Gautier, heroic survivor, and perhaps Romanticism’s most durable representative, wrote his *Histoire du Romantisme* as a sick elderly man with a failing heart. It was published in 1872, the year of his death. More than a lament for Romanticism’s ebullient early years, it is a lament for his lost youth, at an epoch when the Romantic generation, the generation of 1830, was seen as a historical phenomenon. Everyone was young, he broods, as in Napoleon’s army of Italy. It is interesting to see that this image persisted into the nineteenth century, though that army would have looked askance at the army that attended the first night of *Hernani*, on 25 February 1830. Its general was Gautier, his uniform a rose–pink doublet, light grey trousers with black velvet bands down the seams, a moiré ribbon round his throat, and shoulder–length hair, which he wore long for the rest of his life. He was reputed to have seen the play forty times, and no doubt loyally joined in the roar of approval when the famous enjambment, or irregularly stressed couplet, was heard. The melancholy he felt when discussing these early years, when he had already received warnings of his own death, is readily understood.

Less picturesque, perhaps, was his own working life as a harried journalist, reviewing everything that could be reviewed, handing each page to the typesetter as soon as it was finished. Indeed one of Gautier’s triumphs is to be remembered not simply as a hack but as the ‘poète impeccable’, to whom Baudelaire dedicated *Les Fleurs du Mal*. For real connoisseurs of Romantic anguish his poems, even when elegiac, are too optimistic, his novels too exhaustively picturesque. His famous facility with words, those phrases which fall on their feet, was his undoing as a critic; he was never less than enthusiastic, but he must on occasion have been bored.

His approach to art was one of almost automatic reverence, and he spoke with authority. His was the art of the word picture, the *transposition d’art*. He was famously a man for whom the exterior world existed, and it is precisely his eye which causes him the least trouble. An uninterrupted view of the world, a delight in its sensuous pleasures, enabled the artist he genuinely was to join the critic he was destined to be. Art, he was in no doubt, was, or should be, an artist’s major preoccupation. He applied the term widely, but with less anxiety than did his contemporaries.

Yet Gautier was not always so generously eclectic. Nor did he ever forsake his belief that Art survives, and will even survive the destruction of civilization: ‘*Le buste/survivit à la cité.*’ This is not Art as consolation, so much as confirmation. Art, indeed, is an autonomous entity, as enclosed and as self-justifying as a parallel universe. Above all, it is not necessary to ordinary existence. In the preface to his novel *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, he states that although man is manifestly incapable of self-improvement, Art represents transcendence. This idea persists throughout a ranting attack on everything contemporary, particularly the newspapers to
which he was to spend his life contributing. Critics can only criticize; artists proceed in another fashion, even if the utility of their works is not perceived. 

‘... un drame n’est pas un chemin de fer ... on ne peut pas se servir d’une antithèse pour parapluie.’ (‘... a drama is not a railway ... a couplet cannot be used as an umbrella.’) True beauty resides in what is useless, with the proviso that only the superfluous is necessary. Sardanapalus, in his search for pure sensation, is a true artist. He is thereby an elitist, just as the companions of Gautier’s youth, the friends who forged the collusive ideal of Romanticism, were elitists. Art, the essential non-essential, was the antithesis of progress. Art, as envisaged by Gautier, lies somewhere between intention and desire.

Despite his generous tributes to Delacroix in his various Salon reviews, the artist who comes nearest to Gautier’s conception of Art, the Art that will survive the city, is, paradoxically, Ingres. Ingres represents an absolute, an ideal, as Robert Snell has described it in his fine study of Gautier as a critic, of self-sufficient form. He thus stands outside the Romantic debate; he is not in favour of fusion, of the subversion of accepted canons. Rather it is his respect for these canons, and for authority, which give him a timeless classical stature, to which he adds those appetites which impart a thrill of sensuality to his most ideal forms. The painter was a majestic presence; Gautier, tiring rapidly, perceived this when he visited Ingres in his studio. In hale old age Ingres seemed to him to be in a fair way to outliving the city. In 1857, ten years before Ingres’s death, Gautier saw his painting of La Source. It satisfied him both as a man and as an artist, a virginal nude with mature proportions, as real as a woman and as chaste as an ideal.

