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Gustave Planche, or The Romantic Side of Classicism

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Gustave Planche, or The Romantic Side of Classicism by Marijke Jonker

Gustave Planche (1808–1857) was the most important and most formidable art and literary critic during the July Monarchy. After joining the staff of *La Revue des deux mondes* shortly after the beginning of this regime, he campaigned against the superficiality in the art of his time. The vehemence of his attacks earned him the nickname of *La Revue des deux mondes'* *exécuteur des hautes oeuvres*, that is, its public executioner. He has generally been judged a highly conservative critic or even, by his biographer Maurice Regard, an adversary of Romanticism.[1] The focus of this article will be the development of Planche's ideas during the first and most fruitful phase of his writing, 1830 to 1840. During these years, the political stance of *La Revue des deux mondes* was decidedly antigovernment. In my view, Planche, rather than being an anti-Romantic, invented his own kind of Romanticism.

The most influential study of Planche's art criticism is Pontus Grate's *Deux critiques d'art de l'époque romantique; Gustave Planche et Théophile Thoré* (1959), an excellent survey of developments in French art criticism during the "Romantic era" with a comparison of Planche's writings to those of Théophile Thoré. Unfortunately, Grate tends to see Planche as more conservative than he actually was, which leads him to underestimate Planche's lasting admiration for Delacroix and to exaggerate the esteem in which he held Ingres's work.[2] Grate sympathizes with the socially committed Thoré and cannot generate much understanding for Planche's elitist stance. He describes Planche as the foremost *juste-milieu* critic (*juste-milieu* being defined by him as a group of critics who combined idealism, spiritualism, and realism in their assessments) and a conservative defender of unity and finish.[3]

I am convinced that it would be too simplistic to view the "sketch–finish" conflict as the dividing line between progressive and conservative artists and critics during the so-called Romantic era, for in truth this is only one of the many manifestations of a much deeper conflict, that of idealized form versus expression. This conflict dominated the artistic and literary scene during the Restoration and was perhaps most strikingly labeled by the painter and art critic Étienne-Jean Delécluze—a pupil and staunch defender of the painter David—when he coined the terms "Homeric" and "Shakespearean" art in 1827.[4] The conflict between form and expression had already caused a collision between Delécluze and Stendhal on the occasion of the Salon of 1824.[5]

Homeric art referred to the artistic system that ruled the Classical world, and was, in Delécluze's opinion, the only valid one. In this simple society, art imitated the beauty of form that human beings already possessed, with the sole aim to please. Modern culture, with Shakespeare as its quintessential representative, was far more complicated. According to Delécluze, the Shakespearean system was that which expressed ideas about good and bad, about the beautiful and ugly sides of human beings, with the primary purpose of increasing the viewer's knowledge about the complexities and dangers of society.

I assume that Romantic artists and playwrights who wished art to be of its time, as Stendhal did, embraced the Shakespearean system. For this reason they hardly embellished the

events that they portrayed and were heavily indebted to the highly didactic eighteenth-century French art theory of figures such as Dubos and Diderot,[6] who desired an immediate emotional contact between artist and viewer and therefore were deeply interested in *peinture d'expression*, color, and the immediate appeal of the first idea, the initial sketch.

The opposition Homeric–Shakespearean art recurred several times in Delécluze's art criticism after 1827. It caught Planche's attention in Delécluze's Salon of 1831 and it inspired him not only to attack Delécluze, but to devise his own theory of the nature of Shakespearean art and its influence on nineteenth-century artists and writers. This theory became the cornerstone of both his writing on art and that on theatre and literature, and eventually led him to a synthesis of Shakespearean and Homeric art.

But before considering this, we must take into account the stance of the magazine he chose to work for. *La Revue des deux mondes* was the successor of *Le Globe*, the newspaper that had preached moderate, noncontroversial points of view in the artistic and literary conflicts of the Restoration. About 1830, when some of its contributors launched political careers and the newspaper itself became a mouthpiece of Saint-Simonism, those remaining—including Planche, who had just started his career as an art critic—defected to *La Revue des deux mondes*. The policy of *La Revue des deux mondes* was to infuse Romantic writers and artists with a spirit of self-criticism and to combat the excesses of Romantic art. Most of all, it wished to maintain the beautiful, measured composition and style that had been the hallmark of French art and literature since the seventeenth century.[7] Although the attitude of the journal—and that of Planche as well—could be termed *juste milieu* (as indeed it was, by both Grate and Albert Boime),[8] it was an entirely different *juste milieu* than that of such artists as Paul Delaroche or such writers as Casimir Delavigne. Both *Le Globe* and *La Revue des deux mondes* longed to see modern Shakespearean content combine with classical or Homeric form, not to please the presumed ignorant mass public, but to maintain the greatness of French art and theatre, and their views, particularly in artistic debates, are more accurately called eclectic than *juste-milieu*. [9] They wanted artists to have complete freedom to emulate all schools of painting, to choose subjects from modern history, and to make use of the possibilities of *peinture d'expression*—but only when they were combined with the "grand style" and "grand dessin" that had been the hallmark of David's school.[10]

