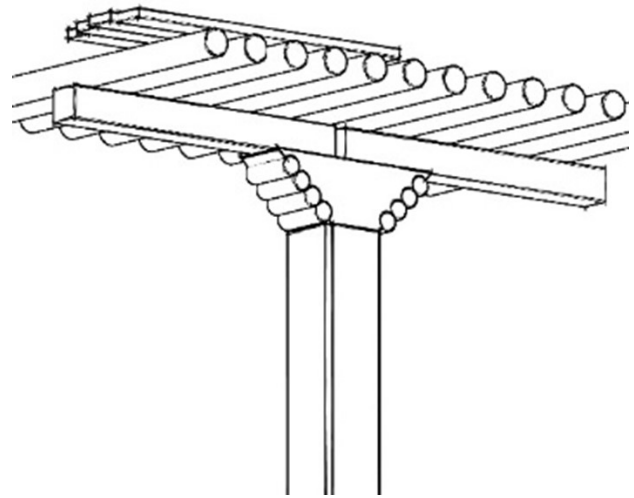


Fig. 11. Rotating and hierarchical arrangement of wood from floor to roof. Source: Authors.



Fig.12. Light on objects. Source: Author's aechive.

experienced. This research shows that it is possible to use lived experience to describe architecture and apply it to architecture. Although Pir Shalyar's house does not appear to be a building with special values according to the prevailing and common theories of architecture, this research showed that this building creates its own special atmosphere with its sensory data, which can only be understood and experienced by the presence of a person in it. Analytical and explanatory theories of architecture, emphasizing form and function, map, stylistics, and historical and social issues, have ignored a fundamental part of architecture; The present and embodied experience of architecture or in other words perception of architecture. Pir Shaliar's house has its own perceptual richness, which has created an atmosphere in which the experience of being there is

