

FACT AND FICTION IN *EMPIRE OF THE SUN*

Amal M. Jasim

Abstract

A Fact is known to be true, and truth is the reality of something which can be easily proved. Facts are ubiquitous in this massive world that any can figure them out as they are based on evidences, while Fiction is the prose writing that tells an imaginary story. Events and characters might be invented or might be based on real events and characters.

The *Empire Of The Sun* is regarded as one of the finest war novels ever written. A semi-autobiographical novel by J.G. Ballard, it was published in 1984, and it quickly became a critical and commercial success. The writer recorded the semi-autobiographical experiences of an eleven-year-old British boy named Jim living in [China](#) during the Second World War.

This paper tries to figure and outline the events of this novel from the opening till the ending in order to distinguish the fictionalized events from those which are absolutely right. And the conclusion will sum up the findings of the study.

The *EMPIRE OF THE SUN*

The classic, award-winning novel, made famous by Steven Spielberg's film, tells of a young boy's struggle to survive World War II in China, *Empire of the Sun* was published to enormous acclaim in 1984, it quickly became a critical and commercial success. Many commentators regard it as one of the finest war novels ever written. In the novel, Ballard chronicles, in forty two

chapters the semi-autobiographical, experiences of an eleven-year-old British boy named Jim living in [China](#) during World War II.

When the fighting reaches Shanghai, Jim is separated from his parents and sent to a prison camp. It is there that he faces the harsh realities of war and learns important lessons about human nature. The novel has been praised for its vivid portrayal of the devastating effects of war and the psychology of survival as seen through the eyes of a young boy. In this moving coming-of-age tale, Jim lets go of his innocent ideas about war and heroism and in the process reveals the meaning of courage, tenacity, and faith in the endurance of the human spirit (Gavin Collinson <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/cinema/features/empire-of-the-sun.shtml>).

Plot Summary

The novel opens, in Shanghai's International Settlement, on the day Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. Eleven-year-old Jamie — or Jim; as he prefers to be called — father and mother live in a wealthy European area within the city.

With the threat of war, most of the European women and children have been evacuated to Hong Kong and Singapore. Jim's family remains. While riding his bicycle through the streets of Shanghai, he dreams of being a fighter pilot like the Japanese pilots that fly over the city.

On the morning of the 7th of December, Jim witnesses the Japanese attack on British and American warships docked at Shanghai (which occurred at the same time as the attack on Pearl Harbor), and in the ensuing turmoil he becomes separated from his parents.

FACT AND FICTION IN *EMPIRE OF THE SUN*

Amal M. Jasim

After the attack, the Japanese imprison the Europeans living in the city. For the next few months, Jim roams the city on his bicycle in constant search for food, shelter, and a recognizable face. Exhausted from long trips round the city and a lack of food, he decides to give himself up to the Japanese. As he roams the city, Jim meets Frank and Basie, two American sailors. The three are soon captured and Basie and Jim are sent to a detention center. On arrival at the camp, Jim becomes seriously ill. With Basie's help, he learns how to get enough food to keep himself alive.

Jim and Basie are transported outside the city to the prison camp at Lunghua. During his three years there, Jim faces hunger, disease, and death. As the American bombing raids intensify, their meager rations are reduced.

Jim spends his time running errands for Basie, Dr. Ransome, and others. He tries to ingratiate himself with both prisoners and guards to gain company, food, and gifts, like a shiny pair of golf shoes. However, his boundless energy and unflagging determination to survive sometimes annoy the other prisoners. He enjoys visiting the American prisoners, and reads copies of *Reader's Digest* and *Popular Mechanics*. He plays chess and does homework problems assigned by Dr. Ransome. Over time, he forgets what his parents looked like.

In August 1945, after American air attacks become a daily event, the Japanese evacuate the camp to the Olympic Stadium outside Shanghai. Jim finds it hard to leave the relative security of the camp. During the difficult journey there, many of the prisoners die. At one point, Jim becomes seduced by the idea of death, and decides to stop along the side of the road. Mr. Maxted, however, coaxes him on, insisting that they need him to lead the way. Mr. Maxted dies after they are herded inside the stadium. Jim acknowledges that he had been trying to keep the war alive, and

with it the security he had known in the camp. Now it was time to rid himself of Lunghua, and face up squarely to the present, however uncertain, the one rule that had sustained him through the years of the war.

That night the Japanese soldiers vanish and Jim sees a strange flash of light that floods the stadium. Later he is told that the light came from the atomic bomb explosion at Nagasaki, reflected across the China Sea. Not knowing where to go, Jim decides to walk back to Lunghua.

As he walks back to Lunghua, American planes drop canisters of food and magazines that contain tales of the heroic exploits of the American soldiers. Jim devours the food and eagerly reads the magazines; the cans of Spam and candy bars make the "most satisfying" meal of his life. Back in the camp, unsure of what to do next, he notes that "peace had come, but it failed to fit properly. At times he is not sure that the war is really over.

Jim soon leaves with Lieutenant Price, an American who had taken control of Lunghua. Price, however makes a detour to the Olympic Stadium, hoping to steal some looted cars and furniture. After they arrive, a Chinese soldier shoots Price. As a threatening gang of bandits surrounds Jim, he recognizes Basie among them. After Basie and the gang strand him on a mud flat, he returns to the camp where he is reunited with Dr. Ransome.

