An Investigation on Tadao Ando's Phenomenological Reflections

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ABSTRACT: Although Tadao Ando never refers to phenomenology explicitly, concentrating on his numerous texts and writings reveals that his way of thinking on architecture implies some essential themes and concerns, which are fundamentally related to the "phenomenological discourse" in both philosophy and architecture. Concepts and ideas such as union of subject and object, space, body and movement, memory, corporeality, multi-sensory perception, etc. are all essential themes in Ando's reflection on architecture, which point to the common concerns in phenomenological discourse of architecture. This essay first discovers Ando's basic phenomenological concerns based on a thematic analysis of his writings and words through which his central phenomenological concerns and their similarities and differences with the ideas and thoughts of other phenomenologists such as Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Norberg-Schultz, Pallasmaa, and Frampton are discovered. At the end, it is concluded that existing phenomenological reflections in Ando's architectural thought and work are not the result of his systematic investigation and reading of theoretical texts about the philosophy of phenomenology, but rather they are more rooted in his personal state of mind, his way of learning and understanding architecture, his cultural background and attention to the Eastern-Japanese way of thinking, and to some extent studying the works of some architectural theoreticians like Norberg-Schulz and Frampton.

Keywords: phenomenology, architectural phenomenology, Tadao Ando, body, place.

INTRODUCTION

Ando does not talk about phenomenology explicitly. However, reading his reflections on architecture reveals that his way of contemplating architecture is analogous and parallel to the way architectural phenomenologists or philosophers contemplate architecture. Different themes such as the union of subject and object, body and movement, memory, corporeality, multi-sensory perception, light, regionalism, and place, which are extensively used in Ando's architectural reflections and considered in his realized works, are central ideas and concerns of the phenomenological discourse in architecture. On the other hand, Ando's architecture has been referred to by some architectural phenomenologists and they have discovered a kind of phenomenological approach in his architectural thought.

In this regard, some important questions arise: what is Ando's contribution to phenomenology? Is he

influenced by the "philosophy of phenomenology" or the "phenomenology of architecture"? Why do phenomenologists refer to his thought and architecture? Does he propose a special way of phenomenology in architecture? To investigate these questions, I would like to extract Ando's "phenomenological concerns" by means of reading his texts and writings and pointing to their similarities with the ideas of other phenomenologists.

OBJECTIVE & METHODOLOGY

This article investigates Tadao Ando's architectural thought to discover its somehow dormant and hidden phenomenological concerns. Through literature review, all his available written texts will be studied to highlight those expressions and statements that narrate an implicit "phenomenological approach." Since the goal is determining the presence of certain issues or concepts within texts, content analysis will be used for discovering phenomenological concerns dormant between the words, followed by a "thematic analysis" of some central phenomenological themes.

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TADAO ANDO'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONCERNS, A THEMATIC ANALYSIS

In this section, by means of thematic analysis, Ando's phenomenological reflections will be investigated, trying to highlight their similarity or interconnectivity with phenomenological reflections of some leading phenomenologists. In general, Ando's phenomenological concerns can be categorized under four main themes of "Shintai, body, and multi-sensory architecture", "culture, Critical Regionalism, and tectonics", "light, darkness, and tectonics", and "place, Enclosed Domain and Genius Loci".

Theme 1: Shintai, Body, and Multi-sensory Architecture

Ando resists the Newtonian concept of space and rejects the separation of subject and object, mind and body, by means of referring to the Japanese term "shintai". He explains that "by shintai I mean a union of spirit and flesh. It acknowledges the world and at the same time acknowledges the self" (Ando, 1988, p.453). His understanding of the "body" as "shintai", thus, brings him close to those thinkers who reject the Cartesian dualism of spirit and body, from Husserl to Merleau-Ponty. He states that "Man is not a dualistic being in whom spirit and flesh are essentially district, but a living, corporeal being active in the world" (Ibid.). This active body engages with the world as a whole, as a union of subject and object, mind and flesh.

