Between DANIEL LIBESKIND’S Lines
Reflecting on the design process of Jewish Museum in Berlin
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Introduction

Adventure of architecture is best discovered through the challenge of doing it, but this adventure can be learnt by looking at what other architects have done, and through reflecting on others works the methods they have applied to meet the challenges will be understood. (Unwin, S. 2003). Thus, as part of our course, reflecting on architectural design, and for demonstrating different ways of response, this essay will mainly try to reflect and evaluate Daniel Libeskind’s architectural response to the concept during his design process of Jewish Museum in Berlin. However, for reflecting and analysing one’s work, examining and understating of the roots is essential. Therefore, initially his methodology and background on design process will be briefly studied, then the different methods that he has adopted or even created for responding to this specific project, Jewish Museum, will be appraised.

Figure 1: Jewish Museum Model
NOEVER, P (1991)
1-Roots:

"Visual thinking is particularly relevant at design stage which is also the stage in which an architect make the most significant impact" (BRAWNE, 2003)

1-1 Hand drawings:

There are various types of architectural drawings that can be produced by hand or by help of technology. And they could be learned our adopted by several architects, but only those of them with originality can become remarkable.

Two kinds of hand drawing that were produced by Daniel Libeskind are Micromegas and Chamberworks. The first type, Micromegas, has been developed from his interest in geometric (Figure 2, left), which could be reflected as a blueprint of his work. On the other hand, Chamberworks, can be considered as collaboration between music and architecture, (Figure 2, right), he has always attempted to bring different elements from music to his way of doing architecture. In my opinion Daniel Libeskind drawing has their own specific character which makes them significantly distinguished from others. His drawing reveals information not only...
about the way he thinks about the nature of spatial architecture, but also his own character and background.

1-2 Three Lessons in Architecture:

Early in his career, when he was a principal teacher at the Cranbrook Academy School of Architecture, Daniel Libeskind introduced his theory “Three Lessons in Architecture”: Reading, Remembering and Writing Architecture, for these three he created three machines as well. Figure 4, demonstrates the diagram he has drawn to show the relationship between his machines and the time during design process.

Although his idea and talent to create such a machines and diagram is appreciable, in my opinion his diagram cannot consider as a comprehensive guide to show architectural process as it suffer from the lack of considering other critical aspect of architecture such as site, client, users and etc. The other matter with his theory is, this diagram seems to be easy and readable, however, it is difficult to understand and examine it. In other words, it is only applicable by its own creator.
2- Between the Lines

Architects are conventionally identified not so much by the problem they challenge as by types of solutions they produce for it, and this is their creative and practical response to the different tasks that distinguished them from others. There are several aspects in response process of Jewish Museum in Berlin that attracts interest. However, response can be categories to the different parts in various methods, and there is no precise agenda to pursue. This essay tries to divide it into different sequences according to time passing in the project.

2-1- Getting Involve with the Project:

Jewish museum for Daniel Libeskind; or as he called it between the lines; was not a case to discover or a building he had to do study; rather, from start he was implicated with the project. According to Libeskind (2001)” the whole project is between two main lines of thinking, organization and relationship. One is a straight line but broken into many fragments, the other is a tortuous line but continuing indefinitely”.

2-2-Understanding the Site:

although the site of this project was located in the old-new centre of Berlin, near famous Kollegienkaus building, it is the memories and event that happened in the past time in this city’s atmosphere that give the site both critical and essential value. The board around this site, more than being physical is mental; the site is part of today and past together. Respect and response to the site, are necessary rules that help the design to embed in the site perfectly. In a time of putting the zigzag plan of museum (broken star) into the site, it is not the concept that orders what should
happen to the site but it is only one simple element of the site; a solo tree; that turned one wing of this zigzag plan. (Figure 5)

2-3-Thinking Process: Concepts

One part of the design process, undoubtedly, is thinking process which Led to narrative. Libeskind believes that the building needs a story. The story for this building is formed from four main concepts: An invisible and irrational star, Unfinished Moses and Aaron opera, departed or missing Berliners, "One Way street", a book from Walter Benjamin, and to tell his story in architectural language he made his own alphabet. They are series of signs, and each of them represents an idea or a concept (Figure 6).
2-3-Being Creative and Effective

Creative introduction to the idea: it is really essential for the architects to influence their client, and to clearly demonstrate the concept behind their design. Among his four concepts, as Libeskind connection with music has always been obvious in his works and drawings (Chamberworks), the most interesting is the unfinished opera of Moses and Aaron. He attempts to complete this opera, but this time as an architectural building. Therefore, for attending the competition he submitted his proposal on a music paper, creative and also effective way to demonstrate his concept.