Two months later Jim has been reunited with his parents and is preparing for his departure for England. As his parents slowly recover from their years at a prison camp in Soochow, Jim returns by bicycle to his old haunts in the city. He realizes that only part of his mind would leave Shanghai. The rest would remain there forever, returning on the tide like the coffins launched from the funeral piers at Nantao.(Ballard,pp:1-116)

J.G. Ballard

James Graham Ballard, was born in 15 November 1930 in Shanghai , an English novelist and short story writer, who moved from science-fiction to mainstream fiction, and prominent member of the New Wave movement in science fiction. He lived through the Japanese takeover of China, and was sent to the Cathedral School in Shanghai. After the outbreak of the [Second Sino-Japanese War](#), Ballard's family were forced to temporarily evacuate their suburban home and rent a house in downtown Shanghai to avoid the shells fired by Chinese and Japanese forces. After the [Pearl Harbor attack](#), the Japanese occupied the International Settlement. In early 1943 the Japanese began interning Allied civilians, and Ballard was sent to the [Lunghua Civilian Assembly Center](#) with his parents and younger sister. He spent over two years, the remainder of World War II, in the internment camp. His family lived in a small area in G block, a two-story residence for 40 families. He attended school in the camp, the teachers being camp inmates from a number of professions. These experiences formed the basis of *Empire of the Sun* (http://www.biographybase.com/biography/Ballard_J_G.html). It documented his experience in Japanese internment camp during the Second World War. Approximately starved to death, he underwent frequent cases of murder and brutality at the encampment, located between Shanghai and Suzhou(Gray Bowerman [g.j.ballard.pdf])

After the war's end he returned to *England*. He was first educated at *the Ley's School, Cambridge*, then read Medicine at *King's College, Cambridge* (which he abandoned after two years) and later English Literature at the *University of London*. He also worked as a copywriter and then was stationed with the *RAF* in Canada. Ballard wrote about these and later events in another semi-

autobiographical novel called *The Kindness of Women*(<http://www.spiritus-temporis.com/j-g-ballard/>).

Ballard married Helen Matthews in 1953 and had three children. Her death in 1964 devastated him and death became a recurring theme in his writing. In writing science fiction in the mid-1950s and, by the 1960s, which introduced experimental literary techniques and more sophisticated subject matter into the genre, his novels did not gather much critical or commercial success, but he was recognized as an innovative writer of science fiction, especially in England and Europe(<http://www.answers.com/topic/empire-of-the-sun-novel-8>).

As his most common genre is science fiction dystopia, those who know Ballard from his autobiographical novels would not be prepared for the subject matter that Ballard most commonly followed,. His most celebrated early novel is *Crash*, wherein cars stand-in metaphorically for the automation of the world and where city life itself is programmed to death -- dragging its inhabitants (the protagonist named after the author included) into a macabre lust. Ballard's disturbing novel was turned into a controversial, and also disturbing, film by David Cronenberg.

http://www.biographybase.com/biography/Ballard_J_G.html).

The literary distinctiveness of his work has given rise to the adjective "Ballardian", defined by the *Collins English Dictionary* as "resembling or suggestive of the conditions described in J. G. Ballard's novels and stories, especially dystopian modernity, bleak man-made landscapes and the psychological effects of technological, social or environmental developments." J.G. Ballard, Writer<http://www.answers.com/topic/j-g-ballard>)

FACT AND FICTION IN *EMPIRE OF THE SUN*

Amal M. Jasim

In 2008, *The Times* included Ballard on its list of "The 50 greatest British writers since 1945". Ballard was diagnosed with prostate cancer in June 2006, from which he died in London in April 2009(ibid).

His Works

In addition to his novels, Ballard has made extensive use of the short story form. Many of his earliest published works in the 1950s and 1960s were short stories. Ballard's fifteen novels and numerous short stories have established him not only as a first-rate science fiction writer, but also as an accomplished novelist and short story writer of works that explore intricate psychological landscapes.

This is a partial list of his novels and short story collections.

The Wind That Came From Nowhere(1961)

<i>The</i>	<i>Drowned</i>	<i>World</i>	(1962)
<i>The</i>	<i>Terminal</i>	<i>Beach</i>	(1964)
<i>The</i>	<i>Drought</i>		(1964)
<i>The</i>	<i>Crystal</i>	<i>World</i>	(1966)
<i>The</i>	<i>Atrocity</i>	<i>Exhibition</i>	(1969)
<i>Vermilion</i>	<i>Sands</i>		(1971)
<i>Crash</i>			(1973)
<i>Concrete</i>	<i>Island</i>		(1974)
<i>High Rise -- part of so-called "dystopian trilogy" (w/ "Concrete</i>			
<i>Island"</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>"Crash")</i>	(1975)
<i>The</i>	<i>Unlimited</i>	<i>Dream</i>	<i>Company</i> (1979)

Hello *America* (1981)

Empire of the Sun -- historical novel, based on his own adolescence

in a Japanese internment camp in Shanghai. (1984)
The Day of Creation (1987)
Running Wild (1988)
War Fever -- a compilation of essays and stories (1990)
The Kindness of Women (1991)
Rushing to Paradise (1994)
Cocaine Nights (1996)
Super-Cannes (2000)
Millennium People (2003)

http://www.biographybase.com/biography/Ballard_J_G.html).

