

Permanence and Literary Practices: The Letters of Jacques-François Blondel

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The expression *oeuvres complètes* appeared in France towards the last quarter of the Eighteenth Century.¹ "Complete works" were assembled by the author and essentially different from a form already popular in England, designated as 'collected works' and usually gathered by an editor. Publishers worked towards the consecration of a writer, but the author was often excluded from the enterprise. *Oeuvres complètes* were realized during the last stages of the author's creative life. The construction of a coherent whole was an attempt to recapture the personality of the writer through a fresh look at the work. These '*oeuvres complètes*' aimed at representing, a man, his soul, his history and the creative act as a totality with an essential order. Because it presented a final image, the idea of '*oeuvres complètes*' presumed on the completion of the work of the writer. Similar to a funeral the ritual was intended to build for the author a tomb, a monument to posterity.²

L'homme du monde éclairé par les arts, a small provocative treatise with autobiographical and libertine tones written by Jacques-François Blondel, will be the focus of this study. This important text is often overlooked; yet its form, the time of its publication and its divergence from previous works shed a new light on a corpus of treatises that for years was the keystone of the doctrine of the Academy. Taking as reference the idea of *oeuvres complètes* in literary works and looking at the birth of the couple author-oeuvre in both literature and architecture I would like to suggest a reading of *L'homme...* focused on elements such as style, form, autobiographical character. This study will attempt to assess aspects which signaled the start of profound change in architectural writing practices.

At the end of the eighteenth century the editor's task became more anonymous and collective, and strict rules were established for author's rights, publisher-author relations, and copyrights.³ This established the author as an individual, with the status of a 'reasonable being', a creative power, and a project. Scientific works became more anonymous but the literary author appeared as a new character.⁴

In a project dated back to 1757, Rousseau presented the general edition of his works as "his body"⁵. He never spoke about "diverse works", or "complete works" but about the "*Édition générale de mes écrits*."⁶ Rousseau wrote that the edition was both complete and unpublished before.⁷ As a final and precisely organized version of his writings, the project was oriented towards posterity.⁸ More than memoirs, the Confessions were written as the history of a soul. Meant to reestablish the authenticity of his ideas, this *Édition Générale* was to become a posthumous memorial of his thoughts in the light of his life.

Between 1774 and 1781, Diderot expressed his desire to constitute a "complete collection" (*recueil complet*) of his published or unpublished works.⁹ In letters to Falconet,¹⁰ he wrote that although he wanted to constitute a corpus with clear limits, this ensemble would be open to different genres: articles, minor pieces destined to the *Correspondance littéraire*, etc. He revised, edited and included all his writings, even the work on the *Encyclopédie* although it was a collective enterprise. In 1780, as his health was ailing, Diderot started copying two similar collections, one for Catherine II and the other for his heirs. Envisioned not only as a collection of works but

also as a portrait, this manuscript collection was not destined to be published in his lifetime to avoid the constraints of censorship.¹¹ Liberated from decency and conventions, it was the freer substitute to a published collection. This complete ensemble was a "testament de mort" destined to a restricted audience; as for publication, Diderot relied on the future, his friends and posterity.¹²

A Professor

Jacques-François Blondel lived his formative years through the end of the Rocaille, and his career spans between the last period of the rococo and the beginnings of neo-classicism.¹³ His first treatise *De la distribution des maisons de plaisance*¹⁴ was published in 1737-38.¹⁵ *Architecture française*¹⁶ was published between 1752 and 1756, the *Livre nouveau*...¹⁷ in 1767, and the *Cours d'architecture* between 1771 and 1774.¹⁸ *L'homme du monde éclairé par les arts*¹⁹ was published posthumously by Jean-François de Bastide in 1774, the year of Blondel's, death.

Blondel was convinced of the necessity of a theory founded on the study of "belles-lettres", mathematics, and drawing, and his career was devoted to theory and teaching more than professional practice. Blondel was a great theoretician of distribution, who tried to preserve and at the same time innovate on the classical tradition. Concerned for the contemporary teaching of architecture that he judged inadequate, he opened a private *cours* in the *rue de la Harpe* in 1739. The *École des Arts*²⁰ was an immediate success and became public in 1743, (that is officially recognized by the *Académie Royale d'Architecture*²¹). After 1754 In 1755, he was appointed Professor at the *Académie* and started a reform of the teaching of architecture.²² France owes him the first 'academic body of doctrines'²³ that Blondel taught for almost half a century at the *École des Arts*, the *Académie*, then the *École des Ponts et Chaussée*.