This understanding from the shintai as the union of body and mind is a basis for our perception of the world. According to Ando, man articulates the world through his body as the reference point and centre of perception. Since our body is essentially heterogeneous - that is, it has a top and a bottom, a left and a right, and a front and a back - "the articulated world in turn naturally becomes a heterogeneous space" (Ando, 1988, p.453). Accordingly a "here and now" and subsequently a "there" and "then" appears. As Merleau-Ponty points out, "Our body and our perception always summon us to take as the centre of the world that environment with which they present us" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.285). Here and there, in fact, point to our existentiality and spatiality. We feel different directions and positions within our immediate surroundings. This is indeed due to the directionality of the body, and the body orients itself towards things. This directionality, which intends to fill the distances – what Heidegger (1996) calls it de-distancing – makes place meaningful. Ando says that

"Through a perception of that distance, or rather the living of that distance, the surrounding space becomes manifested as a thing endowed with various meanings and values. The world that appears to Man's senses and the state of Man's body become in this way interpreted" (Ando, 1988, p.453).

According to Ando, to perceive an object, the distance between self and the object must be changed, and this is fulfilled through movement. Shintai moves – in fact, exerts its directionality through de-distancing – and thus spatiality emerges. "Spatiality is the result, not of a single, absolute direction of vision, but of a multiplicity of directions of vision from a multiplicity of viewpoints made possible by the movement of the shintai" (Ibid.). Ando calls this process "mutual articulation of the body and the world." The body as shintai, indeed, is the true and authentic "self".

The importance of movement for Ando can be seen in the way one approaches his buildings. Mainly in religious buildings, Ando avoids direct entry into the interior and presents a kind of hierarchical approach by using paths, pillars, walls, and colonnades (Fig. 1). This idea – like "perspectival perception" of Merleau-Ponty by which he acknowledges that perception is originally perspectival and there is no perspectiveless position – highlights the vital role of movement in perceiving the work of architecture and presents a "poetics of movement" as Plummer (2002) calls it.

Fig. 1. Hierarchical approach to the Water Temple (Source: the author)

Body, on the other hand, is a combination of different senses through which our percept from the world is obtained. In contrast to vision-oriented architecture of the time, Ando states that "Architectural space is a phenomenon we take in not only visually but through

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all our senses, that is, through our whole bodies" (Ando, 2005b). For example he points to his experience of the interior space of the Pantheon while a procession of believers came in and started to sing a hymn. He remarks that it was the sound of space that affected him strongly and gave him an impression that was not merely achievable by visual perception.

Thus, similar to Pallasmaa, who condemns the supremacy of vision in the process of perception and proposes an "architecture of senses" (1996a), Ando employs a multi-sensory attitude towards architecture. He claims that "A space is never about one thing. It is a place for many senses: sight, sound, touch, and the uncountable things that happen in between" (Ando, 2002e, p. 31). In fact, he pays attention to all the senses from the beginning of the design process. In the case of selecting materials he remarks that they judge on materials considering "not just sight, but the other senses such as touch and hearing as well" (Ando, 1997a, p. 13). In the places that are in direct contact with the human hand or foot, natural materials are used to provoke the senses (Ando, 1991d). For example, in Japanese Pavilion in Seville he intended to make people aware of the odour of the wood, to emphasize the haptic qualities in the increasingly digitalized and vision-based society. He explains: "I wanted visitors to experience the architecture through all their senses - smell, touch, as well as with the eyes" (Ando, 1997b, p. 140).

Theme 2: Culture, Critical Regionalism, and Tectonics

Ando argues that in a world which is becoming more and more technological and computer-based, and the human beings are being reduced to "masses", the extreme tendency towards universality eliminates differentiations between various cultures and intends to lead to a kind of standardization by which individuality is disappearing. He believes that the increasing universalization, standardization, and generalization may be useful for civilization, but endanger culture. In this situation, what is vital for architecture is paying attention to culture rather than civilization, because architecture is deeply rooted in culture. By culture, Ando means "a background of history, tradition, climate and other natural factors" (Ando, 1986, p.450). Obviously, these are all important factors, which give a particular character to architecture and make it situational. This culture-based particularity may reject monotone urban contexts and similar constructions in cities and give them variety.

