

Research paper on etienne louis boullée

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Annotated Bibliography on Boullée'

Boullée & visionary architecture ed. Helen Rosenau, Pub. Harmony Books, New York, 1976 ISBN 0-85670-157-2.

In her seminal book, Rosenau concentrates on how Boullée' managed to create a cult which dealt exclusively with his passion for ontological designs. She delves deep into the artistic styles which make up the larger part of Boullée's work and his intrinsic influence on other architects which followed him. More importantly she uses the great classicist and philosopher's ideas as sources of inspiration, especially Immanuel Kant and Plato comparing their treatises on humanism to Boullée's grand concepts and inspirational ideals. Although the link between philosophy and architecture is more or less debatable, Rosenau does come up with a large number of interesting arguments regarding form and structure especially when these are compared to the ideals of Heidegger.

In Chapter 3 ' The Primitive Hut' p 60, Rosenau also delves into another classicist philosopher, Vitruvius who speaks about the importance of architectural design in society especially from the early beginnings. This debate is arguably quite radical although Boullée's architectural style does hark back to those far off days. It is indeed a seminal book in more ways than one and is probably the only authoritative piece on the architect which is readily available.

Boullée's Treatise on Architecture by Étienne-Louis Boullée, ed. by Helen Rosenau, pub. Alec Tiranti, Ltd. London: 1953 First Edition

Boullée's own work ' Treatise on Architecture' which was translated by Rosenau continues to demonstrate the grand and overtly expressive nature

of his work. He delves deep into the concept of grand architectural design especially in his description of the Cenotaph in Honour of Isaac Newton which was conceived on an enormous scale and was probably not even doable as an architectural concept. Boullée' continues to come up with grand architectural schemes such as the aforementioned Cenotaph and the Hotel Alexandre which is the sole surviving example of his work which still stands. Boullée' explains his geometric schemes in this grandish work which was left unpublished until 1953.

Etienne Louis Boullée' – Entry in Encyclopedia Britannica

This is a biographical article which focuses on Boullée's life and his initial wish to become a painter then turning to architecture according to his father's wishes. The article argues that although his Neoclassical works and theories achieved considerable standing at the time, he was actually much more influential as a teacher having taught for over 50 years with great architects such as: A.-T. Brongniart, J.-F.-T. Chalgrin, J.-N.-L. Durand, A.-F. Peyre, and L.-M. Thibault, taught by him. The article also describes Boullée's thoughts about past and classic architecture such as Egyptian pyramids, Greek temples and huge mausoleums in the forms of cenotaphs which encompassed his designs for public buildings.

Middleton Robert; Boullée' and the Exotic Source: AA Files, No. 19 (Spring 1990), pp. 35-49, Published by: Architectural Association School of Architecture, Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29543683>. Accessed: 17/03/2013 02: 18

In this excellent article, Middleton focuses on the grand and lofty manner of Boullée's designs especially with regard to the commissions by the Royal

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Family and the Church for grand and patriotic celebrations. There are also numerous artistic impressions of Boullée's grand designs especially those for a cathedral which are truly stunning and intrinsically very much in line with his lofty vision for classic architecture. The grand designs and extraordinary luxury in which the French aristocracy and clerical orders lived is also described in great detail as well as their expectations in this regard.

Emil Kaufmann; Étienne-Louis Boullée; Source: The Art Bulletin, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Sep., 1939), pp. 213-227, Published by: College Art Association, Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3046639>, Accessed: 11/03/2013 01: 39

In this article Kaufmann argues that ' the rise of the new system is also apparent in the work of Etienne-Louis Boullée'. Kaufmann explains that in his important treatise on architecture, Boullée's emphasised the new principle which made up the architectural prowess of the 19th century that is the isolation of the parts. However the author does not concentrate solely on this but rather focuses on the metamorphosis of forms which made the architectural system change accordingly. He states that Boullée is significant as marking the first conscious employment of the new forms.

Etienne Louis Boullée'

The thesis for this paper is to compare several grand architectural designs which are extant today or which are no longer with us and how these all fit the bill when actually compared to Boullée's grand styles and visions.

