

Abstract

This MA thesis delves into the portrayal and analysis of the Great Exhibition of 1851 as depicted in three selected literary works. With the vision of presenting different viewpoints that influence how the event under investigation was seen and received, the article provides a scholarly examination of historical context, and provides theoretical base for analysing the event and its reflections. By looking at different frameworks, the study clarifies different points of view and adds to a more complex understanding of the event and its wider relevance. The first source under examination is Henry Mayhew's novel, *1851: or, The Adventures of Mr. and Mrs. Sandboys and Family*, a humorous (and satirical) portrayal of a provincial family's perspective on the events of 1851 London as they visit the Great Exhibition. This work investigates the utilization of satire within the novel, drawing parallels with the contemporaneous magazine *Punch; or, The London Charivari*, which is analysed, too, with its depictions of the event, and its omnipresent mocking quality. The second novel under examination is Howard Spring's *The Houses in Between*, which also portrays a visit to the Crystal Palace, in this case however, the from a child's viewpoint. Beyond depicting the fair itself, the novel offers insights into Victorian society and its prevailing values, but also the social strata of the time. Further analysis extends to J.G. Farrell's *The Siege of Krishnapur*, which captures India's 1857 Sepoy mutiny, marking the onset of the Indian Rebellion. Through this lens, the novel reflects upon Indo-British relations, the colonialism intertwined with the Great Exhibition, and the gradual decline of the British Empire. This thesis thus offers a nuanced exploration of historical events and the backdrop of British expansion. Each of the novels presents the Great Exhibition within a distinct context, shedding light on various facets associated with the fair.