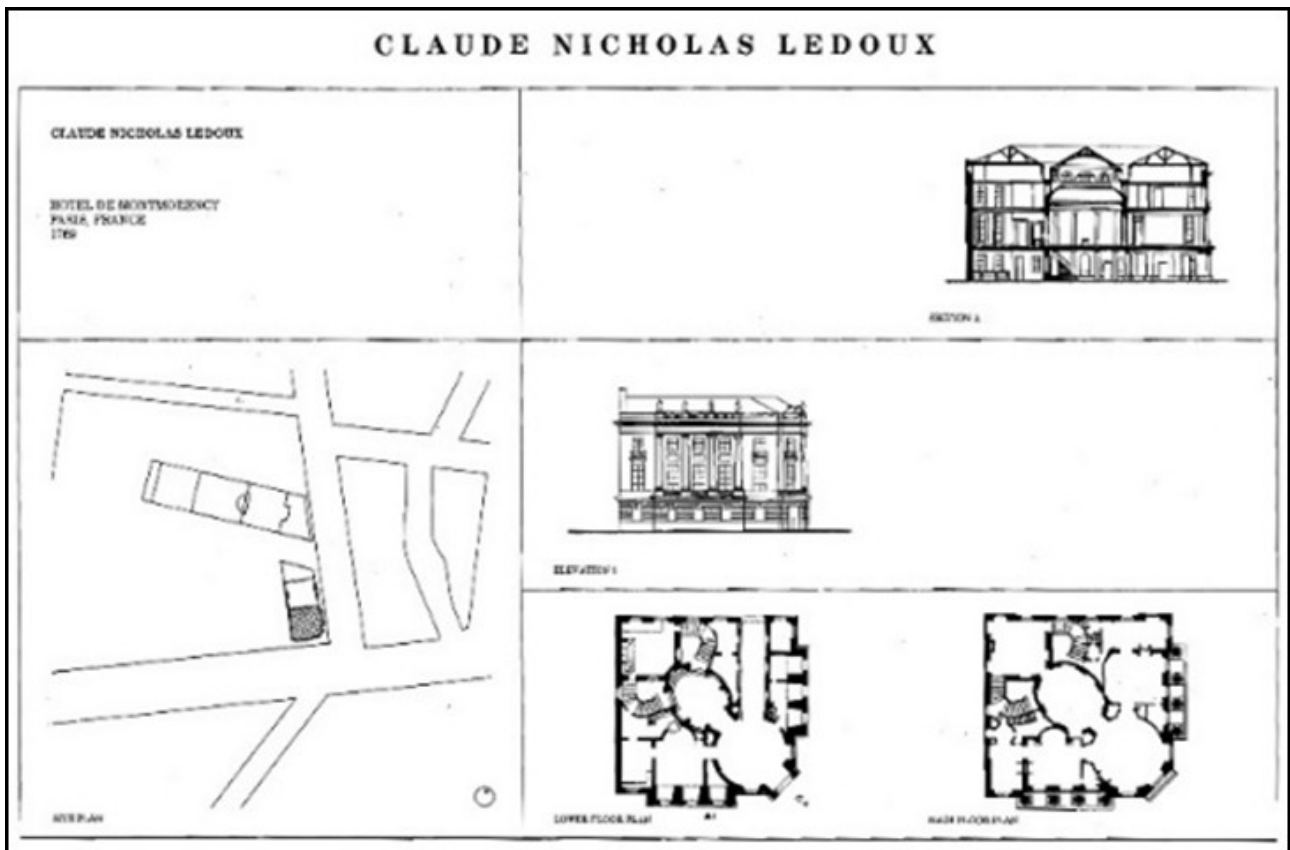


Fig. 13. Formal analysis of Hotel Montmorency by Nicolas Ledoux. Source: Clark & Pause, 2005, 96.

