*Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions UniverselIes, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs,* 1851-1939 by Paul Greenhalgh. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1988. pp. xii + 245, 20 illus. ISBN 0-7190-2299-1. $65.00 (cloth); ISBN 0-7190-2300-9, $19.95 (paper).

This survey of universal exhibitions is a compelling study of the interconnections between imperialism, nationalism, market competition, and hegemonic cultural ambitions of European nations from the mid-nineteenth century to the eve of World War II. Greenhalgh describes in detail the financing, propaganda efforts, display of colonies and colonized people, representation of women, and of the fine arts in these giant extravagant spectacles. He nicely complements the ideological intentions of European governments with the probably unplanned and unexpected positive consequences of the exhibitions - the masses' exposure to non-Western art and social life, the exploration of women's history and contributions, the permanent architecture lasting beyond the events (such as the Eiffel Tower or the Palais de Trocadero), and the development of prefabrication and mass-production as offshoots. Greenhalgh's examination includes the descriptions of the physical displays and sites, as well as the documentation of their planning and financing and evidence of government and private intentions.

Perhaps the greatest irony about these international events is that despite their bringing together European and non-European cultures on a mass scale, they could not mediate two horrendous world wars and the continued exploitation of colonialized people. Instead, internationalism seemed to encourage nationalistic fervor, competition for markets, and racist and sexist assumptions which contributed to the very construction of the exhibitions. Part museums, part sideshows, part technological conventions, international exhibitions were bricolaged affairs reflecting a multitude of motivations and discursive practices.

In the first two chapters Greenhalgh describes the complex organization of the events, beginning with relatively small national displays of industrial and craft objects in France (3), and expanding to an international level first in London in 1851. One motivation was the competition between England and France for the market for craft products-ceramics, porcelain (Wedgwood's products seriously challenged French control of this market), textiles produced through the new factory system in England (4ff). In England the Society of Arts, founded in 1754 (7ff), promoted small national exhibitions and began the bond between commercial export interests and the fine arts, which continued to motivate displays of all international exhibitions. Indeed, the English model broadened the definition of arts and blurred distinctions between art and craft by displaying the fine arts alongside crafts and sometimes beside tools (all categorized as "inventions," 7). The fine arts did not gain prominence as expressions of cultural values until the Paris Exposition of 1855, after which they became standard fare. Motives at first were the promotion of competition, peace, education of the mass audience, improved manufacture, and trade.

In his second chapter, Greenhalgh examines the political and social motives of the funding, done in England with mostly private funds, and in France with government funding. Saturated with Liberal ideology (27), the exhibitions expressed assumptions about the inevitability of material progress, imperialism as a civilizing force, the value of philanthropy as a cure for social ills, and the promotion of free trade. Greenhalgh details the costs, sources, and the mixture of public and private enterprises and motivations, which were sometimes at odds with each other. He focuses especially on the Great Exhibition of 1851, whose success compelled other countries to carry out these extravaganzas on increasingly massive and excessive scales. Here as in all chapters, Greenhalgh follows developments chronologically through the exhibitions with examinations, too, of national priorities and practices. The shape of the exhibition early on made it "a remarkably efficient medium for the conducting of commercial, political, industrial, military and artistic business" (49).

In Chapters 3 and 4 Greenhalgh focuses on the imperialist motivations of the exhibitions. Whole colonial villages, complete with indigenous peoples, were constructed. Scotland and Ireland were treated like "primitive" colonies, too, in "the orchestration of colonies, dominions and dependences into a huge imperial display" (53). Though certainly still primitivized, India was treated in greater depth, "as a resource, as a commodity, as something the British had created, as an abstract concept; it could be many things in