ON THE SKETCH: THE MAKING OF AN IDEAL LIBRARY

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ABSTRACT

for it is the same, to think as it is to be.

Parmenides, fragment 3

These pages are a presentation of an architectural activity. It is the activity of the architectural sketch. By architectural sketch, I mean free hand drawing. Primarily, this is a presentation of the sketch as a generator of form and idea. With intent to clarify this activity, this way of thinking and working, there are also several short essays on the sketch. These essays will discuss certain aspects of the sketch which are intellectually intriguing (food for thought) and relevant to the fundamental question: what is it to sketch? A few supplementary questions posited at this point will help direct the viewing (IA) of the sketches and also serve as a background for the subsequent discussion.

1) Of what importance is the sketch?
2) What is the activity of the sketch?
3) How does the sketch differ from other ways of drawing?
4) What is the relationship between drawing and seeing? and thinking?
5) What is revealed (unconcealed) in the sketch?
6) Is there an aesthetics of the sketch?

Secondly, this is an architectural project, a masters thesis. It is a library project for an academic environment. Inherent in the sketches is a movement of form and idea (εἶδος). This movement in the sketches lead to the architectural pieces which become the library. The question then becomes how to order the pieces, how to situate them with respect to one another. Through a study of geometry, proportion, and regulating lines the pieces are brought together into a rational order, that is, made intelligible to the mind. This ordering elevates the pieces which have been formed by the sketch to another level. A series of studies on regulating lines will be presented as well as some hard-line drawings of the pieces and the library.
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1 - Sketching as an activity...

The activity of sketching is something other than a “quick caricature” or quick study. It is not a frivolous or cavalier activity, an “easy off the cuff” way of drawing. Rather, the sketch is a slow, thoughtful endeavor, a patient and subtle search. It is a “subterranean” mining of hidden truths. It is a careful activity, full of care for the subject, for the eye, the hand and the mind. As an exercise it is a difficult, daily participation with the purpose of merging the eye with the hand and that with the mind and one’s inner imagination. The activity of sketching is a way of thinking, a way of meditating on and mediating between the image in the mind and the bounding of the image on the site of the page and the bringing of the image into the light of knowing. The image, object or thing, is not known until it has been possessed by the eye and the hand, carved out upon the page and made known to the mind. This is a re-cognition, a re-membering of the re-mind. Through the sketch, the image becomes two things; the one, the image in the mind in front of the inner eye or the object in front of the outer eye, and the other, the image on the page. The activity has been doubled and expanded. The mind then must confront the two realities. With the recognition of the two realities one must enter into a dialogue or a dialectic with the two interpretations of the real. The subsequent questioning of reality begins a new search for the object and the image. The real must confront the real. Through (Δια) this conflict, a new search and a new knowledge must be called into being with the activity of the sketch.

These series of sketches are a coming into being of particular architectural pieces. They are made known through the activity of sketching. The pieces slowly flow into known forms. The ideas began to know themselves. The ideas as images take on their own life and their own reality.
2 - **Towards an interpretation of reality...**

One possible way of understanding the activity of the sketch is to differentiate between the drawing of objects which exist independently of the mind, and the drawing of ideas or forms in the mind. The *a priori* objects point to one aspect of reality. These objects could be buildings, bottles, watches, tables, chairs, etc... One virtue in drawing *a priori* forms is that one can work on the representation of the thing through the act of mimesis. One is obliged to work on the correct representation of the object through the practice of coordinating the eye and the hand. Inevitably though, there is a difference between the object and the resulting sketch. There have become two things: the object and the drawing of the object. In the drawing of the object, the found object has in a sense been remade. What is presented in the sketch is primarily a way of seeing, that is, what is particular and internal to the way of viewing the subject matter. Thus, there is a representation of the object on the page mediated by the sketch. A way of seeing is not immediate and it cannot be communicated at first try. It has to be developed with passion, enthusiasm and clarity.