La Revue des deux mondes saw very little difference between *juste-milieu* art and theatre and Romantic art and theatre. This is abundantly clear in Planche's vicious criticism of both. Rosen and Zerner's insightful analysis of the character of Romantic art and culture is highly relevant here: Romanticism was going through a process of constant redefinition during the first half of the nineteenth century (without, in my view, overstepping the border set by the form-expression conflict). This process was largely a reaction to the fact that conservative forces, such as the Institut, appropriated and legitimized certain traits of Romanticism, partly at the instigation of unpopular governments. Paradoxically, this appropriation caused progressive writers and artists to react by defending Classicist points of view.[11]

Planche's writings illustrate these tendencies perfectly. First, the main targets of his criticism were writers and artists whose works, though controversial at first, had gained them a seat in the Institut (Victor Hugo, Casimir Delavigne, Horace Vernet, and Paul Delaroche, to name

the most important). Second, one of Planche's main preoccupations during his first years as an art and literary critic was a redefinition of what truly Romantic, or Shakespearean, art should be. Third, this redefinition took the form of seeing universal, classical values in the works of controversial artists and writers, particularly in the plays of Shakespeare, who was the most controversial of all.

The True Nature of Shakespearean Art

Planche, although greatly interested in the minor genres, such as landscape painting, hardly challenged the traditional genre hierarchy. He considered the depiction of the passions inspiring great historical events as the main task of art, literature, and theatre. He found such insight in human passion sorely lacking in the works of many artists and writers of his own time.^[12]

If a writer wanted his public to understand the deeper significance of historical events, his work should obey the classical rule of *vraisemblance*, respecting both historical fact and the public's understanding of human psychology. Planche was highly critical of the work of Victor Hugo, for instance, whose plays offered the viewer only a visual contrast between the palace and the prison—light and dark—and Triboulet's frightening appearance and his tender love for his daughter. The moral contrasts were too facile to contemplate. Hugo's plays were food for the eyes only.^[13]

What was unacceptable in Romantic theatre, was equally so in the works of *juste-milieu* playwrights. Delavigne, the most famous of these, tried to find middle ground between classical tragedy and modern historical drama, not to shed light on the role played by human passion in history, but simply to appeal to the public; this *irréprochable ouvrier en hémistiches* knew exactly how to make a "nearly new" idea acceptable to the viewers.^[14]

Planche's ideas about Shakespearean and Homeric art, as opposed to those of Delécluze, came to the fore in his review of the Salon of 1831, where his attack on the older, respected critic centered on Delécluze's views about the paintings of Paul Delaroche. Delécluze had regarded Delaroche, rather than Eugène Delacroix (Planche's favorite painter that year), as the leader of the Shakespearean School in painting, since Delaroche had shown himself to be "an observer and a thinker."^[15] Planche, however, considered Delaroche to be a representative of the *juste milieu*, or, in his own words, "réconciliation," in art, and believed his portrait of Cromwell in *Cromwell Viewing the Body of Charles I* (1831; Nîmes; Musée des Beaux-Arts), revealed only the artist's doubts and uncertainty—unable to decide what facial expression to give Cromwell, Delaroche had made him impassive.^[16] The painting, lacking grandeur and expressiveness, fell short of the mark as a history painting.