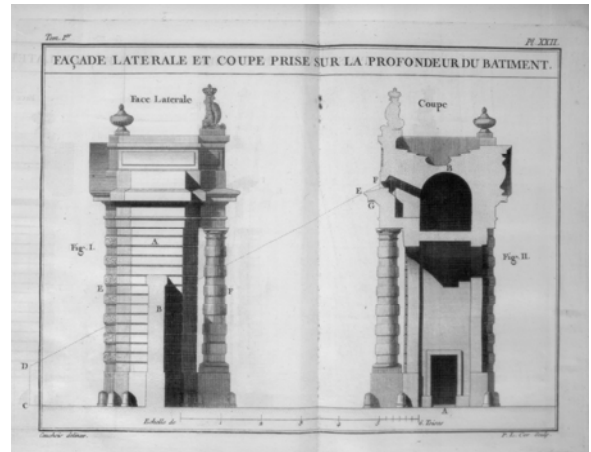


Fig. 1. Architecture Française.

Blondel understood the importance of a theoretical reflection. He defined his theory over the years with some hesitations, but presented his treatises as an inseparable body of work to be assessed as a whole. The plates Blondel engraved when he contributed to Jean Mariette's *Architecture Française*²⁴ reveal an indulgence for the *rocaille*. The influence of the rococo is still felt in the *Distribution...*, but it is corrected and severely criticized in *Architecture Française*.²⁵ The object of *Architecture française* -conceived as a new edition of Mariette- was stated in the title, it was intended to be an answer to Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus*.²⁶ Like his contemporary Boffrand,²⁷ Blondel affirmed the necessity to observe *convenance* and give to every building a character corresponding to its use. More than ten years later Blondel published the *Livre nouveau* a book in pure rococo tradition, then in the *Cours*, he condemned superfluous ornaments. Finally in his last work, *L'homme...*, Blondel mellowed his earlier intransigence towards the *rocaille*.

Blondel's theory was first articulated in the *Distribution...*, then further developed in *Architecture française...*, but the *Cours d'Architecture* and *L'homme du monde éclairé par les Arts* allowed him to recap, redirect and update ideas developed in earlier works, yet reveal another image of himself.



Fig. 2 *Livre Nouveau*

A Course

Blondel was a great lecturer and the *Cours* came directly from his teaching. By presenting the *Cours* as the redaction of notes taken by one of his students in the lectures he was giving twenty years ago, Blondel avoided censorship and did not have to solicit the imprimatur of the *Académie*. Blondel undertook the publication of his lessons because he was aware that the copies that students made of his lectures were hardly readable: gaps interrupted the connection between lessons and mistakes in the texts and in the figures made for imperfect manuscripts.²⁸ Blondel had agreed to make the work public, yet he urged his editor to disregard anything concerning him personally and that might displease his peers. He composed the lessons when he was still young and could afford to be enthusiastic, but at the time of the publication he was changed by age and recognized the danger of this enthusiasm.

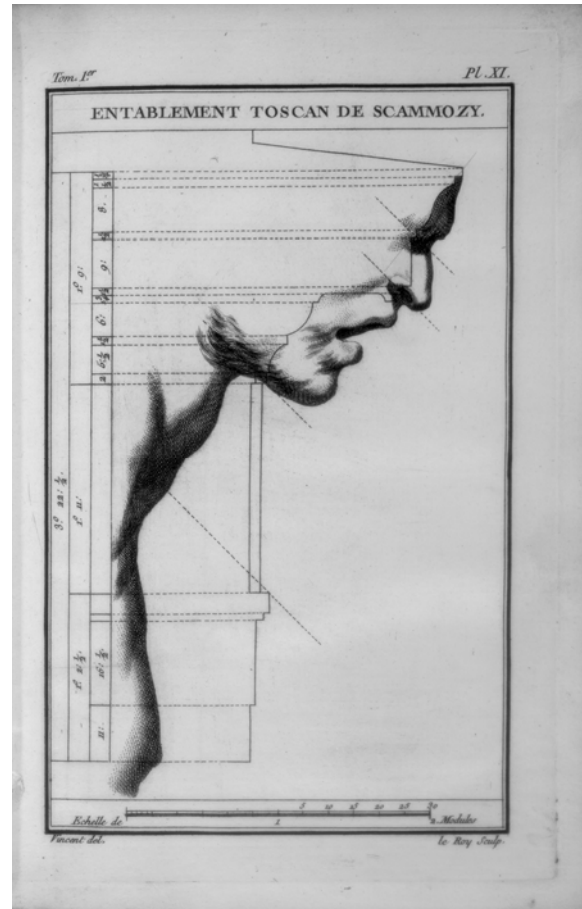


Fig. 3 *Cours d'architecture*.