His Style:

The most important figure to emerge from the British New Wave of science-fiction writers Ballard's works have brought a new degree of literary sophistication and critical respectability to the genre beginning in the late 1950s.

according to Charles Brower, writing in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Ballard uses the language and symbols of science fiction to "explore the collective unconscious, the externalized psyche, which is plainly visible around us and which belongs to us all (www.bookrags.com/biography/j-g-ballard-aya/ - *United States*).

Because of his tendency to upset readers to enlighten them, Ballard did not enjoy a strong mass market following, but he is recognized by critics as one of the U.K.'s most prominent writers. His fiction is literary, sophisticated, and profoundly concerned with creating cognitive and aesthetic dissonance in its readers.

FACT AND FICTION IN *EMPIRE OF THE SUN*

Amal M. Jasim

It seems that this literary icon ,Ballard, did not miss any art without sniffing from it. He also had a noticeable influence on popular music, where his work has been used as a basis for lyrical imagery, particularly amongst British post-punk groups. Examples include albums such as *Metamatic* by *John Foxx*, various songs by *Joy Division*, and *Warm Leatherette* by *The Normal*.

(<http://www.spiritus-temporis.com/j-g-ballard/>).

Before his death, Ballard had expressed a wish to his two daughters, Fay and Bea, that the archive should be kept at the British Library. It includes photographs of a young man with his family, and ephemera including school reports, passports and his birth certificate. The archive takes up around 12 linear metres in shelf space in the British Library and is expected to be fully accessible by summer 2011.. MLA chair Sir Andrew Motion said:

The preservation of our literary heritage is a matter of vital importance - and it's tremendously good to know that the expertise and attention of those on the panel of the Acceptance in Lieu scheme has been able to secure the papers of such a powerful, original and distinctive writer as JG Ballard(http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment_and_arts/10282095.stm).

One of the few names of novelists of the early 21st century is Ballard's name, which can be used as an adjective of his works i.e. one-word summary reflects his output. Ballard achieved a much wider audience in 1984 with *Empire of the Sun*, which told a wartime story through the eyes of a young boy and drew on the author's own experiences(Encyclopedia Encarta "Ballard").

"London - Writer J.G. Ballard, brings to mind a singularly dystopian depiction of modern life: a world of soulless high rise housing estates, brutal civic architecture and bewildering road

networks best known for the autobiographical novel "Empire Of The Sun," which drew on his childhood detention in a Japanese prison camp in China. His acute and visionary observation of contemporary life was distilled into a number of brilliant, powerful novels which have been published all over the world and saw Ballard gain cult status (the Birmingham post).www.encyclopedia.com"

The controversial figure by critics and academic people had been influenced by surrealism ,and many critics see the short story as central to his work, originating and developing themes and obsessions that progress through into his novels(ballard_crash).

His writing is so often situated within the erotic , technical, post holocaust landscape and so often concerned with the further reaches of postmodern consciousness, that it is unavoidably rather amusing to come upon the man himself(J.G. Ballard interview.p:1).

He confessed that he relied on the charisma of an obsession as a way of proceeding, and he was never happier than when he could write about drained swimming pools and abandoned hotels. Furthermore the surrealists fired his imagination the most ,as they show how the world can be remade by the mind, and he assumed one was dealing with the process very close to that of dreams. Along with the fact that he was a note taker before any synopsis ,which took him a year or more without abandoning anything. That is why his works have been very well received by critics. Moreover he adopted style of pseudoscientific reportage closely based on similar scientific paper(ibid.:1-30).

One of the most interesting and successful qualities in his novel *Empire of the Sun* is its use of point of view. The events unfold through the eyes of Jim, the protagonist, as he experiences the horrors of life in China during World War II. While providing a

FACT AND FICTION IN *EMPIRE OF THE SUN*

Amal M. Jasim

vivid depiction of the destruction that surrounds him, Jim remains the detached observer, and he learns a survival skill at the prison camp. That same sense of detachment is evident in the novel's early scenes before Jim is separated from his parents. While he enjoys the benefits of his upper class life in Shanghai, this lonely boy observes with an ironic eye the stark contrasts between European and Chinese life .

In *Books and Bookmen*, William Boyd praises the author's pace, structure, character development and use of symbols. While he asserts that the novel contains "flaws" like "shaky" dialogue and repetition in some parts(ibid). Rick McGrath said in J.G. Ballard on "Experimental Fiction"

It may surprise few to learn that British writer J.G. Ballard has always had a desire to write experimental fiction. In one of his many interviews, Ballard reveals that when he started writing science fiction in 1956, he would have preferred even then to have written stories similar in experimentality to those in *The Atrocity Exhibition*. "I was interested in writing experimental fiction (though I hate the phrase, in fact) when I was still in school. (McGrath:1-2http://www.jgballard.ca/criticism/jgb_experimental_fiction.html)"

Increasingly recognized as one of the greatest and most visionary novelists, J. G. Ballard is , in the words of Malcolm Bradbury, possessed, "like Calvino, a remarkable gift for filling the empty deprived spaces of modern life with the invisible cities and the wonder worlds of imagination, a "writer of enormous inventive powers," <http://books.wwnorton.com/books/detail.aspx?ID=12255>).