The Execution of Lady Jane Grey, 1833 (London, National Gallery; fig. 1) was also the target of Planche's wrath. He considered it vacuous and sentimental (not to mention excessively indebted to an English print showing the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots). His objections to Delaroche and *juste-milieu* art in general are most explicit in the article he wrote in 1834 about this painting, in which he opined that the work reflected the artist's unwillingness, or inability, to express the deepest feelings of the characters in the scene,^[17] a flaw detected by other critics as well. Planche found this particularly annoying in the depiction of Lady Jane Grey, for the girl in the picture had none of the earnestness for which Lady Jane Grey had

been known all her life. Her vacant expression, however, made her an ideal object of fantasy to an indiscriminating public; indeed, one could write volumes about the feelings people detected in her half-covered, expressionless face. In Planche's view, a truly Shakespearean artist would try to reveal to his public the inner life of his heroes and the passions and duties that inspired their actions.[18]



Fig. 1, Paul Delaroche. *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey*, 1833. Oil on canvas. London, National Gallery
[\[larger image\]](#)

This belief enabled Planche to dismiss Delécluze's opposition of Homeric and Shakespearean art and his assumption that Shakespeare's interest in human passion was the consequence of his belonging to modern culture. For Planche, the expression of human passion was evident in the works of the classical Greek playwrights because it was, in fact, the most important feature of all great writing.[19]

What were the sources of Planche's ideas about expressivity as the hallmark of all great art and literature? His mentors were probably Victor Cousin, the liberal and eclectic philosopher who had already influenced the intellectual debates of the Restoration, and Cousin's pupil Philibert Damiron, who had been Planche's teacher at the Collège Bourbon. Although Cousin also rose to a position of eminence after the July Revolution, Planche never came to doubt his integrity, as he had doubted that of the Romantic artists and writers who were favored by the July Monarchy. Cousin valued painting only slightly less than poetry. Not only could it depict the entire physical and spiritual world, but it could convey the beauty of the human soul in all its richness and variety. In this respect only poetry, with its ability to express abstract ideas, could transcend painting.[20] Cousin united two ideas on expression: the traditional mimetic one, embodied by painting and theatre, and the idealistic one, embodied by poetry. (The latter sprang from German Romanticism and gained increasing influence in France during the first half of the nineteenth century; it emerges only gradually in Planche's writing.[21]) Cousin considered seventeenth-century France to have been the most successful period in the history of art and culture because it had produced the greatest talents in every form of art and the artwork expressed every human passion. He believed that no painter outside France had ever been able to match Nicolas Poussin's almost philosophical approach, in which a superb technique was harnessed to the expression of thought, nor had any painter expressed the most tender of

human sentiments as well as Le Sueur. Pierre Corneille had surpassed the Greeks by adding to the range of emotions that tragedy could express the most dramatic of them all, those of a great soul torn between passion and duty. Jean Racine excelled in expressing the most basic and most universal human feelings. It was the example of these great compatriots that young artists and writers should follow, not the writers and painters of other Schools, who might have excelled in the technical side of their profession but could not rival the expressiveness of the art and literature of seventeenth-century France. In fact, the only modern playwright outside France for whom Cousin could muster genuine admiration was Shakespeare, who, in the range of human feelings he could express, he considered superior even to Corneille. Indeed, Shakespeare seemed to grasp human nature in its entirety. Nevertheless, Cousin concluded that Shakespeare's sentiments were more moving but less noble than those conveyed by Corneille, leading Cousin to define the difference between the classicist theatre of France and that of Shakespeare as follows: the former expressed nobility and simplicity of feeling whereas the latter revealed intensity and variety.

Cousin was bitterly opposed to the sensualist art theories of the eighteenth century, which had inspired artists, writers, and critics (Planche among them, early in his career) during the Restoration. Cousin's theories became the primary influence on Planche's thinking only around 1833, when Planche's career was well under way. Although eighteenth-century theorists had emphasized that the imitation of nature should be kept in check, Cousin believed that truly beautiful art and art designed to appeal to the senses were nearly incompatible. Man should be guided by reason in his search for the universal principles of physical and moral beauty. If art was to appeal to the senses as well as to sentiment, his understanding of these principles would never transcend the limitations of his own personality.[\[22\]](#)

Planche's analysis of Shakespeare's handling of human psychology was based directly on August Wilhelm Schlegel's writings on Shakespeare, and less on Cousin's dutiful, but also Schlegel-inspired praise of this greatest of modern playwrights. Both Schlegel and Planche believed that the tragedies of Racine, and, indeed, those of Sophocles, who Racine sought to emulate, ultimately were able to express but one passion, whereas Shakespeare explored all human emotions and was, indeed, a master of their depiction. Moreover, Shakespeare enabled the public to grasp the emotional development of a character. A character's conflicting emotions, though they might differ immensely, were always plausible manifestations of the same character and not, as was the case in Victor Hugo's dramas, incompatible character traits chosen only for effect. Planche's conclusion was that Shakespeare's dramas did not possess the explicit unity of Classical tragedy, but rather an implicit one. The varied and complex thoughts expressed by his characters led the audience back to the core from which all those thoughts emanated.[\[23\]](#) While remaining true to the principle of expression of Classical tragedy, Shakespeare had added a new dimension to it.