The Goncourt brothers also saw this picture, and in 1862 noted in their Journal what they thought of as an absurdity. They found it overworked, slick and stupid, and worse, no longer of its time. ‘A woman’s body is not immutable. It changes with civilizations, with epochs, with climates. A body of Phidias’s time is no longer representative of ours.’ There speaks a nervous and unhappy sensibility, repelled, as Baudelaire had been, by the confrontational assurance of Ingres’s approach, his world view. Opinions continue to be divided between approval or worship, and the distaste of those whose appetites are less robust. In 1867 Edmond de Goncourt saw what he describes as a Bain antique, the harem picture known as Le Bain turc, which includes a nude portrait of Ingres’s wife, and described it as a group of savages from Tierra del Fuego ... primitive, like the earliest exercises of art. He also disliked the drawings (‘wretched’), but in 1885 confessed that he had no respect for Ingres, adding that he had none for Delacroix either.

Respect was the reaction that Ingres most appreciated, and which he most often received. He felt it justified in the light of his own respect for authority, tradition, and the ideal. Art for Art’s sake is as much his platform as it is Gautier’s; unlike Gautier he was consistent in its application. Like Delacroix, Ingres believed in the apostolic succession of the great artists of the past. For Delacroix these were Rubens and Titian; for Ingres, Raphael above all, and Poussin. He was therefore able to admire David, whose pupil and assistant he had been, and for a brief moment he can be seen as a Romantic. His portrait of his friend Granet, smiling with delicious certainty against a background of thunder-grey sky, and his portrait of Paul Lemoine, boldly
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...dishevelled, hirsute, and unaccommodating (Frontispiece), are his contributions to a putative petit-écénat, that small church of the elect whom Stendhal delineated, the ideal society of which one's young years are composed, before characters are fully formed and native dispositions harden. It is possible to regard Ingres as a Romantic even in his classical disguise. It is even possible to doubt whether that Romanticism was ever fully brought under control. When Gautier saw the portrait of Mme Devauçay (Fig. 19) in 1855, he was almost shocked by the portrait's attack. The sphinx-like sitter is as compelling and as challenging as life itself, or rather as la saveur amère ou capiteuse du vin de la Vie, the essence, according to Baudelaire, of modern heroism.

Mme Devauçay dates from 1807, when Ingres, born in 1780, was still a young man. She is as like and as unlike David's female portraits as it is possible to be. David's female sitters do not have impeccable complexions; their dress is fashionable but not timeless, as Mme Devauçay's contrives to be. There can be no doubt that a different approach has imposed itself on the naturalism of David. It is clear that the image of Mme Devauçay would survive the city, as it would survive Mme Devauçay herself. This assumption of permanence is enough to justify Delacroix's 'jalouse haineuse', as noted by the indispensable Edmond de Goncourt. In the first half of the nineteenth century this assumption of permanence represents a fundamental innocence. Ingres in fact continues that strain of almost angelic naïveté - Baudelaire's impeccable naïveté - which he inherits from the eighteenth century; he believes, as did the eighteenth-century reformers, in perfection, in perfectibility, and in the infinite potential for improvement of human material. To grow old in his belief, as Ingres did, to defend purity in the knowledge of your own and the world's impurity, takes a conviction on which time will have only an imperfect hold. Hence the magnificent complexity of the mature and late Ingres. The heads of his sitters become crowded with thought; they are more complicated, as is the artist, but the heroism of meticulous posing and presentation, the assumption of perfection, and the desire to put the spectator at his ease, to assure his equilibrium, remain.

A drawing by Ingres will demonstrate that sublime control which he thought to be the obligation of the true artist. This control might be thought to be Parnassian if there were any evidence that Ingres was aware of the theories abroad in literary circles. He himself said that he read nothing but Homer, and although this can hardly be true it is difficult to imagine him conversing with writers and poets, although he came into contact with them in the salon of the Princesse Mathilde, in the rue de Courcelles. The paintings of Ingres will also be contained within a bounding but unseen line, so that objects are limited, do not merge into one another. Delacroix will work his unease into his paint; backgrounds will be unclear, energies diffused, poses in movement, usually of a despairing kind. The great achievement of Delacroix will be to sublimate his own predicaments into a sort of free-floating anxiety. There are no comparable fail-safe mechanisms in Ingres. Ingres was known to rage and weep until he found the exact place for everything on his canvas, but once that intellectual problem had been solved his anxiety was removed and the picture could be easily finished. What he presents is the ultimate solution, not the tentative or existential doubt, and with
this solution a triumphant balance, so that the spectator is literally becalmed into tranquillity.

