

JG Ballard

Novelist

Novelist, essayist and short-story writer J(ames) G(raham) Ballard was born in Shanghai, China on the 15th November, 1930. His family was interned by the Japanese during the Second World War, returning to Britain in 1946. Ballard read Medicine at King's College, Cambridge, and later studied English at London University. He worked as a copywriter and was stationed in Canada with the Royal Air Force.

His first short story was published in 1956. This and many other short stories were published in science fiction magazines and were heavily influenced by the surrealist movement. The short story is seen by many critics as central to Ballard's work, originating and developing themes and obsessions that progress through into his novels. The dislocated sense of time and space in these stories is located in his childhood experience of war and provides many of the images that have become associated with Ballard's fiction: wrecked machinery, deserted beaches, crashed cars, abandoned buildings and empty, desolate landscapes – 'still-life arranged by a demolition squad' as Ballard himself described his settings in an interview with BBC Radio 3 ('Nightwaves' 30 October 2001). *Complete Short Stories* was published in 2001.

His early novels include *The Drowned World* (1962), *The Wind from Nowhere* (1962), *The Drought* (1965) and *The Crystal World* (1966). These were followed by more experimental novels, such as *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1970), *Concrete Island* (1974) and *High-Rise* (1975), establishing Ballard's reputation with both readers and critics as a cult avant-garde writer.

Ballard's acclaimed and best-selling novel *Empire of the Sun* (1984) brought him to wider public attention. The novel drew directly on his childhood wartime experiences and won the Guardian Fiction Prize, the James Tait Black Memorial Prize (for fiction) and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction. It was made into a film by Steven Spielberg in 1988. His 1973 novel *Crash*, in which a car-crash provokes a disturbing series of obsessions in the narrator, was made into a film by David Cronenberg starring James Spader and Holly Hunter. Most recently, 2015 saw Ben Wheatley's film of *High-Rise* starring Tom Hiddleston, Sienna Miller, Jeremy Irons and Elizabeth Moss.

Cocaine Nights (1996), a thriller set in a community of expatriates living on the Spanish Costa del Sol, was shortlisted for the Whitbread Novel Award. His novel, *Super-Cannes* (2000), a vision of corporate dystopia set in the south of France, won the Commonwealth Writers Prize (Eurasia Region, Best Book). His novel, *Millennium People* (2003), is a tale of violent political protest and social change and his novel *Kingdom Come* was published in 2006. His autobiography, *Miracles of Life*, was published in 2008.

JG Ballard passed away on the 19th of April, 2009.

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Bibliography

Miracles of Life Fourth Estate, 2008
Kingdom Come Fourth Estate, 2006
Millennium People Flamingo, 2003
Complete Short Stories Flamingo, 2001
Super-Cannes Flamingo, 2000
Cocaine Nights Flamingo, 1996
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Myths of the Near Future Cape, 1982
Hello America Cape, 1981
The Venus Hunters Granada, 1980
The Unlimited Dream Company Cape, 1979
Low-flying Aircraft: and Other Stories Cape, 1976
High-Rise Cape, 1975
Concrete Island Cape, 1974
Vermilion Sands Cape, 1973
Crash Cape, 1973
The Atrocity Exhibition Cape, 1970
The Overloaded Man Cape, 1967
The Disaster Area Cape, 1967
The Day of Forever Panther, 1967
The Crystal World Cape, 1966
The Drought Cape, 1965
The Terminal Beach Gollancz, 1964
The Four-Dimensional Nightmare Gollancz, 1963
The Wind from Nowhere Gollancz, 1962
The Drowned World Gollancz, 1962

Prizes and Awards

2000 Commonwealth Writers Prize (Eurasia Region, Best Book) *Super-Cannes*
1996 Whitbread Novel Award (shortlist) *Cocaine Nights*
1984 James Tait Black Memorial Prize (for fiction) (joint winner) *Empire of the Sun*
1984 Guardian Fiction Prize *Empire of the Sun*
1984 Booker Prize for Fiction (shortlist) *Empire of the Sun*