Planche's Strategy as an Art Critic

Using expressiveness as the criterion, Planche elevated Shakespeare to the highest rank in the hierarchy of literature and then used it again to develop his own hierarchy of artists. Planche's critical writings on painting show the same interpretation of Classicism as his theatre criticism. He defended unity, finish, and intelligible facial expressions and objected to the realism and imitation of Schools from the past to which the painters of his time were

prone. (Camille Roqueplan, for instance, is called an ingenious Watteau imitator in Planche's Salon of 1838.) Yet he did not reject these tendencies outright, inasmuch as he saw the desire to stress color and reality, so visible in the art of the sixteenth century and later, as part of a wish to depict the human, dramatic side of biblical history or nonreligious themes altogether. He believed this development was acceptable as long as artists developed or emulated a manner in order to express ideas, not for easy success. In this regard he was also harshly critical of the empty spectacle that he saw in the theatre of his day.[24] Above all, he applauded invention, the intellectual part of artistic creation,[25] and frequently analyzed the different ways in which artists used their capacity for invention. We see this especially in his writings on Ingres, Paul Huet, and Delacroix.

Planche's admiration for Ingres's *Vow of Louis XIII*, 1824 (Montauban, Cathedral; fig. 2), and Calamatta's engraving of it was genuine, and he defended both against more uncompromising observers, who were critical of the Madonna's facial expression ("no Madonna of Raphael had looked like this").[26] However, Raphael's Madonnas conveyed simply the joy of motherhood, whereas Ingres's Virgin Mary, protecting France and the king, had to show intelligence and strength. This could not be accomplished by mere copying, as Planche points out, and at any rate the changes Ingres had made were permitted by the Roman School, to which Raphael belonged. Planche commended *Louis XIII* because Ingres had attempted to reconcile a post-Raphaelite idea with Raphael's manner, and Planche was convinced that this had a salutary effect on the painting of the young artists of the Restoration. By the same token, he believed that Ingres's influence on contemporary French art would end there, because, even though, like Raphael, he had deliberately simplified and abstracted the human form, over the years he had lost his originality in interpreting Raphael's works, and his paintings had become petrified copies of works of art made to suit the demands of an earlier era. Planche had complete faith in Raphael's ability to absorb the important contributions to art made by later painters were he to be reborn in their time,[27] but felt that, in the hands of Ingres, he became a mere shadow of his former self.



Fig. 2, Jean-Dominique des Ingres. *Vow of Louis XIII*, 1824. Oil on canvas. Montauban, Cathedral
[\[larger image\]](#)

It is particularly apparent in Planche's writings on history painting (Delacroix) and on landscape painting (Huet) that the personal and the sensual, so desired by eighteenth-century art theorists and so enthusiastically taken up by Romantic artists and critics during the Restoration, gradually gives way to a more idealistic theory that emphasizes the rational base of art and expression.

During the July Monarchy, the government required history paintings to glorify events from the Revolutions of 1789 and 1830, commissions from Louis-Philippe's Museum generated a market for battle paintings, and landscape painters increasingly depicted the French countryside, around Paris.

One of Planche's favorite landscape painters—and, indeed, one of his best friends—was Paul Huet, a painter, draftsman, and printmaker who found himself in an anomalous position in the artistic life of the July Monarchy. Against the wish of the Academy, his paintings and those of Theodore Rousseau, which still retained much of the freshness of their sketches from nature, were shown at the Salon of 1831 as a demonstration of Louis-Philippe's liberal standpoint in artistic and political matters.

Planche admired Huet's interpretation of his landscape sketches, from which he had removed every ugly, banal, or disturbing detail, yielding a harmonious system of perspective lines to draw the eye to a point of interest and beauty. Huet confronted those who saw his work with an *effet voulu* (fig. 3). Planche felt that true artists should sketch after nature and that in the composition of their paintings they should rearrange and beautify their sketches to reveal *le vrai* behind everyday reality.^[28] He believed that great landscapists of the past—Poussin and Lorrain, for example—had worked in this way, and because Huet applied their method with brilliance, he himself should be counted among the great.