In the *Cours* Blondel edited theories he developed, and taught over the years and that had reached their final stage. Although it still conformed to the classical doctrine the *Cours* already contained the seeds of the questioning of a tradition that Blondel had vigorously advocated in the past. Blondel maintained the distinction between theory and practice already enunciated in the *Discours...* without opposing them. He emphasized the necessary relation between critique and project. For him good architectural apprenticeship consisted of learning to go from one to the other. Blondel reflected on the irreversibility of the architectural act.²⁹ Of all the artists, the architect was the only one who couldn't retrace his path. Writers could still correct their work in a second edition; architects were alone to judge their work before execution but seldom got a second opportunity to correct mistakes.³⁰ First opportunities were scarce for architects, and Blondel was conscious that many worthy architects finished their careers without ever

being awarded a commission that would establish their names.³¹ It was only at fifty years old, thanks to his talent as a professor and the reputation he acquired through his publications, that Blondel himself could express his talent as a builder.³²

In the article "*architecture*" Blondel contributed for the *Encyclopédie*, he stated that many Greek architects wrote on architecture yet no treatise survived, and Latin authors were in a similar situation. Although it was reported that he had around seven hundred contemporaries, Vitruvius survived as the only architect of antiquity because he was the only one who left written precepts that were perpetuated through time.³³

Architecture was a work derived from Mariette's and drawing heavily on other authors. Indeed several treatises entitled *Cours d'Architecture* already existed, yet Blondel presented the *Cours* as a "new enterprise." He put his work at the end of the lineage of Perrault, Dairan, Frézier, Boffrand, Brizeux, and D'Aviler. Emphasizing the importance of illustrations Blondel compared his treatise to Vitruvius', observing that The Ten Books seemed obscure to its commentators because most of the plates accompanying the text were lost. In the *Cours* the plates were supposed to clarify Blondel's ideas and eliminate any ambiguity for future interpreters.

So far, in all cultures the description of ancient buildings was the task of historians, Blondel wrote, yet most of them ignored both the "principles and taste"³⁴ of architecture, and were unable to communicate the genius of the artist. Thus it was imperative for architects to write their own history. When architects didn't write, they left their work to the interpretation of the uninitiated, and for Blondel the problems resided in authors who left only buildings because the built form left to following generations too much freedom of interpretation. The problem was even more acute when different architects worked successively on a single building.