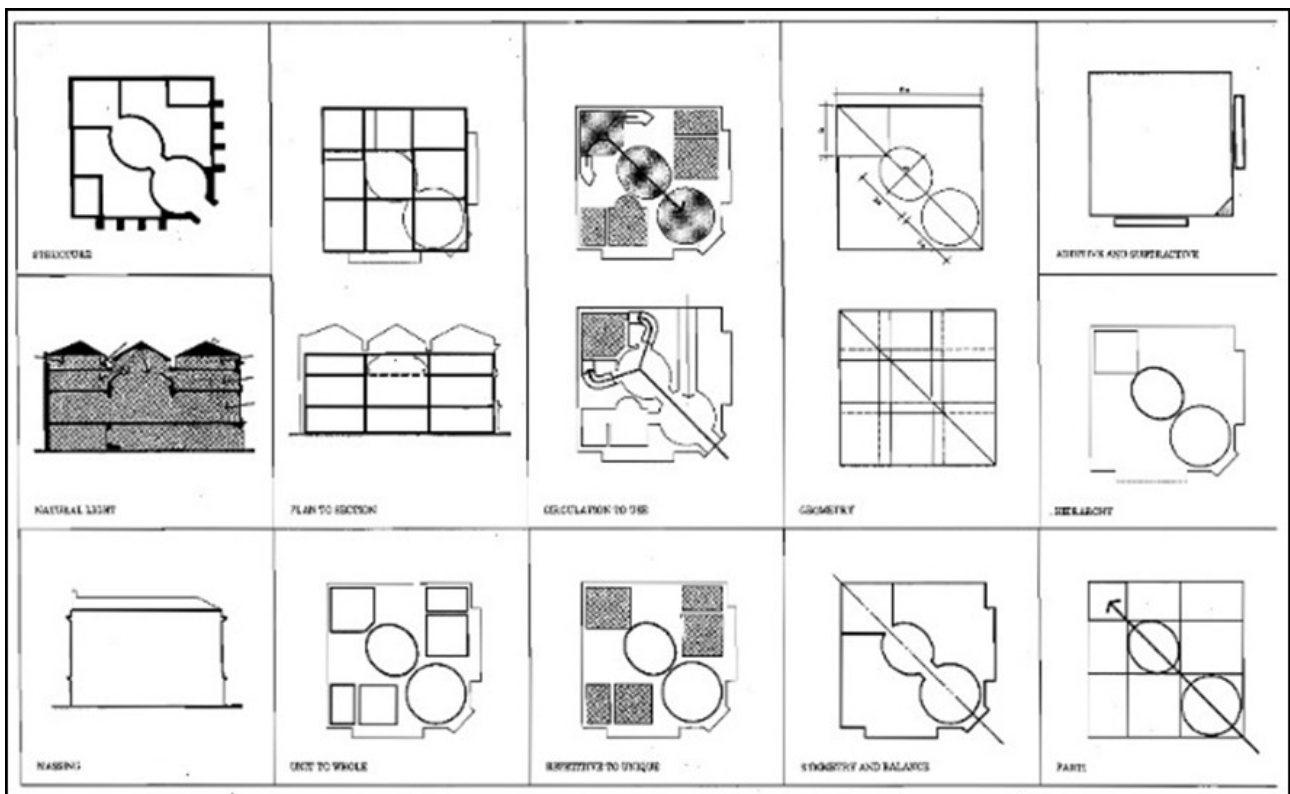


Fig. 14. Formal analysis of Hotel Montmorency by Nicolas Ledoux. Source: Clark and Pause 2005, 97.

unique and special, and has fundamental differences with being in other buildings. In this research, the logic of choosing materials, textures, dimensions and sizes, components, and elements showed themselves and their reasons; Apart from any theory and based solely on the description of perception and lived experience. It became clear how the location of the windows in combination with the height of the building prompts a person to move inside from the outside and invites him inside the house; how inside and outside are connected and separated; How hot and cold, soft and rough, and light and heavy, adjust each other and create a balanced feeling. The world of this house (according to Merleau-Ponty) or its atmosphere (according to Zumthor) is silent; It has created its own silence and singularity. The eyes (windows) do not see the street and only receive light. It is a solitude in which there is no need to attract attention or show off; It is as if it is like the space of museums where the architecture goes back and plays the role of the background and tries to be less visible so that the works displayed inside it can be seen better and more. But although it does this with the eyes, it folds differently with the sense of touch; It is full of tactile lyricism. This emphasis on touch, which is a sense based on closeness and immediacy, as opposed to vision, which is based on distance, has created a world or atmosphere that embraces a person intimately. It is as if it is in this embrace that the house reveals itself. The same interpretations that Pallasmaa used in the review of Villa Mairea can be expressed with a slight modification about Pir shaliar’s house:

this house is “based on the idea of an incremental and piecemeal collection that grows part by part from the bottom, and not a structure of abstraction and ideal of a ruler that is dictated from above. it pays more attention to objective and unique experiences in living situations. This architecture is not a Cartesian idealism but a Bergsonian sensual realism. The goal is to create a perceptual effect from the real perspective of the viewer and not from the perspective of formal mental attention. In addition, this architecture is not a retinal (visual-oriented) architecture, but a tactile architecture that arouses all the senses and must be experienced through the body and by moving through the space. This is due to the current and verb-based conception of space, which is rooted in the moving experience of space, and not the noun and noun-based conception, which is motionless and fixed (Shirazi, 2010).

Endnotes

1. Wilhelm Dilthey (1911-1833) also talks about lived experiences (Erlebnisse), but there is a doubt that he fell into psychologism (Pazuki, History of Contemporary Western Philosophy 2019, 217), which phenomenology is a serious critic of.
2. The word that Merleau-Ponty uses most of the time instead of experience is perception, so the same word appears in the title of his book; Phenomenology of perception (Matthews, 2017, 20).
3. Based on the encyclopedia of phenomenology, phenomenology is divided into four main branches: realist, calendar, existential and hermeneutic (Embree, et al. (1997), 2).
4. It means things as they show themselves in consciousness and not objects or physical equivalents
5. Jonathan Hill considers the concept of the body and the perception of the body as the main concepts that are useful for architects (Hill 1396, 18).
6. Plasma does not consider touching in a literal sense, but tactility from an existentialist point of view and as an experience of existence and an experience of oneself that is a mixture of all sensory methods (Plasma, Böhme and Zumthor, Building Atmosphere 1400, 108).