Thus, in a situation in which humanity is replaced by information and individual creativity by virtual intelligence, and in a context which leads more and more

to uniformity and monotony through the elimination of differences of various cultures, Ando claims that his task is "to create places which express regional and cultural particularities which bring out Man's relationship to nature and other people" (Ando, 1994a, p. 476). In this sense, regional characters would be able to resist the standardization and severe universalization. Ando believes that there is a kind of spirituality and ritual background that "is universal for any kind of culture" (Ando, 2002a) and claims that there is a "level of the abstract and universal" in his architecture by which he intends to be able to make his works regional and universal simultaneously. As Zaha Hadid remarks "His buildings begin to carry a particular sense of universality. People from different cultures find it easy to relate to his work. A Buddhist temple or a Christian church would be experienced at the level, which suggests a common root of all humans" (Hadid, 2002, p. 77).

Because of the cultural and regional tendencies in Ando's thoughts and works, Frampton is very interested in his buildings and uses them as cases for his "Critical Regionalism". Ando and Frampton have similar opinions concerning culture and civilization. Frampton argues that "Ever since the beginning of Enlightenment, "civilization" has been primarily concerned with instrumental reason, while culture has addressed itself to the specifics of expression" (Frampton, 2002a, p. 78). In this regard, Frampton asserts that Ando uses the material condition of modern society, for example reinforced concrete walls, but at the same time he criticizes universal Modernity from within by introducing new goals and limits for Modern architecture. Similarly, Ando acknowledges that his architecture is fundamentally based on Modernist vocabulary and its technology, but rejects its shortcomings and intends to give it "a new direction" by means of presenting an "aesthetic consciousness unique to Japan." This implies a Japanized modernism; that is, mingling it firmly "with natural regional features, history, anthropological traits, and aesthetic consciousness" (Ando, 1989, p. 21). In this way, Ando wants to give a regional identity to his architecture and create an architecture, which is "universal and particular at the same time" (Ando, 1994a, p. 479). To be universal and particular at the same time is close Frampton's idea of "Critical Regionalism" (Frampton, 2002a, 2007).

Theme 3: Light, Darkness, and Tectonics

Ando intends to capture the true character of a thing, to "discover the essence of a thing" (Ando, 1994b, p. 472). To discover the essence of a thing implies being open to it, to be able to capture its true nature. He does

this through thinking, not as intellectual reasoning, but as a kind of intuition by means of sketches. "Thinking is for me a physicalized process, performed through sketches" (Ibid.). For him sketching is a way of discovering the essence of the things, the very nature of phenomena (Fig. 2). Because of this approach, in his work of architecture we confront phenomena and "their desire to disclose themselves" (Co, 1995, p. 22). As Eisenman mentions, "Like haiku, Ando does not give us spaces which allude to meaning, he gives us the real/concrete objects which are meaning" (Eisenman, 1991, p. 7). The wall presents its wallness through pure concrete, and the space shows its spatiality through pure volumes and interiors. Werner Blaser refers to the Greek term 'techne' which implies both art and craftsmanship and states that "Tadao Ando, the builder of meditative architecture, creates buildings with "techne" whose beauty and contemporaneity are compelling" (Blaser, 2001, p. 52).
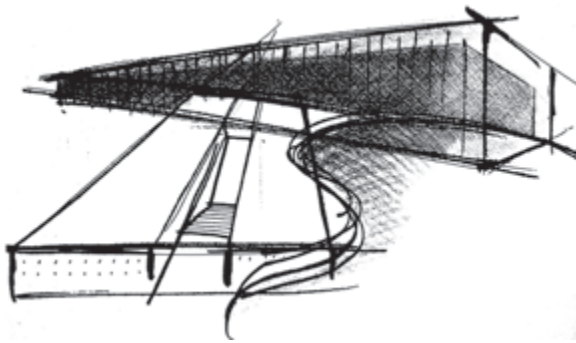