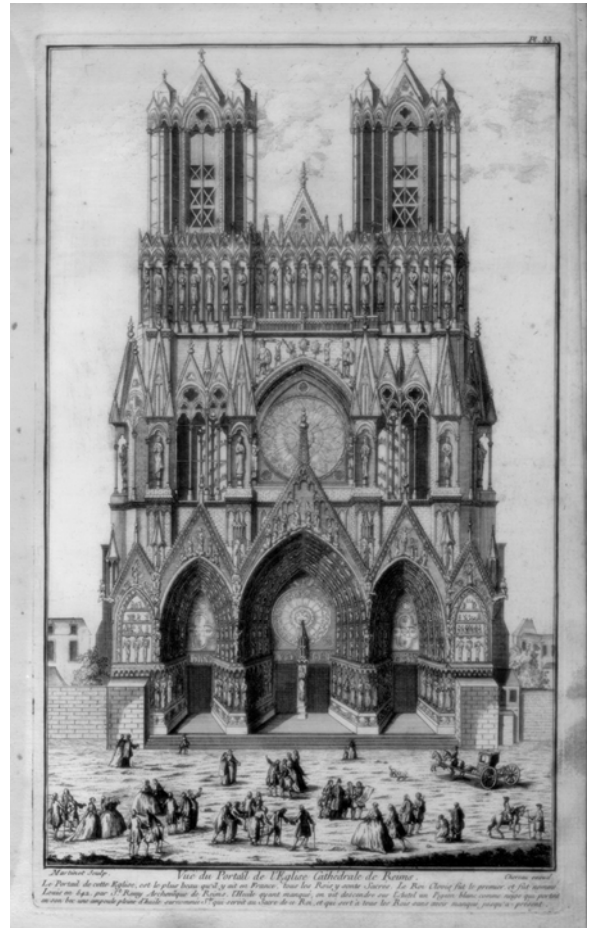


Fig. 4 *Cours d'architecture*

At the end of his life Blondel was only too aware of students' ingratitude and the little recognition that professors reaped. He reflected on the difficulties of teaching the '*bon goût*', communicating ideas and having them perpetuated, and being understood as a thinker and a professor. The *Cours* translates Blondel's deep concern for the way his ideas would survive either through his writings or his students.

A Lover

The birth of the epistolary novel dates back to the late 1660s but in the 1770s the roman par lettres represented a true revolution in French literature. Although first developed by the English,³⁵ the epistolary form was considered to be part of the French genius. As a powerful

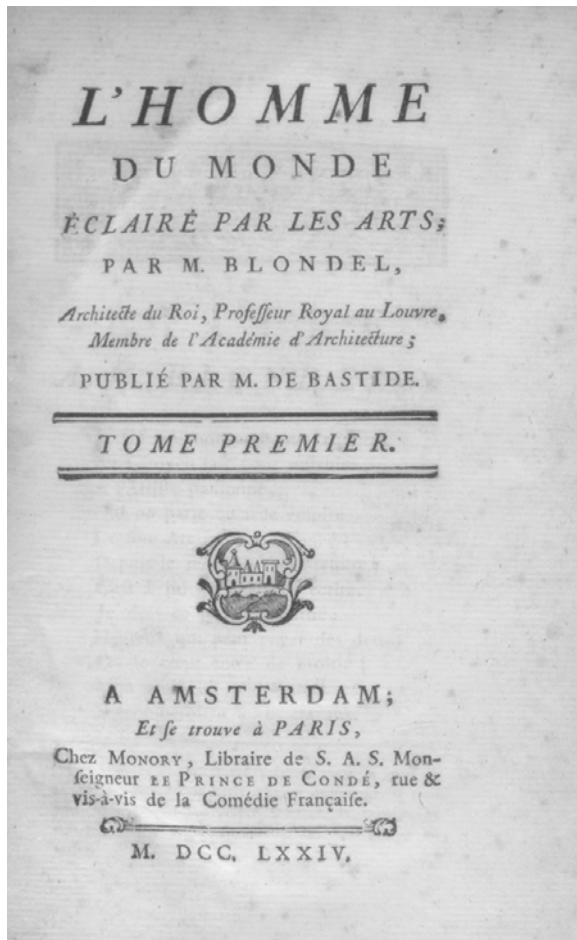


Fig 5: *L'homme...* Frontispiece.

manifestation of militant philosophy the public letter was essential to the Enlightenment and it became philosopher's favorite weapon. Rousseau and Voltaire adopted the letter form for both political and social critiques and the epistolary novel was never simply autobiographical or philosophical. Since letters were never officially public even when destined to publication, the epistolary form created a fiction of the private.³⁶ The letter was an intimate form of communication, yet its fictional aspect entitled to more freedom.

In his last years Blondel wrote an epistolary novel that was published posthumously; *L'homme du monde éclairé par les arts*, in which an amateur -not an architect- comments for his lady friend past and contemporary architecture. It reads as a discussion on the "bon goût" and originated in Blondel's conviction of the necessity to educate the public, especially patrons, to the values of a

French classicism as embodied by the works of François Mansard and Ange-Jacques Gabriel.

The epistolary form had already been used for architectural treatises by Michel de Frémin³⁷ and Viel de Saint Maux³⁸ among others. The letters in *L'homme* are radically different in essence from Viel's letters. Blondel tried to distinguish his book from other epistolary or libertine novels and in the Preface he deplored the fact that the public was avidly reading novels, without criticism and discernment. He presented his novel as an honest and useful work about a man of quality united by taste to a charming woman of the same rank, yet the work has a more intimate and personal tone. The plot revolves around a love intrigue that develops along the letters between the *comte de Saleran*, the *comtesse de Vaujeu*. The count has the widest knowledge, the countess is avid to learn. The Comte de Saleran and the Comtesse de Vaujeu start a correspondence, were the count is supposed to enlighten his friend on the arts. A steady correspondence unites sound ideas to tender feelings, gratitude for lessons given and the pleasure of learning. The countess is engaged to the Prince de***, but in a letter she admits to the Comte that she no longer loves her fiancé and soon they both confess their feelings for each other.