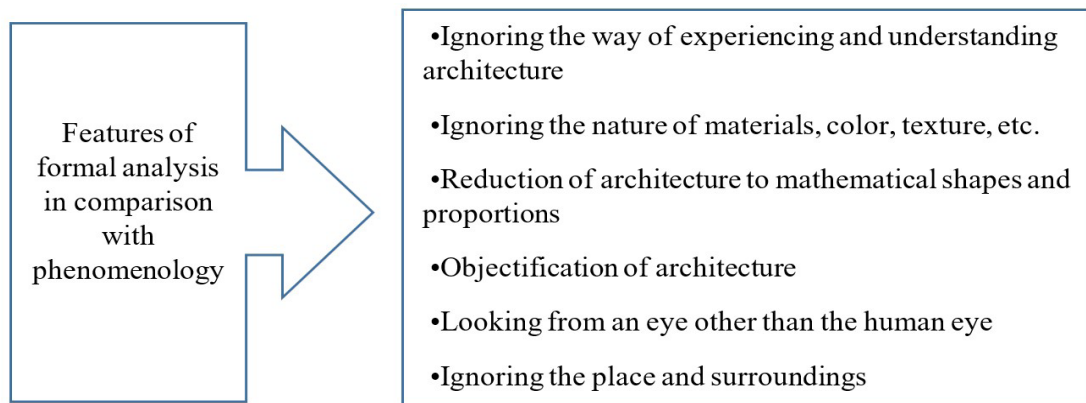


Fig. 15. Feature of formal analysis with phenomenology. Source: Author.