FACT AND FICTION

An autobiographical novel is written to affirm facts. The autobiography is

a narrative account of an extended period of some person's life, written by, or presented as having been written by, that person; or the practice of writing such works. Autobiography differs from biography not only in its evidently more subjective narrative point of view but in its inconclusiveness;... (Baldick:29).

While the autobiography is one way or another different from the biography and it is defined as, the story of one's life, written by oneself. (The word does not occur before the 19th century, though as a form of literature it occurs from the earliest period) popular in modern time...., in which the events of one's life slightly disguised are presented as fiction (Drabble:30)

Although some may not expect the text to fulfill the autobiographical pact, as names and locations are often changed and events are recreated to make them more dramatic but the story still bears a close resemblance to that of the author's life. Hence it is believed that it has fictions besides the fact, which is already stated to be notified. And so fact is a statement that can be proved unlike fiction.

Fiction, the general term for invented stories is now usually applied to novels, short stories, novella, romance, fable, and other narrative works in prose, even though most plays and narrative poems are also fictional. The adjective fictitious tends to carry the unfavourable sense of falsehood, whereas 'fictional' is more neutral, and the archaic adjective fictive, revived by the poet Wallace Stevens and others, has a more positive sense closer to 'imagination' or 'inventive'. verb fictionalize. (Baldick:127-130)

FACT AND FICTION IN *EMPIRE OF THE SUN*

Amal M. Jasim

Hence fictions are literary works of imaginative novels and stories that describe imaginary people and events.

Fact and fiction in *Empire Of The Sun*

Those who read about World War II, and read Ballard's biography must be assured that his semi-autobiographical novel depends upon countless real events(facts) starting from the day Japan attacked Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941, in Shanghai.

Furthermore the novel must be built to convey truth or reality of something more than its plot, which illustrates that Jim is separated from his parents in a world at war, while in reality he was not separated. It seems that the novel should have a number of imaginary constituents for a quantity of dramatic techniques.

Motivations are the reasons behind writing down any work of art. Hence each and every author should have at least more than one motive and Ballard is definitely one of them. According to Miller the first motive in his book *Motives for Writing* is writing to understand experience, that a writer draws upon memories to help him understand who he is. But a writer does not write for himself, he also writes to share his experience with readers. Consequently a writer comes to a better understanding of himself and readers come to understand experience different from their own(Miller:47) It seems that Ballard fitted this motive and more which is to report information since his novel built on facts by that readers appreciate having clear signals from Ballard who alerts them to the most important points and gives them the opportunity to skim the rest, which is Miller's second motive(Ibid:97-98).

Beyond disputes Ballard has done these things, which are also considered the reality of his work, that it relies on facts.

The subjects of discussion or composition are essences and the most important features of any written work are whether it is imaginary or not. These are the themes ,which are either facts or fiction and Ballard wanted to convey them throughout his semi-autobiography.

The Themes

In view of the fact that it is a war novel and being a semi-autobiographical one it is also can be associated with trepidation, fear, terror and death along with bravery, daring and heroism, in addition to alienation, maturation, cruelty and reality.

'Empire' showed us where Ballard's imagination had come from Starting from the title, which might be connected with Japan, which is also a fact , Martin Amis wrote, or rather complained, in 1996 saying "The shaman had revealed the source of all his fever and magic." The source proved to be a Japanese prison camp, where Ballard spent over two years. (<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124061215364654371.html>)

While Brendan Maher emphasized that the central theme of this novel is War [FFFG_4_Empire_Of_The_Sun. pdf], which is almost the vital theme of this work.

Perkins, of Prince George's Community College in Maryland has published an article on Ballard's semi-autobiographical novel *Empire of the Sun* that through this young British boy's observant perspective ,she assures that Ballard rejects traditional notions of the glories of war and instead reveals the true nature of its brutality and futility. Forced to confront the horror of war Jim is separated

FACT AND FICTION IN *EMPIRE OF THE SUN*

Amal M. Jasim

from his parents after the Japanese attack British and American ships in the Shanghai harbor. After wandering through the deserted homes in his neighborhood, scared, sick, and starving Jim meets a shady American sailor named Basie, who teaches Jim how to survive in this new, harsh environment though he has an entire education that could have been designed to prevent him from meeting people like Basie, but the war had changed everything. Jim also comes to understand the cruelty of those affected by war by observing Lieutenant Price, the officer who takes over the camp after the Japanese leave. Jim notes that Lieutenant Price would have liked to get him alone and then beat him to death. After three years in the camp, Jim's notions of war have changed.