If Delacroix represents the liberal conscience, with its absence of conviction, Ingres is a man of the centre who acknowledges authority in every form, whether it is that of the gods of Greece, the senators or philosophers of Rome, Napoleon, Charles X, the Trinity or the Mother of God. His borrowings are not concealed, for he venerates archetypes: thus his *Vow of Louis XIII* is an undisguised tribute to Raphael and Philippe de Champagne. His *Apotheosis of Homer* (Fig. 35) was exhibited in the Salon of 1827, the Salon in which Delacroix showed his ill-judged *Sardanapalus*. The contrast could not have been more striking. The *Homer* is a key work, a manifesto of everything in which Ingres believed. He believed in the superiority of two great artists in the history of mankind: Homer and Raphael. He believed that as these two men had achieved perfection it was not only legitimate but advisable to copy them. The pedigree of art demanded no less. Therefore he was able to invest a subject like the *Apotheosis of Homer* with a sense of serious aspiration which raises it from the dust it might otherwise have gathered.

He sets out a kind of Tree of Jesse, showing Homer, the godhead, with his offspring and descendants, and he casts the subject in a School of Athens pattern. This is his sole adventure into Romantic fusion of the genres. But there is no grotesque here, as there would be in any true Romantic enterprise; on the contrary, all is sublime. Homer sits enthroned, with the two beautiful figures of the Iliad and the Odyssey at his feet. In this group on the left the two most prominent figures are Apelles and Raphael, representing true excellence. By the same token Virgil presents Dante. They are surrounded by the most famous of the Greek poets, philosophers, and sculptors. Also at the bottom left Tasso and Shakespeare, Poussin and Corneille; at the bottom right Racine and Molière, Boileau, Longinus, and Gluck. It is a picture loaded with improving images, making no concession to illusionism. Ingres's own particular kind of naïveté seems to have considered anything less than frontality to have been a sort of trick, and therefore disreputable. The fact that the work was commissioned as a ceiling was not sufficient to shake his convictions. He had decided to show his hand. This was to be his unalterable procedure in everything he undertook.

Delacroix's *Femmes d'Alger* was the fruit of a visit to North Africa, and is therefore authentic, and authentically mature. It is interesting to compare it with a similar subject by Ingres (comparisons between the two men were and remain inevitable): the *Odalisque à l'Esclave* of 1839 (Fig. 36). Both are works of great emotional complexity. Ingres, of course, had no opportunity to go to Morocco; one rather imagines he would have ignored such an opportunity had it presented itself, since Rome had precedence over all other pilgrimages. The décor of his picture is therefore pieced together from various fragments and is correspondingly lifeless. The nude, however, is a real odalisque, sensual and unapologetic. The animality and the ennui of this figure triumph over the cardboard accessories which carry no emotional weight.

In the Delacroix this process takes place in reverse. The women are essentially décor, the impression is unified. Whereas the point of the Ingres is one superlative physical form, the point of the Delacroix is conveyed entirely by
colour, and by a feeling of lassitude which was thought accurately to convey the reality of women imprisoned in their traditional quarters. For Ingres the arrangement seemed quite satisfactory; his odalisque is equally bored, but she is also compliant. As far as colour is concerned Ingres has far more in common with the decorators Percier and Fontaine than he has with any obvious tradition of painting. It is significant that he only brings colour to any kind of fullness in his portraits, as if the physical stimulus of the model were too keen to be ignored. In imaginary or transitional compositions, which take place in some kind of ether, colour dwindles in importance, almost vanishes. It is the striking impact of a woman’s shawl or a man’s collar which inspires him. Nothing could be more palpable than the outer garments of those ardent personalities, M. and Mme Riviere, M. Molteo, Mme Devaucray, whose black dress echoes her hypnotic stare, M. Marcotte, Mme de Tournon, until some kind of apotheosis is reached in Mme Moitessier Seated, who nevertheless dominates her dress with the (borrowed) authority of a figure from Herculaneum.