Fig. 3, Paul Huet. *Paysage Le soleil se couche derrière une vieille abbaye située au milieu des bois*, 1831. Oil on canvas. Valence, Musée des Beaux-Arts [\[larger image\]](#)

In his defense of Huet's work Planche used the same strategy he had used in his writings on Shakespeare. By identifying qualities in it which could also be seen in the work of great masters, he assigned it to the great tradition in art which had always upheld basic principles and placed it at the top of his personal artistic hierarchy. Since Huet was a landscapist and not a history painter, Planche believed that his subjective interpretation of a scene was as

important in the creation of his paintings as his theoretical and technical knowledge.[29] Planche stressed this point in his Salon of 1831. In later years, though Planche's enthusiasm for Huet's working method was as great as ever, he was to object to the painter's sloppy rendition of details.[30]

By 1831 Planche was crediting Delacroix with the ability to renew history painting. He saw him as one of the few great artists able to translate thoughts and sentiments directly to canvas and praised Delacroix's *Freedom Leading the People*, 1831(Paris, Musée du Louvre; fig. 4), for the way in which it idealized an event from very recent history. Delacroix had tried to record what he had witnessed of the events that took place in July 1830 and Planche was impressed with Delacroix's vivid imagery[31] and his portrayal of the dust and the dirt, the weary poor people, *ignoblement beau*, personifying the poverty and depravity of modern life. Although Delacroix's sensitivity and commitment elevated his work above the uninspired anecdoticism of Horace Vernet and others, Planche had doubts about Delacroix's use of allegory in this work, a device he disliked at this point in his career. Clearly, he was still influenced by eighteenth-century theorists—Dubos in particular—who had dismissed allegory because of its obscurity and lack of emotional appeal.[32] Yet only two years later, when Vernet's *The Duke of Orléans Proceeds to the Hôtel de Ville*, 1833 (Versailles, Musée national du château; fig. 5), had failed to move him, he finally acknowledged that realism alone was not enough to convey the importance of an historical event, even with Delacroix's deep feeling for its dramatic and inspirational qualities. Without allegory, Delacroix would never have been able to do more than render the feelings of those taking part in the July Revolution and certainly would have failed to communicate the significance of the event to later generations. Like Cousin, Planche now believed that truly expressive art must express abstract ideas and cannot confine itself to depicting emotion. Delacroix's use of allegory in *Freedom Leading the People* was perfectly suited to the time in which it was created, enabling even the uneducated, inexperienced masses—with the help of the realistic action Delacroix had incorporated in the work—to understand allegory.[33]



Fig. 4, Eugène Delacroix. *Freedom Leading the People*, 1831. Oil on canvas. Paris, Musée du Louvre
[\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 5, Horace Vernet. *The Duke of Orléans Proceeds to the Hôtel de Ville*, 1833. Oil on canvas. Versailles, Musée national du château [\[larger image\]](#)

Planche saw in Delacroix's *Freedom Leading the People* a sensitive rendering of the problems and events that had occupied the artist as well as the lasting, higher meaning which Planche felt a history painting should have. He particularly favored the wall paintings for which Delacroix received numerous commissions during the July Monarchy and the Second Empire. These works demonstrated the artist's increasing skill at reconstituting the old-fashioned allegories traditionally used in the decoration of public buildings—for example in the Salon du Roi in the Palais-Bourbon, an extremely important commission.^[34] The ceiling was painted with allegorical figures. As in the case of *Freedom Leading the People*, Delacroix chose to depict beneath each figure a corresponding action. For example, the allegorical figure of Agriculture is a woman breastfeeding children; the frieze below shows a Bacchic scene on one side and resting harvesters on the other (figs. 6, 7). In this way Delacroix made the concepts of Justice, War, Agriculture, and Industry understandable to a large public.