L'Homme was published before *Dangerous Liaisons*³⁹, but the epistolary form, the intrigue and the sub-plots are very much in the taste of the late eighteenth century. The novel draws a love triangle in an Aristocratic milieu and depicts an everyday life where personal self is opposed to public persona. Lovers are not only preoccupied by their love; tutorials on the arts as well as concerns for feelings shape the intrigue. Besides the intimate situations and the spontaneous expression of feelings, the correspondence includes critical and satirical comments on French architecture and thoughtful dissertations on the arts. In Rousseau's *Julie* the characters are readers of literary works; thus letters are often dissertations and include numerous quotations. In Blondel's novel the characters are the spectators of architectural works. Blondel quoted himself in numerous letters: Saleran recommends the reading of Briseux, Boffrand, and D'Aviler, but he insists on *Distribution*, *Architecture française*, and above all the *Cours*.

In this intrigue, architecture and the arts, or rather the idea of teaching them play a determining role. The main character is first a pedagogue who unveils for his friend the secrets of architecture and rejoices at his student's progress. The tutorial is also a literary seduction, and as it progresses Saleran is transformed with every letter. From lover he becomes a pedagogue reflecting on the state of contemporary arts and architecture. The very personal tone of the letters and the intimate situations reveal another aspect of Blondel's private life. This most personal project gives a surprising insight on his tastes, what he thought of his contemporaries, his attitude towards criticism and calumnies, and his ideas on the education of women, love and relationships.

Public opinion became important around 1780 and Blondel was increasingly preoccupied with the role of the public as a judge of works of arts, and the ways society established the reputation of artists. With *L'homme* Blondel sought to respond to his contemporaries attacks and correct a public image he resented. The work reveals an obsession for affective plenitude, a conflict of emotions and interior turbulences and a tension between the intimate realm, the intrigue, and the public sphere.

The use of the present tense in letters raises the problem of the time of writing and the time of reading.⁴⁰ Memoirs address the past yet try to reintegrate it to the present. The temporality of the letter form is different from that of the treatise. Laclos specified the time letters were written, mailed and received, although the year was not mentioned.⁴¹ Blondel's letters are not dated and do not provide any chronological frame. Besides visits to houses or chateaux which are pretexts for reflections on painting or architecture, there are no references to exterior events. The intrigue is not inscribed in a real temporality. The letter was perceived as the form the most apt to seize the plenitude of the moment, and reveal the complexity of human heart and emotions. The reflection on the time of the lived instant added a new value to the notion of complete present, outside past or future. Eighteenth century craze with the letter form came from a fascination for the immediacy of the moment of writing, for the very act of writing. Every letter represents a moment, a

temporal instant, a unit of time. Present is the central and dominant temporality of the letter form. The letter gives the illusion of mastering and living in the immediate present.⁴²

In the *Reflections on the Persian Letters*, Montesquieu wrote that "because the characters themselves recount their actual experiences, readers could feel their passions better than with any mere narration." For him narrating at the third person did not convey passions but rather provoked a reflection on passions. The epistolary novel brought the reader closer to the feelings of the character. Using the first person and the present tense, the characters are retelling and living their lives at the same time. The reader is contemporary to the action, he lives it at the very moment when it is lived and written by the character. The present tense gives to the letter the qualities of a journal. Montesquieu affirmed that memoirs, diaries or epistolary novels had a common trait; as a mean to understand one's own situation the use of the first person brought truth and self-knowledge. When they spoke in the third person writers and characters were always more detached.⁴³

Late eighteenth century readers of novels developed a cult of the author and identified him with the work. The letter form marked the birth of the notion of personal style. The style of the letters of Diderot and Sophie Volland⁴⁴ which appeared one year after Rousseau's *Julie*⁴⁵ had a great influence on Blondel. Style expressed writers in a more authentic way. Characters could be identified through the style of their letters. Both style and content drew a social portrait but style revealed the other in a more intimate way. Since it allowed him to use another voice the epistolary style was ideal for Blondel. The correspondence translates the desire to express a personal style in conflict with an established image, a plight of individuality and as such appears as his most faithful portrait.⁴⁶

Francoise Choay⁴⁷ argues that in their treatises both Vitruvius and Alberti asserted themselves as subjects by using their first names and the first person singular. In both cases names marked a personal reference to individuals in a situation. Both positioned themselves as commentators of their own text and both referred to their respective biographies. Yet she establishes two fundamental differences.