What makes Ingres particularly interesting is the fact that his devout and rigorous person is allied with a singularly sanguine temperament, the sort of temperament that makes his female nudes too plump, too passive, the sort of temperament that is beguiled by decoration, by hair, by jewels, by contemporary dress. Hence the paradox that Ingres is in many ways more up to date than Delacroix, who throughout his life dispenses the pessimism of an earlier generation. Delacroix, by exhausting his own idiom, left nothing to be handed on, whereas the tradition of Ingres could be and was passed down to numerous descendants. Ingres, however, painted with no eye to the future; his conscious attention was drawn wholly to the past. His artistic ancestry is entirely straightforward. A man of the south, like Gautier, he had been brought up in his father’s studio to copy statues and engravings. Gautier, who had been an art student, could appreciate the discipline. The world, for Ingres, had no political dimension. Only the demands of Art were permitted.

By the time of his first visit to Rome, in 1806, he had already reached maturity. The portraits of the Rivière family, astonishing formulations of wealth, beauty and connoisseurship, were executed in 1804–5. The engraving of Raphael’s Madonna della Sedia on M. Rivière’s table (Fig. 20) may or may not be the painter’s invention, although M. Rivière was known to be something of a collector. Mme Rivière, still in Empire dress, may be made to conform to the oval format of the picture’s canvas and frame, but within it she impresses us as being as plump and malleable as the blue velvet cushion on which she rests her arm. Their daughter, Caroline (Fig. 21), who was to die the year after her portrait was painted, is herself not devoid of physical appeal; her thin arms are eclipsed by her acid yellow gloves, while a white fur stole meanders round her virginal body, indication of the fullness to come. This was not to be. But whereas a lesser painter might have suggested the nature of her illness, which was presumably tuberculosis, might have suggested any form of illness, Ingres has preferred to give her an air of radiant serenity. Only the slightly exaggerated volume of the head with regard to the body gives some idea of a maturity that was both promising and deceptive.

The portrait of Mlle Rivière did not find favour with the critics, much to Ingres’s surprise and disappointment. He
could not understand why it should earn the pejorative comment of ‘Gothic’, for there was nothing specifically Northern in his conception, apart from the conceit of the river landscape, a play on the name of Rivière. There is even a suggestion of Leonardo in her inextinguishable comprehensive smile. In fact the whole portrait is the extremely sophisticated reworking of diverse influences in a shockingly original formula. Delacroix was fond of scoffing at Ingres’s limited intelligence, by which he meant the narrowness of Ingres’s education. But Ingres possessed, over and above the conventional and obedient execution of his large-scale commissions – the Vow of Louis XIII, and the Apotheosis of Homer – an intelligence of the senses which discerns the plastic possibilities in every form, and their susceptibility to that final improvement that Ingres will devise for them.

His formal portraits are entirely undenominational: men are as beautiful as women, and all have a singularity that attests to Ingres’s keen perception of the physical. This held no problems for him, brought no mournful or melancholy associations, no indication of the end to which all flesh must come. This astonishing fervour, the belief in the gifts of the body, is applied to faces which must have been less perfect than they appear in Ingres’s portraits. This was not merely a compliment; it was an article of faith. The Comtesse de Tournon (Fig. 22), a lively ugly old lady with suspiciously dark hair (probably a wig), hides her double chin behind an elaborate ruff which also disguises the slightly sagging contour of her right cheek. The curve of Mme Leblanc’s breast (Fig. 23) is discreetly indicated by her serpentine gold necklace, while M. Leblanc’s watch chain outlines his bulk in just such a flattering manner (Fig. 24). When Baudelaire complained that such portraits made him feel ill he was probably oppressed by their relative lack of aerial perspective. By deliberately positioning his sitters in the front plane of the picture Ingres seems to be insisting on their physical presence, their physical allure. There is no dispersal of vital energies, such as that employed by Delacroix. It is literally impossible to imagine what Delacroix would have made of M. Bertin (Fig. 25) had he been given the commission. Ingres was no less a despot than M. Bertin. It was a quality he appreciated, and he brought to it an objective understanding. Bertin might be an Ingres self-portrait. A comparison of the two faces shows surprising similarities.