When Dr. Ransome notes Jim's previous fascination with the machinery of war and his determination that the Japanese are the bravest soldiers in the world, Jim now admits, the war has nothing to do with bravery. When Jim returns to the camp, he reads the magazines dropped by the American planes. He realizes that they described a heroic adventure on another planet, filled with scenes of sacrifice and stoicism, of countless acts of bravery ;a heroic war, closer to the comic books that Jim had read as a child. Jim is reunited with his parents, but he will never be able to return to his prewar innocence(Wendy Perkins:1-4 <http://www.answers.com/topic/empire-of-the-sun-novel-8>).And thus he affirmed his conclusion of fact in his novel, that Burgess admits it is an incredible literary achievement, and a mesmerizing, hypnotically compelling novel of war, of starvation and survival, of imprisonment camps and death demonstrations (*Anthony Burgess* <http://www.ballardian.com/biblio-empire-of-the-sun>)

Horror, dismay and panic are what is associated with war that an ideal person does not want even to remember and that is what Ballard himself gave surety when he said:

I waited 40 years before giving it a go, one of the longest periods a professional writer has put off describing the most formative events in his life. Twenty years to forget, and then 20 years to remember. There was always the possibility that my memories of the war concealed a deeper stratum of unease that I preferred not to face(ibid)

Hence Ballard wanted to take his evaluation of war seriously, as(according to Miller) the more readers think that the author knows about his subject, the more likely they follow his advice(Miller:242) Despite that fact of World War II and the majority of authentic events , most reviews focus on the novel's serious subject matter, save for fiction is inserted to sustain the focal objects of the novel.

John Calvin Batchelor, in his essay, "A Boy Saved by the Bomb" in *The New York Times Book Review*, asserts that Ballard

has reached into the events of his childhood to create a searing and frightening tale of wartime China. Yet this novel is much more than the gritty story of a child's miraculous survival in the grimly familiar setting of World War II's concentration camps. There is no nostalgia for a good war here, no sentimentality for the human spirit at extremes. He aims to render a vision of the apocalypse, and succeeds so well that it can hurt to dwell upon his images(<http://www.answers.com/topic/empire-of-the-sun-novel-8>).

In his review for *The New York Times*, John Gross challenges that the novel "sets out to raise large issues and stir deep feelings, and for the most part it succeeds remarkably well.(ibid)"

Bényei says in his essay about Ballard's novel that War is depicted as a set of circumstances or a condition of existence that is the opposite of peace, that is, of ordinary existence: it is extreme and excessive, unreal, distorted, the opposite of what goes on in a

FACT AND FICTION IN *EMPIRE OF THE SUN*

Amal M. Jasim

civilised human community. War is supposed to yield a deep knowledge about life, a knowledge that could not be acquired in the condition that is called “peace.” The other place (which can be and often war) is the opposite of ordinary reality, yet it is also more real, a condensed, more intense version of reality. *Empire of the Sun* creates the conditions of its readability by offering itself as a representative of war narrative conceived as cultural and anthropological critique. “the *Empire of the Sun*” is resembling “the *Heart of Darkness*” in this sense (TamásBényei:1-24j

Empire of the Sun would look something like a cross between *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord of the Flies* (with a touch of *The Quiet American*), even more brutal in that it reveals an internal darkness (or a piece of the sun) in children as well as, or rather than, in adults. This novel takes its place in Ballard’s “inner space,” a locality that is “neither portrait nor landscape, but something in between. War seems to intrude into Jim’s life as a catastrophic disruption of the world, depriving him of all the stable points of his existence: his parents and servants as well as his home. War is chaos but it also brings changes that might be welcome for Jim. As with other typical Ballard protagonists, his affections are transferred into various unusual channels: a fascination with words and images, an overawed interest in war technology, especially aircraft and an apparently unaccountable enthusiasm for the Japanese soldiers (ibid).

His muse, though, was not one to bow to expectations: Ballard's follow-up novel was a surreal, apocalyptic "Heart of Darkness" imitation is shared by Johnson in his article Remembering J.G. Ballard, Johnson also adds that Ballard had both a mainstream audience and literary respectability. (Johnson:12<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124061215364654371.html>). In an interview with Hari Kunzru, says that Ballard

was a true subversive: he took our ideas of how societies are supposed to work and threw a new shape on them in this way, Ballard became one of the most influential fiction writers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. He spoke about Shanghai, surrealism, psychoanalysis, violence, social class, revolution(<http://www.granta.com/Online-Only/J.G.-Ballard>).

Philip Gwyn Jones adjoined that Ballard “was like the Angel of History: always future-facing on the page, in person he looked back to the best of the past – unfailingly courteous, civil, generous, loyal and relaxed(ibid)”.

War changes everything and it does not leave a single person without affecting him or her unenthusiastically and negatively. Jim suffered from such situation from the very beginning when he dreamed of war and when he noticed that his father was in a bad temper. These are the consequences of war, which are truly facts and no one can refute or deny.

Upon being taken to an internment camp, Jim finds himself torn between two potential father figures, both with very different visions of the world. Basie is an arc pragmatist American who represents the baseness of the material world and the capitalist refusal to lift humanity out of that base state. Jim’s second father-figure Dr. Rawlins represents a romantic belief in a better world. He tries to teach Jim the rudiments of a classical education but he also teaches him the basic elements of morality that seem to elude Basic (<http://ruthlessculture.com/2010/03/30/a-benign-psychopathology-the-films-of-j-g-ballard/>) Representing his father, these two fictional persons, as one can say, are his variable moods because of the war. When Jim started missing his father from chapter seven (The Drained Swimming Pool) on till the end of the novel he has missed his father’s steadiness in reality.

FACT AND FICTION IN *EMPIRE OF THE SUN*

Amal M. Jasim

Influence on others is one of Ballard's fundamental characteristics, which is what Aristotle stating that ethos is the most important aspect of persuasion. To move the audience is a motive behind writing because persuasion is accomplished through three means: the credibility of the writer, the logic of the argument, and the skill with which appropriate feelings are inspired (Miller:451).

