

A User's Guide to the Millennium: Essays and Reviews

By J. G. Ballard

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Over the course of his career, J.G. Ballard has revealed hidden truths about the modern world. The essays, reviews, and ruminations gathered here—spanning the breadth of this long career—approach reality with the same sharp prose and sharper vision that distinguish his fiction. Ballard's fascination for and fixation upon this century take him from Mickey Mouse to Salvador Dali, from Los Angeles to Shanghai, from William Burroughs to Winnie the Pooh, from the future to today.

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
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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Ballard, the British novelist best known for *Empire of the Sun*, has also done a considerable amount of movie and book reviewing, as well as assorted hackwork, mostly for British newspapers, and this collection is a representative selection. His pieces display a crisp style, an offbeat affection for some of the trappings of contemporary life—such as superhighways, shopping centers, high-rise hotels—usually scorned by literary folk, and an abiding passion for science fiction (of which Ballard himself is a skilled practitioner). He is excellent on SF movies (there are not nearly enough of his cogent reviews of these here), but he is less interesting, being perhaps less involved, in writing about the visual arts. His book reviews are a highly eclectic lot, displaying great enthusiasm for William S. Burroughs, Nathanael West and Henry Miller. The real problem with this collection, apart from its lack of focus, is that Ballard the essayist is not nearly as compelling as Ballard the creative writer.

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From Library Journal

A respected figure in contemporary fiction, Ballard is best known for his novels (most recently *Crash*, on which a film just honored at Cannes was based). This nonfiction collection, however, features the reviews and essays Ballard has written over the last 30 years, commenting on public figures as diverse as Albert Einstein, Andy Warhol, Salvador Dali, and Nancy Reagan. Noteworthy are his reviews and comments on science fiction and surrealism, subjects he examines with considerable enthusiasm and knowledge. While his reviews offer pungent insights into the preoccupations and paranoia of the late 20th century, the autobiographical essays recounting Ballard's early years in China are especially compelling. Born in Shanghai in 1930, he spent four years interned in a Japanese prison camp, an experience he writes of eloquently, strongly defending the American decision to drop the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. (His novel *Empire of the Sun*, which Steven Spielberg made into a film, covers the same territory.) This thought-provoking, informative, and entertaining book is recommended for all libraries. —Nancy R. Ives, SUNY at Geneseo, N.Y.

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From Kirkus Reviews

Like a brain with a severed corpus callosum, this is a wide-spectrum collection of Ballard's heady essays from the '60s that address the future with visionary irony and recent newspaper reviews that concern a pathological, if mundane, present. On such topics as the automobile and the Space Age, or the personalities of Ralph Nader and Salvador Dali, Ballard (*Rushing to Paradise*, 1995, etc.) views the 20th century from a singular, removed perspective that is sometimes martianlike. Still, there is a world of difference between, say, his oracular overview of Surrealism for the "New Wave" science-fiction magazine *New Worlds* in 1966 and his prosaic review of a Dali biography in the *Guardian* in 1986. Ballard the socio-media decoder also proves able to temper his sensibilities when writing for the more banal channels of glossy magazines and Sunday papers. Biographies of Elvis, Howard Hughes, and Einstein, or histories of Hollywood writers, modern China, and comic books are alike easy work, his rarified intellect only subliminally present. He can respectfully, mischievously review Kitty Kelly's "chain-saw" biography of Nancy Reagan, but he did a far more creative hatchet job in his satirical "Why I Want to Fuck Ronald Reagan" in 1970 (not included here). The most notable pieces here tend to be from *New Worlds*, such as "Which Way to Inner Space," his call to recalibrate science fiction's "vocabulary of ideas" and focus less on technology and more on psychology: "The only truly alien planet is Earth," he writes. Yet at century's close, he can still mordantly praise

suburban Shepperton's numbing environs and call for a London of Shanghai-esque decadence. Ironically, the closer Ballard approaches to the millennium, the more he blends futurism with ephemera and the more frequently he dwells on his past. -- *Copyright ©1996, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jodi Saldana:

Book is to be different for every single grade. Book for children until eventually adult are different content. To be sure that book is very important for us. The book A User's Guide to the Millennium: Essays and Reviews was making you to know about other understanding and of course you can take more information. It is rather advantages for you. The reserve A User's Guide to the Millennium: Essays and Reviews is not only giving you much more new information but also to become your friend when you feel bored. You can spend your own personal spend time to read your publication. Try to make relationship using the book A User's Guide to the Millennium: Essays and Reviews. You never feel lose out for everything should you read some books.

Melanie Archer:

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Ivan Dinkel:

Many people spending their period by playing outside together with friends, fun activity together with family or just watching TV 24 hours a day. You can have new activity to invest your whole day by reading a book. Ugh, you think reading a book really can hard because you have to take the book everywhere? It fine you can have the e-book, delivering everywhere you want in your Smartphone. Like A User's Guide to the Millennium: Essays and Reviews which is getting the e-book version. So , why not try out this book? Let's see.

Tammie Jackson:

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