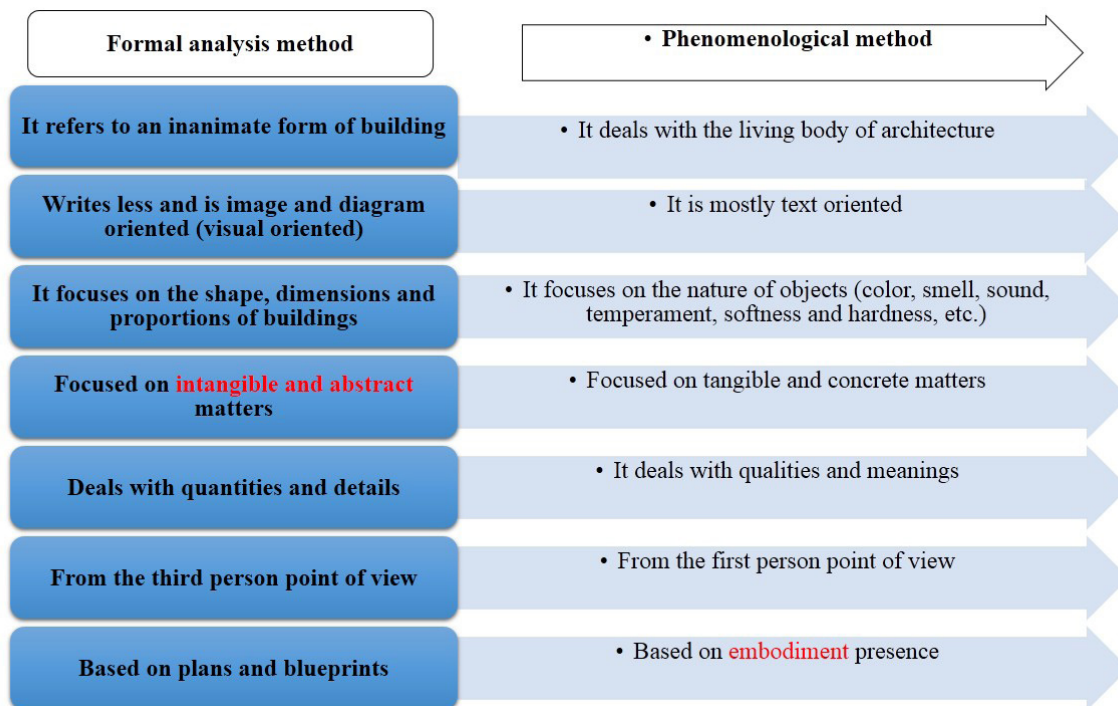


Fig. 16. Differences between the formal analysis method and the phenomenological method. Source: Author.

7. From start to finish, his work is largely based on the attention to physical materials, materials A to Y shape his design process. Every project begins and ends with love for a material and discovering its potential. Stone in the Valls Spa, glass in the Art Gallery, wood in the St. Benedict's Temple, brick in the Columba Museum, and concrete in his recent works in Haldenstein (Platt and Spier 2010).

8. According to phenomenologists: Prepredicative.

9. The difference in color between the protective wall and the main wall can be considered as the reason for the restoration rules and regulations, but since in the phenomenological investigation, the focus is on sensory perception and it is a description, such an explanation was avoided in the original text.

10. Story, Floor.

References list

- Asghari, M. (2019). *An introduction to contemporary Western philosophies (from Husserl to Rorty)*. Tehran: Research Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies.
- Bayazidi, Q., Iraj, E., Farah, H., Mokhtabad, A., Seyyed M. (2012). A research on the explanation of the views of regionalism and their evolution in contemporary architecture. *Naqsh Jahan*, 3 (1), 7-18.
- Bayazidi, Q., Golabi, B., Tahmasabi, A., Sahabhi, J. (2017). Deep exploration of the meaning of native house by phenomenological method (case study: rural house of Mokrian region). *Rural Research Quarterly*, 9 (4), 646-660.
- Brown, S., Collinson, R. & Wilkinson, R. (2012). *One hundred twentieth - century philosophers*. (A.S. Behzadi, Trans.). Tehran: Ghoghnoos.
- Educational Research and Planning Organization. (2016).

Kurdistan Province Studies. Tehran: Iran educational books publishing company.

- Hatami Golzari, E., Mirza Kouchak Khoshnevis, A., Bayazidi, Gh. & Habibi, F. (2020). (2018). Qualitative investigation of architectural durability implications of Tabriz Bazaar complex from the phenomenology aspect. *Architectural thought*, 4 (7). 172-188.
- Hurssell, E. (1989). *Ideas pertaining to apure phenomenology and to a phenomenological phil Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology & to a phenomenological philosophy second book*. (R. Rojcewicz, & A. Schuwer, Trans.). Boston / London: Kluwer Academic Publisher.
- Jiao Jiao· J· Songfu, L & Xiaojuan, H. (2013). Peter Zmthor ideas of Architectural Creation. *Applied Mechanics and Materials*, (423-426), 1183-1186.
- Kadkhodamohammadi, A., Dolatabadi, F. & Kaboli, H. (2020). (2019). Exploring the world of space in Horamaan Takht's residential architecture (from an ontological point of view). *Architectural thought*, 4 (8), 120-134.
- Kearney, R. (2022). *European modern philosophical movements*. (A. Kashfi, Trans.). Tehran: Negah Publications Institute.
- Kuifer, Sh. & Chamro, A. (2018). *Phenomenology* (N. Momeni, Trans.). Tehran: Pegah Rozgar Nou Cultural and Artistic Institute.
- Matthews, E. (2017). *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Phenomenology of Perception* (M. Daryanvard, Trans.). Tehran: Daily Life.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2012). *Phenomenology of Perception*. (D.A. Lndes, Trans.). London/Newyork: Routledge.
- Naqibzadeh, M.A. (2019). *A look at the philosophical attitudes*

of the 20th century. Tehran: Tahori.