Mentioning a war one should attach it with death, which is the actuality and truth. James Berardinelli admits that Ballard's *Empire of the Sun*, which is based on his memoirs, is constructed to explore the larger themes of life, death, and the absurdity of war. It remains a solidly engaging story of heroism in the face of adversity, as filtered through the eyes of a boy obsessed with planes and flight. As World War II tales go, this one belongs to the minority of adventures that transpire away from the battlefields of the day (Berardinelli:1-2 http://www.reelviews.net/movies/e/empire_sun.html).

Ballard is considered to have an effect on his wife's death in 1964. Some have viewed this as a sort of irony, but it is, rather, the theme of much of his work. It is the everyday, in Ballard, that is surreal. (Johnson:1-2) (<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124061215364654371.html>). His influenced by the death of his wife is reassured by others. Harin Kunzru says "The untimely death of his wife, and his conversation seemed to me to have all the tensions that fascinate the reader in his work" (<http://www.harikunzru.com/jg-ballard-interview-2007>).

Senses and visual terms of death seem to be found in almost all chapters of the novel. Death is appealing to Jim in all of its forms, and the central episodes or experiences of death combine the Chinese and Japanese insights into death and dying. The brutal public execution of the coolie who is beaten to death by the Japanese soldiers is one such episode. The execution is a show put

on by the Japanese to teach a lesson to their European prisoners. What appeals to him is the way the coolie dies: he does not try to resist. The allure of death is the allure of fixity.

The most seductive images of death imply a smooth, gradual process of dying, the traditional notion of death as a desired peace, as relief from painful change. The death march to the stadium is associated with the nuclear bomb. All these styles and seductions of dying represent various aspects of Jim's fascination with death (Bényei1-

24http://www.jgballard.ca/criticism/white_light_empire_war_story.html).

Jim even thought, in chapter 31 *THE [...]*, that the light which he and the Japanese saw in the stadium, which is later recognized as atom bomb, was no more than a premonition of his death, the sight of his small soul joining the larger soul of the dying world. This is called trauma according to MacKay, which is what happens when thinking fails or can no longer take place, which is also a result of the marriage of technology and barbarism. Modern war has become the charged emblem of a moral, psychological and existential paralysis of thought (MacKay:194)

It is there that he faces the harsh realities and certainties of war and learns important lessons about human nature. The novel has been praised for its vivid portrayal of the devastating effects of war and the psychology of survival as seen through the eyes of a young boy. In this poignant coming-of-age tale, Jim lets go of his innocent ideas about war and heroism and in the process reveals the meaning of courage, tenacity, and faith in the endurance of the human spirit (<http://www.answers.com /topic/empire-of-the-sun-novel-8>).

FACT AND FICTION IN *EMPIRE OF THE SUN*

Amal M. Jasim

Although MacKay states that a bomb literature is associated with Japanese literature either figuratively or realistically or both, those writers want to record their overwhelming experiences about the legacy of war, right after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and their memories of dreadful images became the source of their creative power (MacKay:147), yet the British author J.G. Ballard has written about the same subject with the same perspectives in that he has displayed the feasibility of annihilating humankind in China. And he did not observe this war like other British or western authors. Milan Kundera reminds that a novel's aesthetic value cannot be judged in a narrowly national context. Hence the subject to censorship is not a patriotic propaganda, nor is it dispassionate analysis. It is much truth in the observation that the truest fictional plots are the most deviant(Parrinder:2)

In this novel, regardless of his change, Jim has always proved to be humanitarian and caring. Be concerned about almost all those who imprisoned in the detention camp, Jim struggled to be gracious even with those who despised him. Jacob Hall states that there is a theme of friendship and trust in the novel (Hall:1.<http://www.independentcritics.com/reviews/empireofthesun.htm>). Through his relationships Jim's spirit and resourcefulness help him develop unlikely friendship with his fellow prisoners and he begins to understand issues of class, national identity and death (Philadelphia *Empire of the Sun*:3).

Anthony Burgess called the novel "almost intolerably moving", due to the careful use of sentimentality (Gavin Collinson<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/cinema/features/empire-of-the-sun.shtml>).

Ballard's commanding literary gifts of producing deeply humanistic and transcendent works can only grow in years to come

([MartinAmishttp://books.wwnorton.com/books/detail.aspx?ID=12255](http://books.wwnorton.com/books/detail.aspx?ID=12255)). To elevate the human spirit by reminding human beings of what is most important in life, is a reasonable motive which involves drawing on widely held values and evoking feelings that need to be reinforced (Miller:521). Ballard has changed hearts by his condemnation of war.

In the course of being moving concerning some political and social issues, Ballard has censured imperialism, which is a practice by which powerful nations or peoples seek to extend and maintain control or influence over weaker nations or peoples. Scholars frequently use the term more restrictively: Some associate imperialism solely with the economic expansion of capitalist states; others reserve it for European expansion after 1870. Although imperialism is similar in meaning to colonialism, and the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, they should be distinguished(Encarta “imperialism”).