Fig. 2. Sketch of the Langen Foundation by Ando

Light and darkness are reliable means for Ando by which catching the essence of the things becomes possible. Light is the origin of all being for Ando. It gives things depth and thus helps them appear. To appear implies manifestation. Light, in this way, plays an important role in the self-showing and self-manifestation of phenomena. It makes things appear as phenomena. These phenomena, which constitute the surrounding world, are essentially light-based. It can be said that it is light that constitutes the world by letting the phenomena show themselves from themselves. Ando states that "Light: the creator of relationships that constitute the world… continually re-invents the world" (Ando, 1993a, p. 470).

To re-invent the world implies manifesting phenomena in their changing appearance. Phenomena are not immobile beings, rather they show themselves differently and establish never-ending relations with other phenomena, and this ceaseless transformation is the result

of the ever-changing character of light. Architecture, as the scene in which phenomena can be revealed, purifies light and brings it to our consciousness. Architecture helps light to be perceived as "Light", to show its character and capability.

Fig. 3. Church of the Light (Source: the author)

However, light is perceived because of darkness. "There must be darkness for light to become light" (Ibid., p. 471). Darkness allows light to be seen and to be manifested essentially. Excessive light kills the light, and excessive darkness kills the darkness. To perceive the world, both light and darkness must be simultaneously present. Presence and absence of light and darkness are interrelated; they make each other weak and strong.

Ando believes in the strength of darkness and claims that in modern Japanese culture the "sense of the depth and richness of darkness" is lost (Ando, 1990b, p. 458). Therefore, he tries to present the vigour of light in his architecture (Fig. 3). For example, in the case of "Church of the Light," "The worshipper becomes aware not of the walls themselves but of the light and its movement as the day passes, not the walls themselves" (Russel, 1999).

This enthusiasm for things and their essence makes

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Ando sensitive about technology. He resists abundant technology and states that he intends to go beyond it to highlight spiritual and poetic aspects of a building. As he puts it, "What I always have in mind is not a life of abundance made possible by technology but a life of abundance that transcends technology, a life of abundance that allows for heterogeneity" (Ando, 1995, p. 170). Going beyond the technological nihilism of the epoch implies standing "outside the constant threat of commodification" (Frampton, 1995a) and releasing the imagination from mediocrity and the masses. In this regard, Pallasmaa points out that Ando's work represents the poetry of ascetics, of concentration and reduction, which today is an important counter to the architecture of abundance and irresponsible "freedom" (Pallasmaa, 2005).

Taking all the above-mentioned statements into account, one can say that as Taki remarks, Ando is a builder rather than an architect. "I think of Tadao Ando as a builder rather than an architect…. At a moment when "architects" are increasingly devoting themselves to superficial decoration, the appellation "builder" may be read as a term of praise" (Taki, 1984, p. 11). Thus, Ando's architecture appears highly related to tectonics. According to Frampton who has written on the difference between tectonics and scenography, tectonics intends to show the poetics of construction, the ontological aspects of building. In this regard, Frampton believes that Ando's architecture is rooted in a "tectonic transformation of our being through space and time" (Frampton, 1991, p. 21) and understands his works against the scenographic revetment of any kind. This character is essentially based on Ando's personality as an independent architect, and also on his attempt to discover and present the essence of things, their thingness.

Theme 4: Place, Enclosed Domain and Genius Loci

Ando states that the world is not a homogenously articulated space; it basically consists of "topoi" in concrete spaces. These "topoi" are in fact heterogeneously articulated entities, and this variety is related deeply to history, culture, climate, topography, and urbanity. This approach is obviously opposed to Newtonian physics, as Ando puts it: "A "place" is not the absolute space of Newtonian physics, that is, a universal space, but a space with meaningful directionality and a heterogeneous density…" (Ando, 1988a, p. 453).

