

off the signifier like an empty husk once its meaning has been understood."

The remainder of the book traces Hunt's method of combining, in painting after painting, the realistic and visionary aspects of experience. Obviously, Hunt the prophet of "things to come" would count for little if his visionary gifts were not matched by outstanding gifts of execution and, no less importantly, by a sure grasp of the real. While these two aspects of mastery are usually conceded -- albeit with some reluctance -- many critics, including some very competent ones, have cavilled at Hunt's taste (e.g. his strident color schemes, a touch here and there of mawkishness). Others have felt repelled by the glaringness of his presentments, disconcerted by his extreme attention to detail (though for Hunt each detail, as Landow brilliantly shows, is pregnant with meaning), or offended by the strongly hortatory tenor of these paintings -- a tenor "foreshadowing" rather than didactic, but all the same obnoxious to purists. Yet in the light of Landow's demonstration, Holman Hunt's much-censured blatancies come to be seen as an integral component of his artistic objective: one of the needful foci of the typological ellipse which requires factual starkness as a balance to prophetic meaning -- a meaning which without such counterpoise would dissolve into vaporous intangibility.

Francis Golffing

Lucy Rabin. Ford Madox Brown and the Pre-Raphaelite History-Picture. 272 pp. and 87 illustrations. Garland Publishing Inc. New York and London. 1978. \$28.00.

In her book -- originally a doctoral dissertation -- Mrs. Rabin traces the trajectory of Madox Brown's work as a historical painter, from the early "Manfred on the Jungfrau" to "Cromwell on His Farm" (1874). The late Manchester murals lie beyond the scope of her work.

The genesis of each painting or drawing is described circumstantially, with great precision of detail. The author succeeds in skillfully weaving together biographical fact, iconographic interpretation and Brown's unremitting process of self-reflection. (Few English painters have thought as strenuously about their craft and rendered as accurate an account of their methods and goals as did this strangely neglected 19th century figure. For comparable levels of self-analysis and sense of métier during the period in question one has to look elsewhere -- to artists like Ingres or Delacroix.) Perhaps the chief