- Nezbit, K. (2016) *Theory of Postmodern Architecture (1965-1995)* (P. Rouhi, Trans.). Tehran: Kodeh Kasari Kitab.
- Oliya, M. (2015). The place of sensory matter in the phenomenology of Dufresne's art. *Philosophical researches*, 10 (18), 95-109.
- Pallasmaa, J. (2012). *Thoughtful Hand*. (Akbari, A. Trans.). Tehran: Parham Naqsh.
- Pallasmaa, J., Böhme, G., & Zumthor, P. (2021). The atmosphere of the building. (M. Nikfetrat & E. Bitaraf, Trans.). Tehran: New Thought.
- Pazuki, B. (2019). *History of contemporary western philosophy*. Tehran: Research Institute of Hikmat and Philosophy of Iran.
- Raisi, I. & Kakui, M. (2013). Analysis of Valiasr Mosque in Tehran with Johani Pallasmaa's phenomenological approach. *National conference of new theories in architecture and urban planning*. Qazvin: Qazvin Branch Islamic Azad University.
- Salem, M.D., Hassan Pour, F. & Dezhdar, O. (2019a). Physical-Subjective Typology of Vernacular Housing in Western Kurdistan Based on the Procedural Typological Framework (the Muratorian School). *JHRE*, 38(165), 33-48.
- Salem, M.D., Hassan Pour, F. & Dezhdar, O. (2019b). Typology and Efficiency Evaluating of the Open and Semi-Open Space in Vernacular Housing With an Emphasis on Enviromental Quality Factors:a Case Study of Western Kurdistan, Iran. *GeoRe*, 34 (1), 131-141.
- Searod, I. (2016). *At home* (anthropology of domestic space). (Ghaznavian , Z., Safshakhan, M., Nazari, E., Delnawaz, N. & Sadeghi-Tabar L. Trans.). Tehran: Research Institute of Culture, Art and Communication.
- Serbon, D. (2022). *Phenomenology (textbooks of western philosophy)*. (A. Salarvand, Trans.). Tehran: Naqsh Jahan.
- Shirazi, M.R. (2010). Phenomenology in Action (Learning from Pallasmaa's Phenomenological Analysis of Villa Mairea). *Utopia*, 3 (14), 125-132.
- Smith, D. W. (2013). *Phenomenology*. (olia, M. Trans.). Tehran: Phoenix.
- Zumthor, P. (2014). *The phenomenological approach in Zumthor's thought*. (S.S. Mirzoghali Langroudi, & M. Nikfetrat. Trans.). Tehran: Elme Memar.
- Educational research and planning organization. (2016). *Kurdistan province*. Tehran: Iran educational books publishing company.
- Sokalowski, R. (2005). *An introduction to phenomenology*. (M.R. Ghorbani, Trans.). Tehran: Game Nou.
- Serbon, D. (2022). *Phenomenology (textbooks of western philosophy)*. (A. Salarvand, Trans.). Tehran: Naqsh Jahan.
- Shirazi, M.R. (2010). Phenomenology in Action (Learning from Pallasmaa's Phenomenological Analysis of Villa Mairea). *Utopia*, 3 (14), 125-132.

COPYRIGHTS

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with publication rights granted to the Bagh-e Nazar Journal. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).



HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Dana Salem, M.; Jalalian, S., Foroutan, M. & Mardokhi, S. (2024). Perception of Pir Shaliar's house architecture based on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological approach. *Bagh-e Nazar*, 21(130), 21-38.

DOI: 10.22034/BAGH.2023.395708.5373

URL:https://www.bagh-sj.com/article_184095.html?lang=en