The particularity and interiority present in the sketch points to a reality of the intangible, a reality of the inner world, in distinction from the reality of the tangible, material object. [In this sense the activity of the sketch becomes clearly different to that of the photograph.] This difference becomes more evident when one is trying to work with ideas from the mind and images which are being called into being. The sketch is a tool to graphically present the imaginative world and the forms in the mind. The eye turns inward and surveys the inscape and the forms in the imagination. In the sketch the hand calls the idea into form and brings it into the light of being, where it can be developed. In this form, the idea on the page can be more fully known and comprehended.
The notion of reality as a given reality is questioned in the sketch. One of the
traditions of western thought is that the IDEAS or FORMS (εἶδος) are the more “real
things” and they are behind the perception (ὁσθεσίς) of reality by the eye. What we
as perceivers take to be reality are in truth the shadows on the wall of the cave which
we live in. We take the shadows to be real, more real in fact than the good (τὸ ἀγαθόν)
which is the cause of the shadow’s presence. Plato’s metaphor of the cave initiates the
thinker into a fundamental questioning of reality and the nature of things. This question
underlies the human experience that imagines a difference between what is and what
seems to be. This experience is prerequisite for the thinker, the believer, or the artist.
This experience of this difference implies a μετά or a beyond the perception (ὁσθεσίς).

The sketch calls into question the nature of perception and the perception of
reality. An interpretation of reality which favors the pre-eminence of idea could argue
that the reality depicted in the sketch is of a higher order than the built project developed
from the conceptual sketch. Is something lost, some aspect of ideal reality, when the
sketch submits to the tyranny of the hardline? Is something lost to the exactness of
scale and dimension as a quality of measurement? The line quality changes from an
elusive, animated and oscillating quality to the cold precision and definitiveness of
bricks, concrete, steel and other real materials. Are bricks more “real” than ideas?
Matter more “real” than spirit? Certainly both can be argued to be primary and
fundamental, but in the sketch, there seems to be inherent in the activity a trace of the
ideal and an emphasis on the reality of spirit and flight over the reality of matter and
gravity. In the sketch, the ideas can float and move about freely, unhindered by scale,
dimension and the site of the page. An architecture of spirit, of idea and form (εἶδος)
is by nature metaphysical. The sketch is an activity that is particularly suited to a
meta-physical architecture, an architecture that points beyond the physical.
3 - Sketching as a dialectic...

Sketching is by nature a questioning. It is a patient search for form. It is a questioning of reality, a questioning of self, a search for form in self. In the activity of sketching one enters into a dialogue with self and the form in self. This is similar to what in the Greek is a διά λόγος. Διά is the Greek for through or by and λόγος is the telling or the speaking of the word, so διαλέγονται is the telling or speaking through of thought (λόγος) by itself and for itself. The predominant western philosophical models of the διαλέγονται is the Socratic dialogue and the Hegelian dialectic.

The Socratic sense is to converse with, have a conversation, and through argument and discussion to discriminate truths. In the Socratic dialogue the truth of a given statement is always called into question, it is always problematic, never complete or fully known. The only statement which is always true, and thus necessitates a given fundamental awareness, is that one is ignorant and incomplete. Analogously, a truth may appear to come into being, but it is never free of the critical eye.
In the sketch, given truths are presented from the eye to the hand. Through the pen, the idea is worked on, delineated and formed. The forms in the sketch merge with other forms, trans—form and become new ideas, never fully limited to one thing. The inner syntax of the lines on the page are challenged and questioned as to their validity and worth. As the ideas and forms become more solidified, so too does the search for continuity in the sketch. One sketch always leads to another. The joy of the activity is enough to sustain it ad infinitum.