Amongst the works chosen are The Temple of Athena, the Colosseum in Rome and the Villa Lantes in Spain. All these seem to conform exactly to Boullée's grand vision of neo classical architecture and are prime examples

that his art is alive and well both as an example of past styles as well as a forerunner for the future.

Architectural examples:

Greek and Roman architecture have similar traits between them but they are also different in many ways. Perhaps the finest examples of architecture in this sense are the Colosseum in Rome and the Temple of Athena in Greece. Each has a distinct style which brings together the natural characteristics of both works with the Greek focused mainly on Doric columns and a certain mysticism. The Colosseum on the other hand is a huge structure with considerable prowess and the capacity to thrill. The public buildings all had their ways and means to attract people but they were largely the focus of other stories in the sense that they attracted a certain level of people to their fold. This was exactly what Boullée' espoused in his grand designs for Cenotaphs and hotels and his extensive use of columns and similarly grand halls conform exactly to the idea of public buildings

The Temple of Athena (427-424 BCE)

The Temple of Athena is probably the most beautiful and most important piece of architecture built in Ancient Greece. With its vast network of columns and arches, the temple comes across as extremely powerful and wonderful in more ways than one. It also personifies the Greek's love of Athena who was the Goddess of Love and who would always be at the centre of their activity.

The temple is built with a typical Doric structure in mind and has the finest features of Greek architecture in it. Principally it is a rather dominant style

with a strong and mindful outset and full of little nooks and crannies which personify its beauty. The material used is also consonant with what used to be used in those days with large structures, material such as marble and graphite. The temple is also full of strikingly original features such as sliding columns and intricate design on its frontage.

However the Temple of Athena remains most famous for its striking location and beauty. Its sheer size is also an important issue when discussing it aesthetically as it also means that the temple appealed very well to those who wanted to come up with a vision of grandeur and greatness. This also meant that the architectural style was rarefied and original demonstrating that art can be huge and enormous but also pretty powerful too.

Finally the Temple of Athena is a beautiful example of sculpture and architecture in its finest form with rarefied beauty being the first aspect of all this design. The Greek architectural firmament was undoubtedly addressed by this issue in more ways than one and the Temple of Athena is a living example of all that.

The Colosseum

The Colosseum is a gigantic theatre with an original design basically a three dimensional form of art. It contains several innovative techniques for those times which includes the fact the audience seats are in a sliding format. The materials used vary from normal stone to graphite with several different characteristics combining together to form one real whole.

The Colosseum was intrinsically used for the vast Roman games where gladiators and other exhibits would fight often to the death in the arena which often ended up reeking and strewn with blood and victim's carcasses.

Seeing it today, one would not actually appreciate the noise that it made in its heyday with the elliptical shape of the theatre amplifying the sound in many ways.

The theatre represented the power of Rome which actually the dominant empire at the time. This was brought about principally by its location in central Rome but it also formed part of a series of architectural monuments which were located in the same part of the Roman city centre. In its own way, the Colosseum demonstrated power and tyranny as well as the factor of grandeur which was used several times and actually milked by famous emperors such as Nero and Trajan.

Finally the functionality of the Colosseum remains intrinsically one of theatre projection and in this sense it succeeded magnificently. The combination of vast spaces with packed audiences must have been quite an experience for all those who were in the theatre experiencing the gory bloodshed and the games in their own way. It is truly a brilliant example of architectural functionality at its brilliant best.

Here one can observe a similarity between the Colosseum and Boullée's grand designs especially the Grand Theatre. The awning edifice is actually part and parcel of Boullée's inspirational doings especially when one compares the rising tiers for the audience with the Colosseum's own imposing superstructure.

The Villa Lante

The Villa Lante demonstrates an incredible understanding of topography and how this affects the intrinsic design of any villa accordingly. One can appreciate certain features such as the Fountain, the River Gods and the

Water Chain which demonstrate the capabilities of the architectural designer who also brought about considerable change in what he managed to achieve. The whole complex as regards the Villa Lante demonstrates that everything can be achieved with some imagination and this is most definitely the case here. Yet again one can compare this with Boullée's grand designs for gardens which are prevalent

The architectural features which are prominently described include a whole stretch of designs such as Fountain Candles, the Fountain of Moors as well as Casini on either side of the gardens. On the right, there is a hunting park, Pegasus, other fountains in woods, maze, whole complex is the Villa Lante-recognized as quintessential form of using golden section and iconography, underlying predicate, proportioning system not part of golden section 1: 2, 2: 3, Ren-square, circle pure forms, golden rectangle, doesn't show up in overtly triangles. The Villa Lante is an excellent example of design which is functional yet also very beautiful as it brings out the main characteristics of the building but also provides ample space for roaming about in its wide and extensive gardens.