The Bertin portrait dates from 1832. By 1835 Ingres was in Rome as Director of the Académie de France à Rome, a prestigious appointment which reflects the painter’s growing fame and undeniable stature. Though critics might still express reservations, and while those reservations distressed the surprisingly thin-skinned painter, none could deny his unswerving, almost Olympian confidence. He was confident enough to give orders that his works were not to be exhibited at the Salon in his absence. In that way he could give his full attention to his official duties, and to his students. His immense reputation as a teacher did not stand in the way of precious friendships, both intimate and ephemeral, which he commemorated in the form of portrait drawings intended as gifts. It is as a compendium of friendships that these drawings should be appreciated. Direct and convivial, they are additional evidence of Ingres’s spontaneous appreciation of character and appearance. But only in paint would they achieve their final majesty, for informality was thought to be unworthy of the public gaze.
The most dramatic simplicity pertains only to the portraits. More confected subjects, many of them taken from classical prototypes, present a rather airless appearance. A picture brought back from Rome to Paris, and exhibited with great success in the Salon of 1840, the *Stratonice* (Fig. 37), disconcerts on many levels. One expects a large austere composition in Davidian colours; the subject was in fact selected as one of David’s Rome prize entries. It is a favourite eighteenth-century theme: the young Antiochus laid low by a mysterious malady which the doctor, Erasistratus, diagnoses as a guilty passion for his stepmother, Stratonice. Based on at least two recognizable compositions by Poussin and by Greuze, the image has been reduced to something virginal and withdrawn. The isolation of Stratonice, based on a Greco-Roman figure of Pudicitia in the Vatican Museum, was so attractive to Ingres that he was to use it again in his portrait of *Comtesse d’Haussonville* (Fig. 38), where the pensive head and the bent arm suit the sitter rather better. The colours of the *Stratonice* are, however, bizarre. Stratonice, in lilac, stands in front of a column scarlet to mid-height. There is a scarlet bed cover, blue drapery on a chair, the bed curtain is green, and the doctor wears blue. The key pattern in the foreground is gold and buff; on the right it is red, white, and black. The herm is plum to mid-height, with a gold palm, blue ribbon, and red and blue decorative frieze. The whole picture is conceived in solid blocks of local colour, free of reflections or complementsaries, free of light, conspicuously free of air. Ingres’s practice was studio-bound. Even the famous drawings were probably transcribed in the studio from sketches made on the spot.

If one can discern an influence in this retrograde exercise it is from contemporary architects, from Baltard and from Hittorf, who based his entire aesthetic position on the fact that the architecture of the ancients was coloured, and who produced numerous occasional buildings to illustrate that fact. One of the most popular, the Cirque des Champs Elysées of 1833, had yellow columns, blue mouldings, and bas reliefs on a red ground. Outside stood a statue by Pradier on a green base. The actual architectural forms of the *Stratonice* are based not directly on antique models but on the more colourful contemporary view of antiquity proposed by Hittorf. The bed almost exactly reproduces the portico of another café in the Champs Elysées, now known only from an engraving. Perhaps the nearest extant comparison is with the portico of the church of Saint Vincent de Paul, near the Gare du Nord, which was taken over by Hittorf in 1831 and finished by him in 1844.