In the Hegelian model of dialectic, an idea (thesis) is presented and then worked on with the dual presentation of its opposite, it's antithesis. Through the opposition and conflict one encounters in a thesis/antithesis model, one is lead to a larger, more profound truth or idea, and this in Hegelian terms is the syn—thesis. Analogously, in the sketch there is a “process” of additive knowledge in which the forms inform the eye as to what can be discarded and what has been transformed into a new thing, a new idea. This new idea (syn—thesis) can lead to a new awareness, specifically an internal awareness or consciousness, or in other words a new way of seeing. (The realm of the interior, via Hegel, takes on new and profound importance. Hegel’s movement of the Absolute Idea implies a relationship between external forms of knowledge and interior forms of expression. When knowledge or consciousness is timebound, there is a direct correspondence between form and content.)
Whereas in the Socratic model one is left only with the external knowledge and realization of one's own ignorance and perpetual state of "not-knowing", the Hegelian dialectical model offers a different view of knowledge. In the Hegelian model there is a process which is linear through time and in which truths are arrived at in a successive order, by developing older truths and discarding weaker views. The Socratic model leaves one in a perpetual state of inquiry in which knowledge is post-poned or deferred indefinitely. The Hegelian model gives one the illusion of having reached a quantitative state of being, but in which knowledge is perpetually coming to be. [Both views have an interesting mixture of Parmenidean permanence of Being and Heraclitean permanence of change and flux, or the coming into being (Παντά ρέει -All flows). The Heraclitean view emphasizes the realm of φύσις, literally the continual state of emergence in the realm of nature. The Parmenidean view emphasizes the μετά-φύσις or the permanence beyond emergence.]

In my view both the Socratic and Hegelian perspective is alive in the sketch. The sketch is a speaking or telling through of the form present in the self. Successive sketches show and remind one of the incomplete and inadequate aspect of the rendering of idea in visible form. Successive sketches also point to a process in which one can end the search and period of questioning and then solidify and finalize the idea into hardline reality, the reality of matter, weight, and gravity. In the sketch there is present an interesting dialogue between the age old play of becoming and being. This play between the coming to be and the presence of being can be viewed as a dialectic.
"...to think is to form ideas..." 4

"Every motion of the hand in every one of it's works carries itself through the element of thinking, every bearing of the hand bears itself in that element. All the work of the hand is rooted in thinking." 5

WHAT IS CALLED THINKING? - Martin Heidegger
A fundamental motivation and direction is the desire to learn to think. This is not only a desire to know, but also a desire to participate in the efforts and traditions of western culture and its relatedness to thinking. This is as true for architecture as it is for philosophy. One of the latest great thinkers to write on thinking is Martin Heidegger. In Building, Dwelling, Thinking, Heidegger implies that it is difficult if not impossible to think about thinking itself. One can only think about things, that is, ideas, traditions, columns, stairs, etc... In other words, one can think about things which have names. In this particular sense Heidegger has importance for architecture because he attempts to address the questions: How does one think? and What does one think about? In a series of lectures titled What Is Called Thinking?, Heidegger addresses these questions and others. Heidegger wants to locate and examine a tradition of metaphysical thinking, in the West, that has existed from Parmenides and Heraclitus, through Plato and Aristotle, on through to whom he calls “the West’s last thinker” Nietzsche. Central to Heidegger’s quest is what the Western tradition has been called upon to think about and what calls upon the thinking being to think. In the course of the lectures, Heidegger locates the ground of Western thinking. He quotes a specific Parmenides fragment that best exemplifies this ground. This fragment is the beginning of fragment #6. He re-translates this piece for special insight into what the origin of thinking could have been for the Western tradition. This is the thought in the original:

χρή το λέγειν τε νοεῖν τι ἐδόν ἐμῖμεναι

The key to understanding Heidegger’s thought is to follow his translation of λέγειν and νοεῖν. On the most basic level these words are translated as the stating or the telling (λόγος) and the thinking (νοέω).
A literal translation would be:

"Useful is the letting-lie-before-us, so the taking-to-heart, too; beings in Being."

Thus, Heidegger’s final reading of voetiv, is a “taking-to-heart”. Thus the fragment, as a ground for the calling of thinking in the Western tradition, is translated as:

The letting-lie-before-us is a quality which admits the presence of what is and the what is before us. The taking-to-heart is reminding us to bring the what is before us into ourselves, and then be mindful of this relatedness.