The I of Alberti is speculative and posed only in relation to the problems that Alberti met in his work as a theoretician, it is opposed to the social I used in the Ten Books. Vitruvius depicted himself in a perspective foreign to architecture: he described his relations with the family of Caesars, and the moral reasons that inspired his projects. At the opposite, the biographical material in the *De re ædificatoria* is only concerned with Alberti's intellectual side: the genesis of the book, his research, etc... For Choay, the Albertian subject plays a functional role, serves to the construction of the book, and is integrated to the theory of building. The I of Vitruvius does not really participate in the book. Because of the intricate nature of Alberti's treatise and his intellectual biography, the I is present and active throughout the book; while the I of Vitruvius is manifest in a discontinuous way and disappears to leave place to impersonal enunciations.⁴⁸

By the end of the century, some architectural treatises became close to narratives that not only contained the author's intellectual statement but expressed all the powers of his self. Through the immediate resonance of the work and the self, they opened up a different perspective that wove the historical and the personal. In the preface of the *Cours*, Blondel used the academic *nous* (us) and became the commentator of his own work, but used the I when quoted by the editor. The use of the first person singular in *Architecture française*, and the preface of the *Cours*, is different from the intimate tone of the letters in *L'homme*, which are an assertion of Blondel's identity and a personal reference to his biography. For example when Saleran confessed to past mistakes:

"...I have known the pleasure of the most inconstant imagination. All the whirls have been the cradles of my youth."⁴⁹

True the image of rigidity of the professor was somewhat at odds with some episodes of Blondel's private life.⁵⁰ Casanova was Blondel's unfortunate rival for Manon Baletti, the young woman he married after his first wife died.⁵¹ Towards the end, printing the *Cours* but also his love of pleasures, freedom and expenditure, took a financial toll on Blondel. In *L'homme*... he created a main character with feelings close to his and a milieu

evoking his own social context. Blondel aspired to give to the public a glimpse of his real self, and correct a public image that he felt was misleading.

"I am not pedantic you know: I educated my taste by studying the productions of genius..."⁵²

Blondel used the character of an amateur, escaped both the censorship of the Academy and the criticism of his colleagues, and freely expressed a scathing criticism of contemporary architects and buildings. Years after the *Cours*, Blondel had toned down his earlier attacks on the rococo yet he appeared as the helpless and bitter witness of innovations that he couldn't understand even less approve. Few architects escaped Blondel's teaching in the second half of the century. But the "body of doctrines" that he was proposing at the Académie with his *Cours d'Architecture* came too late. Blondel taught for almost fifty years, but when he died in 1774, the doctrine that he supported with the *Cours*, his theory, and his ideas were already strongly contested by his own students. Blondel had desperately advocated an architectural system coming from the Counter Reformation, and that he knew was condemned.⁵³ In the *École*, he had trainees of the "*bureau des Ponts*", before J.-B. Perronet created the *École des Ponts et Chaussées*.⁵⁴ Conscious of the rise of a new category of professionals, the engineers, Blondel sensed that the time was coming were they would dispute the role of architects. From 1760 on, the laureates of the competitions of the *Académie* started to refute ideas they considered too dogmatic. His students were already influenced by amateurs writers, artists and critics, and the *Académie* was almost converted to the partisans of a purging of taste.⁵⁵ Most of them were former students of Blondel, such as Boullée, Brongniart, de Wailly, Ledoux, Neufforge and Peyre to name a few. This change corresponded to the abandonment of the conceptions of the "*Grand Siècle*", already announced in the 1750s, with the "*goût grec*" replacing the rococo. At Blondel's death one of his students wrote:

"..in France a great change in taste was perceptible only at the time of the death of M. Blondel."⁵⁶

At the end of his career Blondel was an isolated man at the *Académie*, and the bitter witness rather than the actor of the dissolution of a system issued from the Renaissance that the reign of Louis XIV had brought to perfection. *L'homme* reveals a disappointed Blondel. Despite the success of his teaching and the official realizations of the "*Siècle de Louis XIV*" which seemed to support his theories, he had to come to terms with the fact that the new generations were contesting the classical doctrine, and questioning the *grande et belle architecture* he was so keen on.