Ingres, the *grand bourgeois*, finally found himself at home with the bourgeois taste of his later years, and this collusion is taken to great heights of achievement in the portraits of the 1840s and 1850s. These magnificent icons, airless, almost unshaded, pushed up against the very front of the picture space, show the sharpness of focus of the painter’s eye, his love of the harsh colours of contemporary fashion, his perennial desire for perfection. Nowhere is this more apparent than in his two portraits of *Mme Moitessier*, the ‘beautiful and good’ (and extremely patient) sitter for his two supreme celebrations of plastic form. *Mme Moitessier Seated* (Fig. 26) in her almost unimaginable dress, was commissioned in 1844, sketched in by 1848, abandoned in 1849, resumed in 1852, abandoned again in 1853, taken up again in 1854,
and finished in 1857. The standing portrait, on the other hand, was completed in six months. The gesture of the upturned hand, in the seated portrait, was taken from a wall painting at Herculaneum, which Ingres knew from an engraving, probably in one of the volumes of antiquities, by Caylus, or by David and Maréchal, which he learned to copy in David’s studio. Its hyperreal precision, the apparent inevitability of the pose, and the immaculate execution, bear witness to the strange idealism of the painter’s outlook, as keen in his increasing age as it had been when he painted the Rivière portraits in 1804–5. A natural and all too human sensuality has been sublimated into something rarer: Mme Moitessier, both seated and standing, retains a mystery from which all accidents have been removed. She is both human and superhuman, and the spectator immediately accepts the fact that she can impose this dichotomy without strain, almost without ambiguity. This is classicism brought to life by a painter still obedient to his Romantic instincts, so far removed from the morbid stresses of his contemporary, Delacroix, that it is easy to give credence to the latter’s ‘jalousie daineuse’. If it is possible to speak of flamboyant perfection then this term is appropriate here. Predictably, Gau- tier approved.

Two late fantasies remained. The first, and arguably the most important, was the ambitious decorative scheme commissioned by the Duc de Luynes for the château of Dampierre, which Ingres worked on from 1843 to 1850 and then abandoned on the death of his wife. Two vast frescoes were to contrast the Golden Age of pagan antiquity with the miseries of the modern machine age: L’Âge d’Or and L’Âge de Fer. The task of executing two enormous panoramas, five metres high and six and a half metres long, defeated him; the second was never started. This was a strange commission, unsuitable in view of the fact that Ingres was at his best with the single figure, and was probably a tribute to the painter’s great prestige rather than a realistic assessment of his powers.

The Golden Age (Fig. 39) has been called an altarpiece to the cult of antiquity. Ingres imagined a pastoral age very different from the world occupied by his Homer in the earlier ceiling of 1827, a featureless zone in which the inhabitants lead a restrained but purely vegetable existence. As a fantasy it is beguiling, resolutely unscientific. As he said, his pagans toil not, neither do they spin. They live on the fruits of the earth and die painlessly. If this is compared with Delacroix’s view of antiquity, in his exactly contemporary decoration of the Luxembourg, in which the ancient world is represented as a place of striving and illumination, the full force of Ingres’s lack of abstract imagination can be felt. Yet the Ingres passed into the language of nineteenth-century painting through the medium of Puvis de Chavannes and Gauguin (who had his own vision of a pagan paradise). The Delacroix did not.

Ingres called the denizens of his Golden Age ‘un tas de beaux paresseux’: at this stage of his life languor was an appreciable commodity. He was to continue to work hard, apparently impervious to age. His final vision of some other kind of paradise is the Bain turc (Fig. 40), which was so disliked by Edmond de Goncourt. One can almost understand the reasons for Goncourt’s distaste. This is less a fantasy than a wholehearted tribute to the delights of the flesh, in which his plump naked wife figures prominently. The
picture has impeccable antecedents. It was inspired by an account by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu of women’s baths in Adrianople. The second edition of her letters, the edition which Ingres almost certainly knew, was published in French in 1805. Again Ingres has gone back to his sources, to the extent of reproducing one of his own famous figures, the *Valpinçon Bather* of 1808. Only a man at ease with himself is so faithful to his origins. The Adrianople described by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu is completely absent from this almost brutally alive representation. We are in France, even in Paris, a Paris colonized by the painter’s own appetites. Again the discomfort of airlessness and lack of shading, but over and above that the discomfort caused by the frankness of the painter’s interest in this dense group of unrelated figures giving out an aura of something more complex than erotic availability – erotic wistfulness, perhaps – revealing retrospectively the power that had exercised him in all his undertakings, a love of the physical world and its treasures, to which his own response would never fail him.

Ingres died in 1867, four years after Delacroix, and in a sense their antagonism died with them; they did not bequeath it to the next generation. In 1867 Baudelaire also died, and perhaps it is fitting to see this great triumvirate as the last representatives of a great formal tradition, allied to the concerns of antiquity and the challenges of the present. The next generation was to open the doors of the jealously guarded studio to let in light and air, or even to abandon the studio altogether. The legacy of the past was resolutely laid aside. After the deaths of Ingres and Delacroix the board was swept clean, ready, as Zola had said in his *Salon* of 1866, for the genius of the future.