It is the realization of presence, so central to the Greek experience, presence of beings in Being which call for the thinking and the stating that it is so. Being calls us into thought and what is to be thought about is the being in Being.
In the sketch one has to visualize, form, and imagine with the pen. This imagining and thinking with the pen leads to a perception of what is, that is, what is present. This what is, is the what is on the page. This what is on the page, is what is visible and what is perceived. Through the visible relation between thought (νοεῖν) and form (ἐἶδος) comes into being. What is visible (perceived) is what is thought, and this is what has been formed with the pen. The relation between thought and form is elusive and intangible, but in the sketch this relationship becomes immediate. The sketch not only “illustrates” ones thoughts, but helps one to know what one is thinking. The sketch actually is the thought. One works on the images in the imagination through the thinking with the pen and the forming of the sketch. The sketch becomes the readable trace of the mind.

Possibly the relation between thought and form is what is studied in a history and theory of art and architecture. That there could be a relatedness between the thought of a time and the art forms of a time seems fundamental to any attempt to understand or comprehend a work of art. In history and theory we attempt to know this intangible relation between thought and form. In the sketch we can immediately perceive this relatedness. The relation between thought and form is what is present in a sketch, and this is what one can experience in the activity of sketching, or the thinking with the pen.
5- **Sketching as an aesthetic...**

Who can fail to be fascinated by the Ancient Greeks—...in philosophy and mathematics, their passion and enthusiasm for clarity, truth and reason?...in architecture, their clear and distinct forms, for clear and distinct ideas, ideals...their temples for the prescencing of the ideal, the gods and the laws. It is as if at especially this time in the history of culture, a people was actually able to distill its’ most important ideas and thought into the built forms of architecture...
Again, this question of the relation between thought and form which seems so crucial to the understanding of the sketch. It was stated that it is in the what is present and visible that the thought is perceived. This perception is crucial. If it is not perceived, it is hidden, concealed, missed...indeed the relation between thought and form is forgotten, unseen, unnoticed. But what is this relation? Is it through sketching (the thinking with the pen) that thought and form are unconcealed, that is, brought into the light? In the light of the page, in the light of what is visible, perception becomes possible. What is perception?

In the Greek perception is αἰσθησις. Specifically, perception by the senses, mainly the ear or the eye. What is to be perceived? Quite literally the sensible realm, the realm of sense perception. How is one supposed to perceive the sensible realm? For a possible answer to this question let's look at a possible derivation of αἰσθησις. The first part "Αἰσ" is from the root ΑἴΩ which means to perceive by the ear or the eye, to listen or to see. This is the world of raw, unadorned sense. The second part of the word begins to tell us something about the senses. The root of the second part is θης or θητικός. This word refers to a servant, or someone that performs menial tasks for hire. So quite literally, something is held to serve the ears and the eyes. Service is done to the senses or the senses are held to do service. What is interesting is that together the notion of the senses (the ear and the eye), checked or bound by some notion of service, joins together to form the word for perception. This points to the possibility of there being some kind of law or rule to order the experience of the raw, sensible world. So, αἰσθησις becomes the ordering of the sensible through perception. In fact, the Greek language has the relationship inherent in the roots of the words. The root of θης and θητικός is the primary root ΘΕ. This root means literally the settler, or to settle. It is the root of Theseus, the settler of Athens.
Literally, Theseus settled Athens by establishing boundaries and by laying down positions and laws. In other words, he brought order to the raw, natural site. The most important Greek verb with the root ΘΕ is the verb τίθημι. This verb means to setup, or to place or position. Along with τίθημι, θέσις and θέμις come from the root ΘΕ. θέσις is the setting and placing of a position, the establishing of a point of view, or literally of a bounded site. Thus θέσις is the establishing of a position, or the setting up of a foundation. It is a starting place from which one can walk, step, and take up a position. Likewise θέμις is literally that which is laid down, established by custom, the laws and ordinances of a city (πόλις). θέμις is also the goddess of law and order. It is the relation between the root ΘΕ, θέσις and θέμις with θής, which begins to shine light on what αίσθησις might be. Perception that is governed by laws of order. The sensible world is made sense of through the establishing of a position, or a location in the flux; the setting up of a point of view, the positioning of a place from whence one can step and walk. This is a making of a boundary, the making of a way of seeing things, a way of thinking. This setting up of a position establishes a link between what is visible on the page (the form —εἰδος) and what is thought (λέγειν and νοείν). This is one of the possible roles of the sketch. The thinking with the pen can be that of an ordering of the sensible realm with the intent of establishing a position with regards to the relation between what is thought and what is formed. This is the link between the hand and the eye, and the head, or quite literally a perception with order, an aesthetic. The activity of sketching not only develops the eye and the hand, it also is an establishment or foundation of an aesthetic experience, or the foundation of an internal aesthetic. This realm of the interior is not only a poetic activity (ποείς), an activity of making and generation, but the interior is also an intellectual creation, the making of the interior with a purpose (τέλος) or an end in mind.