Although he was protected from the realities of war by the privileges of his race and class, life in Shanghai was lived wholly within an intense present, especially for the Europeans who lived in the wealthy suburbs of the city. This intense present was created in part by the impending threat of war, but the Europeans remained curiously detached from its reality. Jim observes his parents and the parents of his friends fill their days with dances and garden parties, and watches them consume countless bottles of scotch in aid of the war effort. He notes that all over the western suburbs people were wearing fancy dress, as if Shanghai had become a city of clowns. The newsreels they all watch give Jim the impression that the British were thoroughly enjoying the war separated and protected by their sense of superiority at the early stages of the war. Jim, more than the others, sees the suffering that surrounds him. He

FACT AND FICTION IN *EMPIRE OF THE SUN*

Amal M. Jasim

observes the extremes of affluence and poverty in the city as his chauffeur runs over or whips beggars in the streets (Perkins:1-4).

The themes of imperialism and class are also highlighted as being messages presented in this novel(film empire.pdf). Almost everything is evaluated and measured by a child perspective. Although the mainstream is absolutely right, still there is a child who has his childish dreams. His passion of flying , which is Jim's obsession from the very beginning of the novel. Moreover "Jim despaired" is the first sentence on chapter forty one RESCUE MISSION, and it reflects how the death of the kamikaze pilot affected him, and how he had a futile dream that they, Jim and kamikaze, would fly away together. He also believed that if the Japanese was dead, part of himself would die.

Barsanti states that themes of flight and escape are recurrent obsessions in the novel (<http://bnreview.barnesandnoble.com/t5/In-Brief/The-Complete-Stories-of-J-G-Ballard/ba-p/1403>). Children in war zone, facing the brutality of war, which Ballard himself reassured as a nightmare when he said that in an interview "I looked back on Shanghai and the war there as if it were part of some huge nightmare tableau that revealed itself in a violent and gaudy way"(THE ART OF FICTION:8),

Having dreams and sequences of mental images as children who live in peace, it is Jim's right to dream of whatever childish dream could be . Flying is his only dream from the very beginning of the story He was obsessed by flying, planes and pilots , which can be symbolized as Jim's possibility and danger of escape from the prison camp.

War and horrible details related to it are no more than absolute actuality, that all those who have faced it endured. Ballard was distressed by such horrifying warfare, and said “I assume that it took me a long time to forget, and then a long time to remember”(ibid). More to the point he added that

“ I was interned from 1942 to 1945. From the most part of the novel is an eyewitness account of events I observed during the Japanese occupation of Shanghai and within the camp Lunghua”(J.G. Ballard. Empire Of The Sun).

Authenticity, reality and actuality are not only related to the material world, but also to the spiritual, emotional and inner humanity as well. He declared that “the most effective method of dealing with the world around us is to assume that it is a complete fiction; conversely, what’s left of reality is inside our own heads(ballard_crash:4)”.

With all these pros and cons it seems that fact and fiction are universal and they are connected with each others. Hence Facts are all over the place . Consequently one should be subtle toward events and actions around him or her by looking for a logic or vague matters, what is more is to understand the difference between deduction and induction.

CONCLUSION

The boundary between fact and fiction becomes blurry most of the time. In a world where we are deluged with information, discerning what assumed to be true from the truth can prove nearly impossible. That makes it even more important than ever to understand the difference between fact and fiction; it allows us to properly evaluate a given situation, and spot people trying to sway our opinion.

FACT AND FICTION IN *EMPIRE OF THE SUN*

Amal M. Jasim

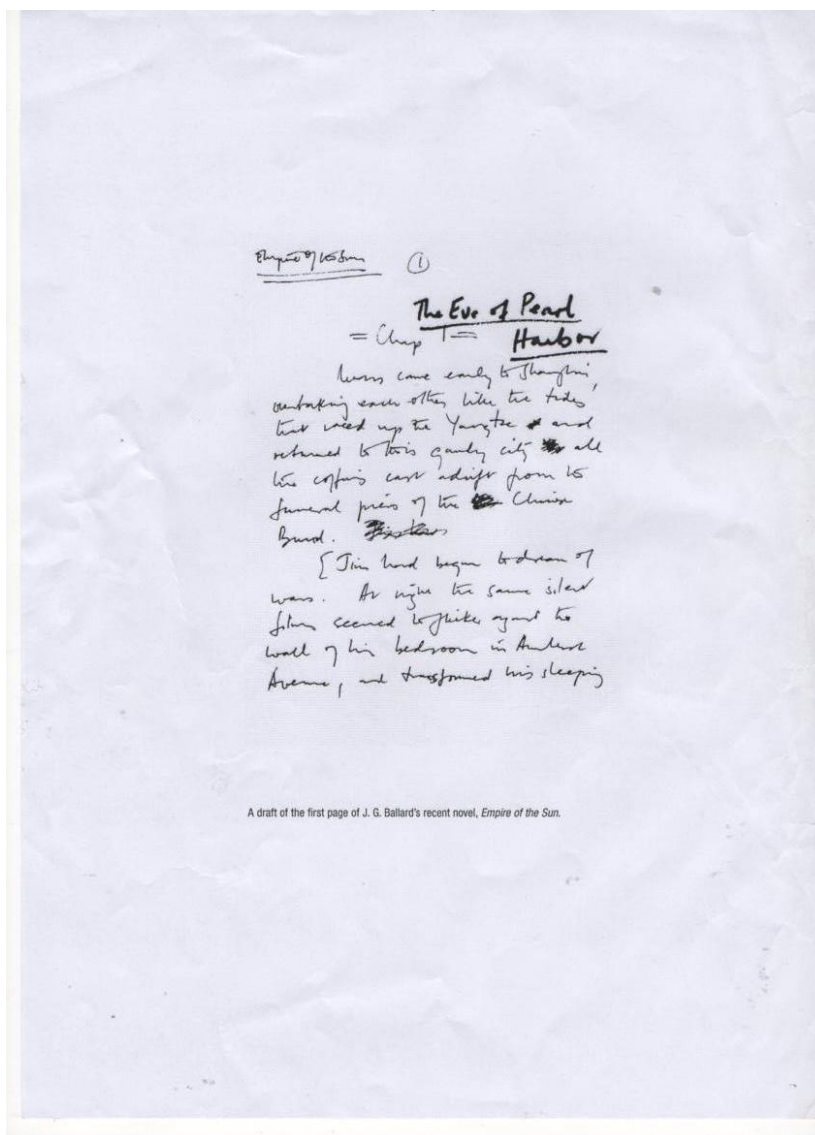
We live in a world ruled by fictions of every kind. However ;Ballard's fiction is a unique one. Although he has written his semi-autobiographical novel, which is supposed to be further distant from true events according to some critics, yet the autobiographical novel is still called nonfiction by others. Ballard has written every single detailed with exact and literal date. Even the date of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor took place on Sunday morning but as a result of time differences across the Pacific Date line it was then already Monday. However one can distinguish the fact that unlike the book Ballard was not separated from his parents'. One can conclude that Ballard and his parents were parted not physically but psychologically . He missed his parents moods and manners before the war. Moreover Ballard wanted to show the reality of war brutality and what aggravate is children suffer and endure in war zone. By writing about war Ballard presents an anti war novel, although he wrote from the perspective of a boy and not a soldier in the battle failed.