Figure 7: competition proposal written on a music paper
LIBESKIND, D (2001)
3- Making models:

Architectural models are made in numerous ways, material, and scale to represent different ideas. Like the drawing they can be done by hand or by utilizing digital technology. The major benefit of making models is that they are potentially rich source of information. As there is no written line between response and make, in here these models are representing as a part of architectural response during the design process.

3-1-Physical Model: Site Model

![Figure 8: Jewish museum site model](image)

NOEVER, P (1991)

It is more an abstraction of the actual building in the context; the museum is further highlighted here by the use of a different clean and bright material against more brooding context. In the aerial view the model and selected elements of the site start to look like a constructivist painting...
In addition, this type of model can help to understand other information such as museum relationship with other buildings, the car and pedestrian access, circulation and views. (Figure 8)

3-2- Physical model: concept

As long as I consider, Libeskind models have been steadily been model models, consequently, this models are made to show the concept rather than showing a building they are meant to represented. In Jewish museum competition, his winning model was on a base wrapped in printing paper full of the name of holocaust victims (Figure 9).
3-3-Digital Model and Film: Circulation and concept

Digital models are beneficial tools for architect to demonstrate their design, as in Museum project there are three underground axes; each of them has the unlike story and end to the different place. Although they seem to be detached elements from outside, from inside they all are linked together by hidden network of connections. The point is, as they are below the surface, the only way to show their circulation and concept is to use digital model, and by making a film, their concept can be understood more efficiently:

Like the legendary tails only one of these three paths leads to another space, the longest one. This main path end up to the stairs which goes up to the third floor and museum area this long path here has no function but being a passage. (Figure 10, No. 1) The two other roads are exhibition areas, but each leads to different space at the end. The second path leads to the black door and holocaust tower, which is a dead end, with blank walls, and light that can come only
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from skylight at top. (Figure 10 No. 2) The last road reaches to the outdoor and to the exile garden which represents the emigration of Jew from Germany. (Figure 10 No. 3)

3-4-Physical Model: Cheeking an Idea

This model is made to test and also demonstrate the idea for the "Exile Garden". The concept of this garden is to show that the escape and finding happiness in anywhere else is illusion. Liner pillar that should represent the tree and hanging gardens of Babylon, however, are tipped to make visitors unbalanced. Figure 11 demonstrate how the perfect square and pillar on it has been tipped down to make a double slope to achieve the concept.

Figure 11: Jewish Museum Model
Le Musée Juif de Berlin (2002)
4- Three Final Points

**Considering Time**: in my point of view, design process as in it nature is time taking. However, one question that needs to be answered is: When do architect really find the end for solving their design problem? According to Lawson (2006) “There is no natural end to the design process. Designers simply stop designing either when they run out of time or when, in their judgment, it is not worth pursuing the matter further.”

**Circular Process**: In my opinion we should consider the process of the design as a round route, it is not direct practice. It cannot develop from putting our ideas on a piece of paper and working on it. Rather, one idea should be tried, worked, revised and reviewed coming back again and again, to the same point. In Jewish museum of Berlin, this cycle is obviously clear in Daniel Libeskind design process, every element of design, is linked together, that it seem there is no end or beginning for it.

**BeingReadable**: We always see the final constructed building, but the process behind it, the method and thoughts are always hidden somewhere in the actual building. Therefore, the design should itself have the ability to communicate with people, especially with the user of the building. In Jewish museum, several thoughts and ideas are used, although they all serve one concept, it not always easy to understand the meaning beyond all of this signs and symbols. For instance, no one could recognize that the angled windows are derived lines from the city map which link homes of prominent Jewish families to the museum; detailed clarification is unavoidable.
5-Bibliography:

- Le Musée Juif de Berlin – Entre les lings. (2002). [DVD]. Directed by Stan Neumann,