Ando, like most of the phenomenologists, gives priority to "place". According to him, the very nature of architecture and its ultimate aim is the creation of place.

He says that "Architecture is not simply the manipulation of forms. I believe it is also the construction of space and, above all, the construction of a "place" that serves as the foundation for space" (Ando, 1990a, p. 457). This notion is reminiscent of the idea of Heidegger in "Building Dwelling Thinking" where by presenting an etymological study on "Raum" (space), he states that "Spaces receive their being from locations and not from "space"" (Heidegger, 1993b, p. 356).

In this way, Ando stresses the place-making task of architecture and considers it to be the foundation of space. "My aim is to struggle first with the site and thereby get a vision of the architecture as a distinct place" (Ando, 1990a, p. 457). A distinct place is an established place by which space is originated.

In this sense, architecture creates an enclosed domain. The enclosed domain is actually a parallel action to the construction of place. To construct a place, it is necessary to delineate a distinct domain, an enclosure that denotes an interiority while preserving its links to the exterior. "Architecture ought to be seen as a closed, articulated domain that nevertheless maintains a distinct relationship with its surroundings" (Ando, 1990a, p. 457). Domains, as Norberg-Schulz (1979) shows, denote existential space and play an important role in "the language of architecture". Moreover, as Frampton argues, in the current ubiquitous placelessness of the modern environment, a "bounded domain" could propose a resistance against that dilemma, so that "the condition of 'dwelling' and hence ultimately of 'being' can only take place in a domain that is clearly bounded" (Frampton, 2002a, p. 85). This bounded domain prepares a true place, weakens general placelessness, and leads to critical regionalism.

Fig. 4. Concrete walls to create enclosed domain, Seminar House, Weil am Rhein (Source: the author)

To create enclosed domains, Ando uses thick concrete walls. By means of these walls, he is able to create an enclosure that gives the individual a private realm in the dullness of the environment. "The primary significance of enclosure is the creation of a place for oneself, an individual zone, within society" (Ando, 1977a, p. 444). This individual zone, which is separated from the cruel urban surroundings, must possess a satisfying interior. Phillip Drew interprets Ando's house as a cosmos against the chaos. He says that "The house resembles our own world, a cosmos, outside of which is chaos. This notion is fundamental to Ando's architecture. The Japanese city is a disorderly territory; it represents chaos, in contrast to the house which signifies a centred cosmic world…. Ando's houses found the world by their geometry, by being cantered, and by the use of light. The thick concrete walls keep out the chaos of the city…. In essence what Ando is saying through the medium of his architecture is that humans cannot live in chaos; architecture therefore has a responsibility to create an ordered world… To create a centre is to build a world. In doing so we establish the necessary pre-conditions for dwelling" (Drew, 1999).

As a true domain, we can allude to the courtyard in Ando's works as a device for the "internalization of the exterior" (Taki, 1984, p. 12). They provide an authentic interiority, a microcosm, in which all the natural phenomena participate. A courtyard brings the outside into the inside. It lets the natural phenomena come into the interior and thus awakens man to the changing character of nature. A courtyard may seem to be a void, but it is "a void in which all things are inherent" (Takeyama, 1995, p. 487).

As Ando puts it, "The courtyard is an important place where seasonal changes can be directly perceived through the senses. The expression of nature changes constantly. Sunlight, wind and rain affect the senses and give variety to life. Architecture in this way becomes a medium by which man comes into contact with nature" (Ando, 1995, p. 449). Thus, a courtyard brings natural phenomena close to us, makes direct contact possible, creates interconnections between inside and outside, and establishes a microcosm in which natural and man-made phenomena are manifested and revealed forever.