His love of bravery is reflected by his love of the Kamikazes, and by releasing that conquest in that war has nothing to do with bravery, because of an atom bomb. Ballard's surveillance of beggars before war and being just like them after war in becoming a scavenger demonstrates his belief that mankind is alike , which also can be exposed by his love of flying ,planes and pilots of different nationalities.

The fiction of *Empire Of The Sun* relies on Fact. Moreover fact also relies on fiction. Hence there is a reversible connection between them. i.e. *Empire Of The Sun* is built on facts while fictions are used to ornament facts.

Hence by understanding the difference between deduction and induction, Ballard's memoirs have been exploited and his fiction browbeaten to serve facts and nothing but facts, whether or

not it should, to send great messages to humanity, which are similar to those of Mahatma Gandhi when he said "I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and Non-violence are as old as the hills".



Bibliography

- Baldick. Chris. *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Term*. New York: Oxford University press, 2008.
- Ballard. J. G. *Empire Of The Sun* : Simon Schuster Paperbacks, New York 1984
- China Business News-BizChinaUpdate: contributed by Gary Bowerman. Monday, 20 April 2009; Empire Of The Sun Author J.G. Ballard Dies.
- D. C. BROWNING . M.A. (Glasgow), B.A., B.Litt. (Oxon.) Everyman's Dictionary Of Literary Biography ENGLISH & AMERICAN *Compiled after* JOHN W. COUSIN LONDON: J. M. DENT & SONS LTD. NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO. INC.
- Drabble. Margaret. *The Oxford Companion To English Literature*. New York, fifth edition: Oxford University press, 1985
- MacKay. Marina. *THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO THE LITERATURE OF WORLD WARII*. Washington University, St. Louis: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2008. © 1993-2007 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
- Miller. Robert Keith. *Motives for Writing*. University of St. Thomas, Fifth edition: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. 2006.
- Parrinder. Patrick. *Nation & novel*. Oxford University: Oxford University Press paperback 2008.
- The Paris Review: Thomas Frick.(J.G. Ballard interview) No 85, 2005 “The Art of Fiction”.

WEBSITES

(ballard_crash) pdf

[FFFG_4_Empire_Of_The_Sun. pdf]

<http://bnreview.barnesandnoble.com/t5/In-Brief/The-Complete-Stories-of-J-G-Ballard/ba-p/1403>

<http://books.wwnorton.com/books/detail.aspx?ID=12255>).

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment_and_arts/10282095.stm

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124061215364654371.html>

<http://ruthlessculture.com/2010/03/30/a-benign-psychopathology-the-films-of-j-g-ballard/>

<http://www.answers.com/topic/empire-of-the-sun-novel-8>

<http://www.answers.com/topic/j-g-ballard>

<http://www.ballardian.com/biblio-empire-of-the-sun>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/cinema/features/empire-of-the-sun.shtml>).

http://www.biographybase.com/biography/Ballard_J_G.html

<http://www.bookrags.com/studyguide-empiresun/style.html>

<http://www.harikunzru.com/jg-ballard-interview-2007>

http://www.jgballard.ca/criticism/jgb_experimental_fiction.html

http://www.jgballard.ca/criticism/white_light_empire_war_story.html

http://www.reelviews.net/movies/e/empire_sun.html

<http://www.spiritus-temporis.com/j-g-ballard/>

ONE FILM : Empire Of The Sun, Themes and Scenes Analysis.(film empire.pdf) Philadelphia Empire of the Sun pdf
www.encyclopedia.com