Fig. 6, Eugène Delacroix. *Agriculture* (ceiling decoration, Salon du Roi, completed 1838). Oil on canvas. Paris, Palais Bourbon [\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 7, Eugène Delacroix. *Agriculture* (wall decoration, Salon du Roi, completed 1838). Wall painting (oil and wax). Paris, Palais Bourbon [\[larger image\]](#)

By 1836 Planche's views on art had become fully rationalistic. He no longer considered it necessary for a painter to be deeply moved by his subject or by the work of another artist in order to be able to reach his public. As we have seen, this could be achieved through a calculated combination of allegory and action. It is interesting to note that the article on the Salon du Roi appeared shortly after the article on the engraving of Ingres's *Vow of Louis XIII* by Calamatta. Planche may have been implying that Delacroix had not been caught in the same trap as Ingres, that Delacroix's starting point was not the work of a greatly admired artist but an intellectual problem, the demands posed by his subject matter.

In the article on the Salon du Roi Planche praised Delacroix for having emulated several masters and Schools of European painting during the course of his career, which, according to Planche, was as it should be. Guided by nature and the artistic tradition, it was the artist's task to invent.^[35] This meant that artists were free to select their style to match their subjects and that for the depiction of any subject a specific master offered the perfect example. Typically, Planche's choices were purely personal: Raphael was the great example for painters of traditional religious subjects; the British portrait painter Thomas Lawrence who, like no other artist, had managed to give the awkward modern costume the dignity of classical drapery, was the example for contemporary portrait painters. By this time, Planche was examining three stages in the process of invention: inspiration, conception, and execution. The latter two were guided by the will, and were, therefore, of greater importance than the more personal and nonintellectual aspect of inspiration.

Planche hoped that Delacroix's large wall decorations would give this eminently gifted and original artist the courage to use these commissions to perfect his own style rather than continue to flirt with every School and master. Only in this way would he truly master his art, and produce finished works with idealized human figures.^[36]

Nature—or realism, as Planche also called it—should ensure that artists would neither imitate just one artist nor indulge in Romantic *bizarrierie*. The degree of finish that Planche demanded in a work of art had to be consistent with the chosen subject and manner, not with a preconceived norm based on Classical art.

Planche was certainly not the inveterate, conservative enemy of Romanticism that he is often made out to be. He was deeply interested in the work of the most controversial artists and writers of his day, but chose to maintain a certain distance—partisanship did not interest him. He was a critic who wished to maintain the greatness and rationalism of French art, while allowing for new themes, the emulation of artistic schools other than that of David, and the development and perfection of a personal style. In such a way he tried to rebuild Romanticism into a new kind of Classicism.

Marijke Jonker is an independent scholar. She received a doctorate in art history from the University of Amsterdam in 1994, and this article is based on a chapter of her dissertation. Her publications include articles about David's *Leonidas*, the critic Delécluze, Delacroix's use of allegory, and Scheffer's *Souliot women*.

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Notes

[1] Regard 1955.

[2] Although Grate acknowledges that Planche put Ingres above Delacroix only in 1854, on the basis of the *forme excellente* of the *Apothéose de Napoléon*, he supposes that the principle of *l'exécution complète*, and some other classicistic ideas, form a classicistic ferment that was present in all of Planche's writing and led eventually to Planche's recognition of Ingres as the greatest painter of his time. Grate 1959, pp. 117–18. In fact, this late praise of Ingres had everything to do with Planche's shortlived attempt to enter the Académie Française, which took place around this time. See Regard 1955, p. 320.

[3] Grate 1959, pp. 134–35.

[4] The earliest and most extensive essay on the opposing principles of Homeric and Shakespearean art I have found is in Delécluze 1827.

[5] On the conflict between Stendhal and Delécluze see Wakefield 1974.

[6] Jonker 1994, pp. 72–74.

[7] Furman 1975, pp. 144–45.

[8] Boime 1980, p. 33.

[9] See Rosen and Zerner 1984, pp. 116–21.

[10] This programme was first worded by Thiers in his review of the Salon of 1824: "As the term 'grand style' characterized the new austerity of art, that of the 'grand dessin' did not mean that [the school of David] drew better than this or that school, that it gave better proportion to the parts of the body, or that it rendered the anatomical details more knowledgeably, but that it gave them a great nobility of form" (Ainsi que le mot de "grand style" caractérisa la nouvelle austérité de l'art, celui de "grand dessin" ne signifiait pas qu'on [l'école de David] dessinait mieux que telle ou telle école, qu'on donnait un plus juste proportion aux parties de chaque corps, et qu'on en rendait plus savamment les détails anatomiques, mais qu'on leur donnait une grande noblesse de tournure). Young artists should "retain the same grandeur and style[,] study nature better . . . keep the picturesque, the ideal, the beauty of choice with all costumes, all habits, and all types of subjects" (conservant la même grandeur et le même style[,] mieux étudier la nature . . . conserver le pittoresque, l'idéal, la beauté de choix, avec tous les costumes, avec toutes les moeurs et tous les genres de sujets); Thiers 1824, p. 7.