Over almost forty years Blondel's writing evolved from the "palimpsest" of *Architecture Francoise*, to canonical texts, to an ultimately personal novel. *L'homme* marks the final point of a transition adumbrated in the *Cours*, which established the text as the repository of a personal image, a future oriented medium and a pledge to posterity.

Endnotes

¹ Jean Sgard, *Des collections aux œuvres complètes*, Voltaire Foundation, Oxford 1999, p.65.

² *ibid.*

³ Foucault, Michel, *Dits et écrits*. Paris, Gallimard, 1994. Volume one, p. 799, *Qu'est ce qu'un auteur?*

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 801.

⁵ Jean-François Perrin, *Ceci est mon corps : J.-J. Rousseau et son 'Édition générale'*. Voltaire Oxford Foundation 1999, p. 85.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ Letter to Rey, July 23, 1758.

⁸ Rousseau projected five volumes.

⁹ -Diderot uses the terms "*collection complète*" and "*édition complète*".

¹⁰ Diderot, *Œuvres Complètes*, Tome IV.

¹¹ In 1746, the *Pensées philosophiques* were sentenced to be burned by the Parliament of Paris. On July 24, 1749 Diderot was arrested and imprisoned at Vincennes, he was liberated only after signing an "*engagement de soumission*". After 1749 Diderot was bound by his engagement to the *lieutenant de police* but he kept writing, chose his audience and renounced publishing altogether. In

1766 the last ten volumes of the *Encyclopédie* were delivered to subscribers almost clandestinely.

¹² Sgard, *op. cit.*, p.73.

¹³ *He was the student of the ornamentiste* Gilles Marie Oppenord (1672-1742) and engraved sketches by Nicolas Pinaud for the fourth edition of D'Aviler's *Cours d'Architecture* published by Jean Mariette in 1737.

¹⁴ *De la distribution des maisons de plaisance et de la décoration des édifices en général*. Paris, C.-A. Jombert, 1737-1738.

¹⁵ Blondel also published two collections of engravings in the tradition of royal ceremonial books, recording the marriage ceremonies of Mme Louise Elisabeth and the Infant Dom Philippe of Spain (August 29 and 30, 1739), and the festivities of the wedding of the dauphin to Marie-Therese, Infanta of Spain in the city of Paris (February 23 and 26, 1745). In both festivities, Blondel was also responsible for many of the designs.

¹⁶ *Architecture Francoise ou recueil des plans, élévations, coupes et profils des Églises, Maisons Royales, Hôtels et Édifices les plus considérables de Paris, ainsi que des Châteaux et Maisons de plaisance situées aux environs de cette Ville, ou en d'autres endroits de la France, bâtis par les plus célèbres Architectes, et mesurés exactement sur les lieux*. Paris, Jombert, 1752.

¹⁷ *Livre nouveau ou règles des cinq ordres d'architecture*. Paris, C.-A. Jombert, 1754.

¹⁸ *Cours d'Architecture ou Traité de la Décoration, Distribution et Construction des Bâtiments; contenant les leçons données en 1750, et les années suivantes par J. F. Blondel, Architecte, dans son Ecole des Arts. Publié de l'aveu de l'Auteur, par M. R.* Six volumes, Paris, Desaint, 1771-1777. It was continued par Pierre Patte.

¹⁹ Monory, Amsterdam, Paris, 1774.

²⁰ Chambers, Richard Mique, the architect of the king Stanislas and later architect of Louis XVI, German Cuvilliers who built Munich Opera, la Guépière, and also the young generation: Boullée, Ledoux, de Wailly, and Brongniart to name a few, were among Blondel's students at the *École des Arts*.

²¹ After 1754 Blondel could no longer keep the *Ecole*.

²² Picon, Antoine: « *Vers une architecture classique* Jacques-François Blondel et le *Cours d'architecture* », in *Les cahiers de la recherche architecturale* 18, 4^{ème} trimestre 1985.