To establish an enclosed domain and thus disclose the essence of place, an architect has to listen to the demand of the given land. To catch the distinct fields of forces within the site, it is necessary to be open to them, to attempt to perceive them. Ando finds the very question of architecture to be how to respond to the demands of the land (1990a). In other words, the land, imbued with its hidden and implicit forces, demands something. It is not a passive entity, but an active one. It proposes and introduces. It talks to us, tells stories, and invites us to be a good listener. A good listener is someone who tries to perceive the voices of the land by being open and ready to perceive. In this way, the true task of an architect is "discovering the architecture which the site itself is seeking" (Ando, 1991c, p. 461).

Obviously, Ando's attention to the demand of the land is rooted in his attention to the place as an *a priori*. He gives priority to place, rather than space, and the given site which is a text with intrinsic and latent powers and potentialities that must be read and considered by the architecture. Therefore, an architect "must begin with a careful reading of the character of the given place, and an accurate interpretation of the relationships woven between the many forces there" (Ando, 1993d, p. 51). In this connection, Ando pays attention to the capabilities intrinsic to each site, and "reads all of these elements with the utmost care- configurations of the project area, context within the surroundings, cultural tradition of each locale, climatic conditions and natural features- then interprets his perceptions of those capabilities into abstract forms" (Kobayashi, 1991, p. 135).

One of the examples to which Ando refers as a true response to the appeal of the site is the Abbey Church at Senanque made by Cistersian monks. He explains that it was their special belief that made them search for a proper site for their monastery. According to him, that land was so suited for a sacred architecture that "one even wonders if it were not the desire of the land for the building of a monastery that brought them there" (Ando, 1993b, p.24). In other words, it was the land itself that desired that kind of building and they just responded to the demand of the land by means of being open to it and listening to the voice of the site.

This approach to place and land is incorporated into the concept of "genius loci", what Ando understands it as a streaming power, which gives resounding voice to a place.[1] He remarks that "genius loci" is an ever-changing entity: "Genius loci never remains still. It is ever changing its whereabouts. It alters its course. The manner of its movement, then, informs a place and gives it character. It transforms and renews a place" (Ando, 1992d, p. 100). To fix the moving genius loci in a land, we need to make architecture. Architecture gives form to the genius loci and concretizes it by raising stone pillars, erecting shrines, and constructing sacred buildings. In this way, the genius loci is manifested and embodied.

According to Ando, Modernist architecture neglected the genius loci and escaped from the land. However, he mentions that regaining what has been lost is not merely

reproducing stylistic and formal archetypes. He never intends to return to the land and history, but to awaken us to the land and history.

"I use architecture to restart the variant movement of genius loci and set it loose. Infused with this movement, the sterile discord between the universal and the regional, between the historical and the contemporary, vanishes. And from place there is a ceaseless outflowing of new life" (Ibid., p.102).

ANDO'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONCERNS: ORIGIN & INFLUENCE

The above-mentioned thematic analysis shows that Ando's architectural thought has fundamental themes that are central to the "phenomenological discourse" in both philosophy and architecture. This similarity comprises a broad range from philosophical themes such as body, thing, space, experience, movement, subject, and object to architectural issues like walls, posts, stairs, and openings. Table 1 presents an overview to the central phenomenological concerns, which appear in Ando's architectural reflections and their relationship to different phenomenologists, form philosophers to architectural theorists.

Table 1. Relationship between Ando's phenomenological concerns and phenomneologists (Source: the author)

Ando's Phenomenological Concerns	Phenomenologists
Shintai, union of subject and object	Husserl, Merleau-Ponty
Movement of body	Merleau-Ponty (perspectival perception)
Body at the centre	Merleau-Ponty
Directionality of the body	Heidegger (de-distancing)
Contribution of all the senses in perception	Pallasmaa (multi-sensory architecture)
Expressing regional and cultural potentiality	Frampton (Critical Regionalism)
Culture against universalization	Frampton (culture against civilization)
Priority of place to space	Heidegger (Raum against extensio)
Architecture as enclosed domain	Norberg-Schulz (language of architecture) & Frampton (bounded domain)
Genius Loci	Norberg-Schulz (Genius Loci)
Demonstrating poetics of construction	Frampton (Tectonics)

As can be seen in the table, similarities are recognizable. However, the origin of these similarities has to be investigated and explored. In the following discussion the possible reasons behind these similarities, the origin of Ando's phenomenological thinking, and his sources of inspiration are investigated.