[11] See "Romanticism: The Permanent Revolution," in Rosen and Zerner 1984, pp. 7–48.

[12] "L'histoire n'est elle pas la mise en oeuvre des passions. . .?" (Is history not the passions put into practice?) Planche 1833c, p. 462.

[13] Planche made this point especially strongly in his criticism of *Lucrece Borgia*: "The play, viewed in its entirety, is of interest as a panorama, a pyrotechnic spectacle, like the maneuvers of an army" (La pièce, envisagée dans sa totalité indivisible, intéresse comme un panorama, un spectacle pyrotechnique, comme les manoeuvres d'une armée). Planche 1833a, p. 392.

[14] Planche 1833b, p. 503.

[15] "No other painter has pushed the abnegation of his artistic quality as far as M. de la Roche in order to show that he is a profound thinker and observer" (Jamais peintre peut-être na poussé aussi loin [que] M. de la Roche l'abnégation de sa qualité d'artiste pour se montrer que penseur et observateur profond); Delécluze 1831, p. 3. See "Salon de 1831," in Planche 1855, vol. 1, pp. 167–69, and Grate 1959, p. 77.

[16] "I suppose that the author, after having hesitated for a long time between the different expressions that he could choose—not being able to imagine one, fearing too much or too little—finally decided on impassiveness" (Je suppose que l'auteur, après avoir longtemps hésité entre les différentes expressions qu'il pouvait choisir, ne sachant auquel entendre, craignant le trop ou le trop peu, s'est enfin décidé pour l'impassibilité); "Salon de 1831," in Planche 1855, vol. 1, p. 74.

[17] "Salon de 1834," in Planche 1855, vol. 1, p. 238.

[18] Planche 1837b, p. 516.

[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 514–15.

[20] Cousin 1853, p. 216.

[21] See, e.g., Iknayan 1983, *passim*.

[22] Cousin 1853, p. 147.

[23] Planche 1837b, p. 513; Reavis 1978, p. 124.

[24] See, e.g., Planche, "Salon de 1833," 1855, vol. 1, pp. 185–86.

[25] Planche 1835, p. 250.

[26] Planche 1837a, pp. 94–104.

[27] A point already made by theorists such as abbé Jean-Baptiste Dubos ([1755] 1993, p. 131): "Were Raphael to return to the world with his talents, he would do even better than he could in the times in which destiny placed him" ([Si] Raphaël revenait au monde avec ses talents, il ferait mieux encore qu'il ne l'a pu faire dans le tems où la destinée l'avait placé).

[28] "Salon de 1831," in Planche 1855, vol. 1, pp. 95–96. The term *le vrai* was derived from Cousin's writings.

[29] "[He] desires above all to convey his personal and intimate impressions" ([Il] veut surtout traduire ses impressions personnelles et intimes); "Salon de 1831," in Planche 1855, vol. 1, p. 95.

[30] Planche 1838, p. 356.

[31] "He took the scene such as it passed under his eyes" (Il a pris la scène telle qu'elle s'est passée sous ses yeux); "Salon de 1831," in Planche 1855, vol. 1, p. 62.

[32] Dubos (1755) 1993, p. 66.

[33] "Salon de 1833," in Planche 1855, vol. 1, pp. 199–200. For Planche's views on allegory, see also Balzer 1908, pp. 8–14.

[34] Planche 1837c, pp. 752–69.

[35] "To invent in the sphere of nature and of tradition" (Inventer dans le cercle de la nature et de la tradition); "Salon de 1836," in Planche 1855, vol. 2, p. 49.

[36] Planche 1837c, pp. 765–66.

Illustrations

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Fig. 1, Paul Delaroche. *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey*, 1833. Oil on canvas. London, National Gallery
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Fig. 3, Paul Huet. *Paysage Le soleil se couche derrière une vieille abbaye située au milieu des bois*, 1831. Oil on canvas. Valence, Musée des Beaux-Arts [\[return to text\]](#)



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Fig. 6, Eugène Delacroix. *Agriculture* (ceiling decoration, Salon du Roi, completed 1838). Oil on canvas. Paris, Palais Bourbon [\[return to text\]](#)



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