²³ "Avec le cours de Blondel qui présente comme modèle de langage universel la manière pratiquée par l'école Française depuis François Mansart, l'Académie se trouve enfin dotée de la doctrine a la fois classique et nationale que la Monarchie attendait depuis la fondation de 1671". Pérouse de Montclos, *Les "prix de Rome", concours de l'Académie royale d'architecture au XVIIIe siècle*. Paris, Berger-Levrault, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts, 1984.

²⁴ Jean Mariette, *Architecture française ou Recueil des Plans, Elevations, Coupes et Profils des Maisons Royales, de quelques Eglises de Paris, et de Châteaux et Maisons de Plaisance situées tant aux environs de cette ville qu'en d'autres endroits de France, Bâties nouvellement par les plus habiles Architectes et levées et mesurées exactement sur les lieux*. 1727-1738.

²⁵ Tome I, p.21.

²⁶ Campbell, Colen, *Vitruvius Britannicus, or The British Architect, Containing The Plans, Elevations, and Sections of the Regular Buildings, both Publick and Private, In Great Britain, With Variety of New Designs; in 200 large Folio Plates Engraven by the best Hands; and Drawn either from the Buildings themselves, or the Original Designs of the Architects*. Vol. I London 1715; vol. II, London 1717; vol. III, London 1725.

²⁷ Germain Boffrand, *Livre d'Architecture*. Paris, 1745.

²⁸ Cours, op. cit..

²⁹ *ibid.*, Preface

³⁰ Years later Boullée deplored the survival of some architectural works: "*Mais en architecture, on ne peut pas mettre le feu aux mauvaises productions et c'est la raison pour laquelle elles attestent à la postérité le mauvais goût du siècle.*" *Architecture, Essai sur l'Art*, Paris, Hermann, 1968, p. 36.

³¹ *Cours*, op. cit. *Abrégé de l'histoire de l'architecture. De l'utilité de l'architecture*, Tome 1er, p125

³² Blondel worked on the redevelopment of the historical center of Metz, later destroyed in 1754.

³³ *Encyclopédie*, the article is signed P.

³⁴ "*les préceptes et le goût*".

³⁵ Samuel Richardson, 1689-1761.

³⁶ Altman, Janet Gurkin, *Epistolarity : approaches to a form*. Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 1982.

³⁷ Michel de Frémin, was not an architect, active between 1665 and 1704 he published the *Mémoires critiques d'architecture* in 1704, were he described the construction of a building from foundation to completion, relating the role of all participants, craftsman, architect, contractor etc.

³⁸ *Viel de Saint Maux, Lettrs sur l'architecture des anciens et celle des modernes...* Paris, 1787.

³⁹ Choderlos de Laclos, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, Paris 1782.

⁴⁰ Diderot wondered how one could have the time to live and write one's life at the same time.

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ Montesquieu, *Some Reflections on the Persian Letters*, p.3-4.

⁴⁴ The correspondence was published in 1762.

⁴⁵ Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*. Paris 1761.

⁴⁶ Jean-François de Bastide was the editor of *L'homme...* and Claude -Nicolas Cochin wrote the letters on sculpture after Blondel's death, but the epistolary novel is the work of Blondel. The fact that some letters were written by Cochin, although not by choice, reinforces the idea of an incomplete correspondence.

⁴⁷ Francois Choay, "Le *De re aedificatoria* comme texte inaugural," in *Les traités d'architecture de la Renaissance*, Paris Picard, 1988. p. 84-86.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ *L'homme*, op. cit.

⁵⁰ -Dézalliers d'Argenville, *Antoine-Nicolas, Vies des fameux architectes depuis la renaissance des arts...* Paris, Debure 1787.

⁵¹-Casanova de Seingalt, Jacques, *Histoire de ma vie*. Paris, Laffont, 1993. Vol. 1 and 2.

⁵² *L'homme*, op. cit p.2

⁵³ Gallet, Michel, "La Jeunesse de Ledoux", *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*. February, 1970, pp. 1-92.

⁵⁴ In the *Discours sur la nécessité de l'étude de l'architecture*, of 1754, Blondel praised a work by Perronet, the lanterne of the Church of Alençon.

⁵⁵ J.-M. Pérouse de Montclos, *Les Prix de Rome, Concours de l'Académie royale d'architecture au XVIIe siècle*.

⁵⁶ Letter of Mathurin Crucy to Baraguey, 1807. Published in *Mathurin Crucy, 1749-1826, architecte Nantais Néo-Classique*. Nantes, Musées départementaux de Loire-Atlantique, 1986.