1. Ando rarely refers to any philosopher, theoretician or scholar in his texts. In a conversation with Michael Auping in 1998, he states that

"What I have been thinking about lately is that many of the best architectural concepts could relate closely to the ideas of Martin Heidegger. I was reading a Norwegian architecture critic recently, Christian Norberg-Schulz, and he seems to think the same thing. Heidegger suggests that what architecture is about is creating a living space; a space that opens the imagination of who is in it" (Ando, 2002b, p.39).[2]

This statement shows that Ando has realized the importance of Heidegger in contemporary architectural discourse, but it is not clear whether he has read his books or not. On the other hand, he states that he has read Norberg-Schulz and has found him similar to Heidegger. Kate Nesbitt has a similar opinion and mentions that "While Ando's vocabulary draws upon phenomenological notions, he does not often refer specifically to this philosophical tradition. One can surmise that he is familiar with Christian Norberg-Schulz and Kenneth Frampton's writings on Heidegger and architecture" (Nesbitt, 1996, p.456). In brief, although one cannot say for sure that Ando has read Heidegger directly, it is obvious that he is familiar with his ideas through Norberg-Schulz, who is fundamentally influenced by Heidegger.

Referring to Ando's phenomenological thought, presented in his texts and works prior to 1990s, denotes

that the origin of Ando's phenomenological concerns is not limited to reading the phenomenological texts of Heidegger and Norberg-Schulz. The case of Frampton is more helpful in this direction. Frampton has written about Ando's architecture extensively (Frampton, 1984, 1989, 1991, 1995a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003). At the time he was advancing his concept of "Critical Regionalism" in the 1980s, he concentrated on Ando's writings and buildings and understood his architecture as a good example for his theory. He invited Ando to teach in the design studio at Yale University and had a close relationship with him. It is safe to say that Frampton played a very important role in introducing Ando and his architecture to the world. On the other hand, Ando has also acknowledged studying Frampton's writings (Ando, 2002a). Thus, it becomes obvious that Ando has been in direct contact with Frampton since the 1980s, and has been affected by him as a source of motivation and support.

However, there is evidence to Ando's attention to phenomenologists before Heidegger, Norberg-Schulz, and Frampton. In an earlier essay entitled "A Wedge in Circumstances" (originally published in 1977) he refers to Gaston Bachelard indirectly and states that "It may be true – as Gaston Bachelard says – that all architecture has a basically poetic structure and that the fundamental structure of spaces cannot be given a physical manifestation" (Ando, 1977, p.444). This remark implies that Ando has presumably been familiar with Bachelard, a phenomenologist whose ideas on space and house have influenced architectural discourse. But it is not clear whether Ando has read him deeply or has read about him somewhere else. In brief, it can be said that Ando has been somehow familiar with the "phenomenological discourse," but this is not the main or the only reason for his phenomenological concerns.

2. Another reason that enters Ando into the "phenomenological discourse" is his "phenomenological manner". By "phenomenological manner" I mean Ando's character, personality, and method in dealing with his surrounding and architectural issues. As we know, Ando is a self-educated architect who has learned architecture through the direct and physical experiencing of buildings. His teachers were buildings and his device of education was his "body" and "physicality." Direct and immediate experience of the works of architecture, being open to the environment, and establishing an intuitive relationship with things are in fact fundamental matters in the phenomenological approach to things. Therefore, Ando's method of life, growth and education has granted him a "phenomenological manner" concerning reading, perceiving, and interpreting things.