This towards sketching as an aesthetic...
6 - **The sketch as the body and the spirit**...

The pre-eminence of the interior as a genuine and valid phenomena worth contemplation and study is really a modern concept, via Hegel. Hegel wanted to ground the aesthetic judgment as an objective science through the subsequent movement of the Absolute Spirit. In this way art and the aesthetic judgment could be rescued from the subjectivity implied by Kant in his *Critique of Judgement*. The realm of the interior and the expression of the interior (poetry, art, and music) was elevated to the higher planes already occupied by Religion and Philosophy. Ever since Hegel, the role of the artist as a giver of form and order, as a shaper of world-consciousness, has been equal to and in some respects greater than the role of the scientists and the priests. The interior world seems to have been thoroughly explored by philosophers (Kierkegaard, Bachelard, Nietzsche), literary artists (Joyce, Proust, Woolf), psychologists (Freud, Jung, Weber) as well as poets and painters (Rilke and Rothko) to name only a few.
The possibilities of the interior in the individual have been the focus of the artists in the last century, or so it seems to be. It is second nature for us to accept the right of free expression of the individual and the validity of one's interiority. Interesting to me is the fact that although there is all this expression of the interior there seems to have been a crisis of the modern concept of spirit or soul. As we have looked inside, on the interior, the intangible has continually eluded us.
The Ancient concepts are fairly clear. There is ψυκή — or breath, the blowing breath of the God. There is πνεῦμα — or breath, the life of the soul. And in the Latin there is spiritus — the breath of inspiration, possibly from the Muse. The etymology of the Greek and Latin definitively implies respiration and breathing, and thus a curious relationship between the interior world and the exterior world. We respire, seek to be inspired, and in the end, expire. All forms of spirit, or the breath that in the primordial beginning enlivens the inert clay. The realization of man as a being of respiration and possible inspiration puts us in a unique place. This spiritus is something we can receive, possibly work in service of, ( θεραπεύω ) and is something that we can lose. It seems it is the spirit which enlivens us and animates us. These concepts of anima and spiritus, or πνεῦμα and ψυκή are central to the sketch. The sketch is the animating principle which can be endowed with the breath of form and idea. The sketch as idea can then enliven the inert mass of ordinary building materials with form and spirit. The flickering, oscillating line quality in the sketch implies something alive and breathing, something yet to submit to rigor mortis and the tyranny of the hardline. This insistence on the anima of the sketch can be seen in various images in the sketches. The image of the mask, the horned mask or face, the serpent, the caduceus, and the vine signify the world of the stage and of the theater. It also points to the world of the animal, the beast, and the sometimes hidden, submerged world of the labyrinth and the minotaur. Man is situated between the realm of the beasts and the Gods. He has the ability or disability to entertain both realms, to descend or ascend in body and in mind.

