

REVIEWS

Time Present and Time Past: The Art of John Everett Millais by Paul Barlow. Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005. 229 pp. + 45 b/w illus. ISBN 0-7546-3297-0. \$120.00.

A number of substantive texts regarding the life and work of John Everett Millais have been published during the last decade, including Gordon Fleming's *John Everett Millais: A Biography* (1998), Peter Funnell's *Millais: Portraits* (1999), Debra Mancoff's edited volume *John Everett Millais: Beyond the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* (2001), Paul Goldman's *John Everett Millais: Illustrator and Narrator* (2004), and Jason Rosenfeld and Alison Smith's exhibition catalogue *Millais* (2007). Although the subject of Paul Barlow's *Time Present and Time Past: The Art of John Everett Millais* mirrors these publications, the author's interpretive strategies and formal concerns align it with a growing body of scholarship engaged with questions of "modernity" and nineteenth-century British art. Pamela Fletcher, Ysanne Holt, Elizabeth Prettejohn, and David Peters Corbett, among others, have usefully questioned hierarchies of modern art that make no place for British work, redrawing the contours of the canon and offering fresh insight on the role of narrative, landscape, and artistic technique in the fashioning of a modern identity for British art. *Time Present and Time Past* makes a strong case for the modernity of Millais's paintings (not, as the title suggests, his "art"; very few illustrations or drawings are scrutinized in the text), and provides a compelling framework for conceiving Millais's *oeuvre* as a coherent body of work, rather than one split unevenly between Pre-Raphaelitism and academic painting. Readers of this journal should find this approach valuable, as it broadens the scope of Pre-Raphaelitism beyond chronology and style, asserting a more conceptually abstract identity for the movement, which I will discuss later in this review.

Barlow's study has strong ties to David Peters Corbett's work in particular; both scholars evoke and critique the work of twentieth-century formalist critic Clement Greenberg in their revisionist quest to delineate the modernity of nineteenth-century British art, suggesting that the dominance of Greenberg's opinions in critical discourse has hindered the reputation of artists like Millais and caused their work to be misread as simply hackneyed and sentimental. From the onset of his book, Barlow freely uses the terms "avant-garde" and "kitsch" (familiar to readers of Greenberg's seminal, if problematic, 1939 polemic "Avant-Garde and Kitsch") to characterize typical reactions to Millais's art in comparison with estimations of French painting of the same period: "the difference between Manet and Millais is that Manet was an innovative 'avant-garde' artist; Millais was a purveyor of kitsch." Barlow