3. Ando is influenced strongly by Eastern/Japanese culture, and his architecture appears deeply Japanese. This "Japaneseness" implies that he is essentially rooted in Japanese tradition and culture. Japaneseness draws Ando's thinking on architecture near to phenomenological discourse through two issues: nature and architecture.

The Japanese way of understanding and perceiving nature is based on "letting it be as itself." As Rudolf (1995) explains, the Japanese word for nature, "Shizen", does not allow any instrumental intervention and cannot be perceived as the source of raw materials. "Shi" means itself and "Zen" means to be so. Therefore, Schizen means "to be as it is from itself" (Heidegger, 1996, p.35). This understanding of nature which necessitates empathy with natural elements appears very close to the term "phenomenology" "to let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself" (Heidegger, 1996, p.35). Nature is understood phenomenologically and appears essentially "phenomenal." Thus, the Japanese understanding of nature stands against the Western Modern understanding of nature as the source of energy and raw material, and denotes to the similarity between Japanese thought and the phenomenological approach. Obviously, Ando's attention to natural elements such as water, wind, earth, light, etc. implies a phenomenological attitude towards nature, and introducing them into the body of a building is one of his primary goals.[3]

On the other hand, Ando's deep attention to traditional Japanese architecture – which as he stresses is alive in his mind unconsciously (Ando, 1984) – and experiencing it directly manifests itself in his deep attention to fundamental architectural elements such as walls, posts, stairs, and openings. He thinks about these elements profoundly and presents them in his architecture in a poetic and tectonic rather than a scenographic way. Therefore, Ando's concern about nature and natural elements, and his interest in architectural elements and tectonics, which necessitates poetical construction, both denote Ando's phenomenological approach to nature and architecture.

CONCLUSION

A thematic analysis of Tadao Ando's architectural reflections shows that the way he formulates his approach to nature and the built environment has considerable similarities and commonalities with the way philosophical and architectural phenomenologists perceive the world. In other words, there exists recognizable "phenomenological concerns" in his reflections, which make him a potential phenomenologist. However, there

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is no clear-cut evidence to support the argument that his phenomenological approach is very intentional, derived from his systematic contemplation and endeavour with regard to phenomenology. To explore the origin of this fact, possible arguments were discussed. Ando's rare references to philosophical phenomenologists seem to be due to his familiarity with the works of architectural phenomenologists such as Norberg-Schulz and Frampton, rather than the original works of the philosophers. Moreover, Ando's phenomenological concerns are rooted in his "phenomenological manner" on the one hand, that is, his personality and the way he perceived the world, and his "Japaneseness" on the other, that is, the Japanese way of understanding nature and the built environment.

In brief, it can be concluded that although Ando never establishes a systematic way of phenomenology in architecture, his attitude towards architecture and architectural matters, for example his attention to place, body, Genius Loci, and direct experience on one side, and his resistance against standardization, universalization, superficial postmodernism, and excessive technology on the other, invite him into the "realm of phenomenological discourse" in architecture.

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ENDNOTES

1. Since "Genius Loci" is an old Western term employed and elaborated by Norberg-Schulz, one may say that Ando is directly influenced by him through reading his books. In fact, Ando's explanation on Genius Loci is deeply similar to Norberg-Schulz's understanding of this concept.

2. It is hard to attribute this statement to Heidegger, because he does not talk explicitly about the "living space" and "imagination" in this sense. It is likely Ando's understanding of him if he has read Heidegger directly, or more likely his understanding of Heidegger through Norberg-Schulz.

3. Although Ando does not believe in "nature-as-is," but in changed architecturalized nature; this "change" does not mean reducing nature or natural elements to mere instruments. By means of an architecturalization of nature he intends to prepare a condition in which "nature" or "natural elements" can be perceived as "phenomena." In other words, he lets them be seen as they are to show their true essence and thingness.