Ingres began his career as a young man and continued to paint into relatively old age. The astonishing *Napoleon as Emperor* (Fig. 27) dates from 1806, when Ingres was a comparatively untried twenty-six-year-old; he was seventy when he painted *Mme Moitessier*. In the years of his maturity he progressed from the simple frontalities he had learned as a pupil and assistant of David to an ability to turn the figure in a shallow space, so that whereas his early works still bear the imprint of the primitivism propagated by his fellow students, the *barbus* and the *primitifs*, who exalted line engravings after Greek vases as the highest good, he can endow his later sitters with an almost conversational availability as they lean forward or back, while fixing the spectator with a gaze that cancels space altogether. In major official commissions, like the Dampierre frescoes, he returns to the planimetric construction which he considered classical, and the effect is *retardataire*, perhaps deliberately so.

His spatial effects, or lack of them, were always severely criticized: the *Napoleon* was castigated as Gothic or Oriental, while many later critics took exception to *Mme Moitessier’s* reflection in the mirror behind her sofa. Ingres was to remain extremely sensitive to criticism; he was to protest his good intentions, to vow secretly to do better. He was aware of faults, but not always of faults of taste. The *Turkish Bath* is perhaps a compendium of those faults, underlined by the uncertain recession of the over-explicit figures. Whereas Delacroix provoked responses which were in all cases violent, whether admiring, in the case of Baudelaire, or detracting, Ingres was regarded with some misgivings. Was he the supreme master of line, as Gautier asserted, the inheritor of the classical tradition, or was he some sort of
Romantic, as Gautier also asserted? In which case could he conceivably be both?

If, as Baudelaire averred, Romanticism was ‘l'expression la plus récente, la plus actuelle du Beau’ (and ‘actuelle’ should be understood as up to date), then there is no difficulty in admitting Ingres to the Romantic camp. It was perhaps harder to arrive at the definition than to classify the painter in any other way. In any case, by the 1860s, the term was purged of its original combativeness. There were to be no more first nights of Homani. And Ingres had, in the course of his career, been responsible for so many wonderful distortions, and such unabashedly erotic fantasies, that he could hardly be included in the opposite camp, although, like Delacroix, he would no doubt have averred that he was ‘un pur classique’. In comparison it is Delacroix who appears to have had the more Romantic temperament, while Ingres impresses as a man of his time, with eyes open enough to concede that life is not always best understood through the medium of literature. The bull-necked youth had become patriarchal, genial. More important, he accepted his pictures as representative of a certain outlook, largely benevolent, wholly appreciative. The eager tone of his letters to Mme Moitessier bears this out. Finally he was not a man for definitions. Art was not only above definitions. Art was above everything.

Public opinion, having conceded that Ingres was a great painter, remained uncertain as to his status. Not so the critic Thoré, who in 1846 stated categorically: ‘... M. Ingres is the most Romantic artist of the nineteenth century, if Romanticism is an exclusive love of form, an absolute indifference to all the mysteries of human life, a scepticism in philosophy and politics, an egotistical detachment from all common and shared feelings. The doctrine of art for art's sake is, in effect, a sort of materialistic Brahmanism that absorbs its initiates, not into the contemplation of the eternal but into an obsession with palpable form.’ Gautier could not have put it better. Few visitors to the exhibition of Ingres’s portraits at the National Gallery in London in 1999 would have denied the artist his superior rank in the hierarchy of art. Many were to come away awed and impressed by the full force of his genius. The doctrine of art for art's sake would not have been uppermost in their minds, but most would have agreed that he was a Romantic of an unusual kind, idealistic but confident, and easily contented with his life, his world. The concept of Romanticism as disappointment is almost negated by the career of Ingres. Yet commentators such as Thoré and Gautier claimed him for Romanticism. The only distinction now to be drawn is between Romanticism and the Romantic Movement. The Romantic Movement can now be relegated to the past (though in 1872 Gautier was still keen to celebrate it). Romanticism as a more expansive, even more inventive phenomenon still had many years left to run.