In fact Boullée saw the possibility of achieving the "tableau expressif" in the highest degree when he could include surrounding nature in his composition. Thus he set about designing a building for the celebration of Corpus Christi on the heights of Mont Valerien or Mont martre, high above the city. Scented gardens were to enframe it; tree-bordered roads were

Reconnaissance Publique set in beautiful natural surroundings which would enhance the

architecture: " Oui, je ne saurois trop le repeter, l'architecte doit etre le metteur en oeuvre

de la nature" (folio 84). Newton's cenotaph was to be set in the midst of flower beds and

cypresses (folio 1 26). All this demonstrates that Boullée' was indeed on the same wavelength as the architects of the Ville lantes with its grand designs and manner and its extensive gardens.

The Tower of Alhambra in Madrid

This is a fortified palace which was completely rebuilt by Charles X and is the last remaining extant Islamic structure/garden in Spain and is very much popular with visitors. It is situated on roughly 35 acres of hilltop and was initially conceived by Calif Muhammed and there are several famous sections in it dating from 1248 or roughly the middle of the 13th century

Amongst the most famous aspects of this topographical design is the Court of myrtles, reception area, step, reflection pool-layers, bilaterally symmetrical, alternating layers of dark and light, with mirador, beautiful surface texture, interior, caligraphic-script, poetry and other factors also permeate the view

One also should look out for Asaleiho, tile work, geometric or floral type motifs. Again this building is a striking example of classic design brought very much into the 21st century with its avante garde styles and reaching out to other cultures. One could almost say that this actually resembles the

Cenotaph conceived for Isaac Newton which was essentially one of the tour de forces of Boullée's designs and concepts.

Tower of Camares

In the Court of the Lions one can observe the main fountain, layer of light and dark in this climate important because of striking sun, relief from sun, incredible reading of textures, water reaching into other rooms, direction and order

Additionally one can also observe the Tower of Ladies which is a harem-place for women, most innermost, most protecting, opportunities to view out into landscape -connected by doors, not axis.

As regards the Generalife-summer garden, C. M. Viliers-Stuart wrote in the early 20th century, that this colored Western thought as all paradise although it is not a good conceptual explanation of garden, proportions one must look at the plan and describe using vocabulary

The Garden Carpet-division of garden in parts, can read garden in plan form, diagram of charhar bagh, strong central axis, often pavilion on axis, with water feature, many change grade, pomegranated, peach, roses, pear, fruiting trees, edged or bordered by other vegetable, clover turf to bring bees, entire thing scented, seasonal, gardens built by rulers as a statement of their extent/power, urban gardens.

Jardin de Monceau was laid out between 1773 and 1778 for the young Due de Chartres (later Philippe Egalite, Due d'Orleans), by Louis Carrogis de Carmontelle. De Carmontelle's beginnings were humble; he had started as Louis Carrogis and had served as a draughtsman in the Due d'Orleans's regiment. He had moved from there to the Due d'Orleans's household,

becoming tutor to his son, the Due de Chartres. Carmontelle proved himself an invaluable entertainer. He drew profile portraits of everyone of note who visited the family. Over five hundred of these portraits survive and they are full of incredible vitality and an almost expressive naughtiness. The vast expanse of the garden here once again compares well to Boullée's concept of paradise as envisaged in his monument to Corpus Christi.

Conclusion:

All these monuments and buildings demonstrate the art of expansive form and its change can revolutionise thought and direction. Etienne Louis Boullée' was a prime thinker and teacher and his harking back to the influence of the classic architectural principles of past masters is crucially important for all to understand. Boullée's designs may perhaps have been unworkable and were too grand to achieve success but his ideas live on and they are essentially still alive today in several buildings which attempt to achieve the grand manner whilst at the same time harking back to the past.

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