The language of the Ancient Greek recognizes this. θεός and θεα are both god and goddess. θεός means to issue from the divine. Conversely, θηρός is the wild beast and θηρίον is the savage or wild beast. The verb, θηρίζω means to hunt or to chase, specifically the wild beast. Between the realm of θεός and θηρός, is the realm of θεοί, except, for the breathing marks barely distinguishable from θεα.
This is the realm of seeing, looking at and beholding. This is the stage, the Theater, the place for action and activity on the platform of the Earth, in the amphitheater situated between land and sky. This is the world of man as a stage. Θεότος means to be seen, the θέατρον is a place for seeing. Likewise, from the same root, θεόμαι means to look at, view and behold and θεωρα is a beholding or viewing or an activity called speculation. Θεωρος is the spectator or the one that is doing the viewing. This is the realm of man, situated between the earth and sky, between the gods and the beasts. His activity in this realm is to act out, speculate, theorize, and contemplate on his curious location. His acting out includes the activity of building and making, of thinking and doing. It is the viewing and the beholding, the bearing witness to that which issues from the divine (θεος), that best occupies man’s attention and inspiration.

And it is this which nurtures and sustains.

The activity of sketching is a way of setting up (θεσις) a theater (θεατρον) for the viewing (θεωρεω) of the god (θεος), or in this case, one’s thinking with the pen. This in turn is submitted to the service of the perception by the senses, or one’s internal aesthetic.

This internal aesthetic becomes embodied in the sketch and is the tangible, perceptible evidence of the relationship between interior thought and exterior form.
GLOSSARY OF GREEK TERMS
FROM LIDDELL & SCOTT'S GREEK LEXICON

αἴσθησις - perception by the senses
θέω - service, menial labor
θεωρον - truth, unconcealed, remembered
ηθελεα (λογοθέλεω) - forgotten, unseen, missed
εὐθεος - full of god, inspired, possessed
εὐθυνοστικος - to be inspired or possessed by a god
θεος - god, divine
θεα - goddess
θεω - more than human, wondrous, issuing from the divine
θεοτοκος - to be seen
θεοτοκον - a place for seeing
θεοποιον - to look on, view, behold
θεοποιος - beholding, looking at, viewing
θεοποιησις - spectator
θεοποιησις - to look at, view, behold,
( speculation)
θεοποιησις - to do service to the Gods
θεοποιησις - tending, nurturing, care (therapy)
θησεω - to suckle, or suck a breast
θησεις - the breast
θησεις - of the mother, of the suckled breast
θησεις - to hunt or chase wild beasts
θησεις - a wild animal or beast
θησεις - wild beast
θησεις - to set, put, place or position
θεοποιησις - a setting, placing, arranging of a position or situation
θεοποιησις - purpose, end, — with will or intent
θεοποιησις - the word, or that by which inward

FOOTNOTES


APPENDIX:

There are two intertwined interests which have been studied independently of the architectural sketch. They serve the purpose of furthering the architectural pieces exhibited in the sketch. The one is derived from a desire to understand the visual complexity of planar drawings which show ancient Greek and Roman sites as found by archaeological excavations. Examples of this kind of visual vitality can be seen in such sites as Delphi, the Acropolis at Athens, and Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli. A study of Doxiadis', *Architectural Space in Ancient Greece* provides some clues towards a rational understanding of how the Greeks laid out a site and used rational number, proportion and measurement to bring order, clarity and intelligibility to the visual world. Doxiadis' analysis shows a kind of regulating line which can be understood to bring beauty and order to the numerous pieces at their given locations.

Examples: the Athenian Acropolis, the temple to Delphi at Miletus, and the site at Samos.
One can change the scale from the large site to the smaller house and visualize analogous efforts at regulation in such architects as Le Corbusier and G. Terragni, to name only two. One could look at the Villa Stein and the Danteum for instance. A more interesting example might be Carlos Scarpa's Ottolenghi House. At first look the plan seems barely intelligible. Further analysis reveals a curious ordering behind the relation of the columns, their concentric and eccentric diameters, their proportion and distance apart from each other, and the placement, widths and lengths of the main and secondary walls. A drawing of the regulating lines alone show a highly intelligible order behind the apparent flux of the free form plan.

These examples have inspired and directed the ordering of the architectural pieces exhibited in the sketch. The question becomes: Given clear and distinct pieces, how best to order and situate them with respect to one another? The pieces and their lines of regulation come together to form a site, an invented site; and through this they form an ideal academic institution for both the rememberance and the furthering of humanity.
Glass block stairs
Cone and spiral stair study
Axonometric
The vita has been removed from the scanned document