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# Censoring Perversion: J.G. Ballard's *Crash*, the Novel and the Film

Klara Kofen

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This article considers JG Ballard's seminal novella *Crash* and its film adaptation by David Cronenberg within the tradition of lascivious, subversive literary utopias. It examines how *Crash*, as both a caustic critique of consumerist culture and a work of futurist pornography, sought to uncover the psychopathologies of sexual and political transgression simmering beneath the concrete surface of suburban ennui. The controversy ignited by Cronenberg's film amongst critics and audiences alike brought contemporaneous social morality into sharp relief with the black mirror Ballard held up to society, two decades earlier.

Pornography is the most political form of fiction, dealing with how we use and exploit each other.<sup>1</sup>

Utopias are, per definition, 'no places', they describe scenarios and places which do not exist. Ever since their inception in the sixteenth-century, writers started using these exotic and undiscovered places to illustrate the mores of their society.<sup>2</sup> Wagar notes how out of this tradition two more or less distinct kinds of utopian writings emerged:<sup>3</sup> those that use imaginary places as ideals to strive for, and a 'counter-culture', in which the social or political power relations of their time are perpetuated ad absurdum; 'in which utopia is not a bustling city registering worldly progress but a community of spirits earning grace'.<sup>4</sup> It is this latter category to which notorious writers such as the Marquis de Sade, Aldous Huxley, Nietzsche and J.G. Ballard belong, writers who theorised desire in all its forms, and it is this latter category which has consistently been attacked by censors and moralists from the entire political spectrum, precisely

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KLARA KOFEN is a final year History student at the University of Glasgow. Her main academic interests lie in eighteenth-century European history, the Enlightenment in France and Germany, and debates on censorship. The idea for this piece originated in a series of reading group meetings on the theme 'Utopias' which she organised over the course of her final year. She hopes to continue into Postgraduate study to further pursue her studies of the European Enlightenment.

<sup>1</sup> J.G Ballard, *Crash* (London, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> D. E. Rose, *The Ethics and Politics of Pornography* (Basingstoke, 2013), 81.

<sup>3</sup> W. W. Wagar, 'J.G. Ballard and the Transvaluation of Utopia' (1991) 18:1 *Science Fiction Studies* 61.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

because the ‘perversities’ described by these writers are ‘too close to home’. In that, they can be considered as valuable pieces of social criticism, while the controversies they generate shed a light into the dark edges of dominant ideology. Although censorship in the twentieth-century was not, primarily, a business of the state anymore, its workings can still be used as a starting point for analysis of these controversies, and the way in which ‘texts’ become politicised through public debate.

If measured by the debate and moral hysteria they generated, J.G. Ballard’s cybersexual novel *Crash* from 1973, and David Cronenberg’s adaption for the screen from 1996, can be considered the very peak of this subversive potential in the literature of the twentieth-century. And if all sexually explicit material has been political since its inception, then censoring pornography is always, and has always been primarily, a political act.

The novel is essentially and primarily a story about sex and car crashes, including all the deadening narrative traits of pornography: ‘flatness, repetition, circularity’.<sup>5</sup> Yet the cruel banality of the world through which James, the protagonist, is wandering — and which Ballard describes with the cold detachment of a ‘scientist, dissecting a cadaver’<sup>6</sup> — is essentially a dark mirror of twentieth-century western consumer society and its psychopathologies, in which technology has moved into the most intimate realm of human relations. Thus, Ballard’s social criticism, while it might not provide a ‘healthy’, constructive alternative of how to restore morality to the present state of affairs, serves to lure his readers out of their complacency.

Richard Porton characterises Cronenberg’s films as ‘viscerally aggressive’ pieces of cinema, which ‘examine irrationality and often stomach — churning violence with calm, rational detachment’.<sup>7</sup> In the greater context of Cronenberg’s work, *Crash* is not thematically unique: Within the ‘body horror’ genre, the destruction of the human body as the last stable referent of identity has also been treated in his *The Fly* and *Naked Lunch*, while the power of the media was the central theme of his *Videodrome*.

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<sup>5</sup> Z. Smith, ‘Sex and Wheels: Zadie Smith on JG Ballard’s *Crash*’ in *The Guardian* (04.07.2014).

<sup>6</sup> Ballard, *Crash*, 3.

<sup>7</sup> R. Porton, ‘The Film Director as Philosopher: An Interview with David Cronenberg’ (1999) 24:4 *Cinéaste* 4.

In this article, it will be shown how Ballard's *Crash* can be placed into the tradition of lascivious, subversive utopias, how Cronenberg's 1996 adaption translated its literary precepts into film, and how both the book and the film reached a level of notoriety among critics, audiences and censors. Ballard states that 'Crash (...) is not concerned with imaginary disaster, however imminent, but with a pandemic cataclysm that kills hundreds of thousands of people each year and injures millions'. As we shall see, advocates of censorship during the *Crash* controversy in 1996 were overly aware of this, but did not believe in the positive potential for change in this 'cautionary tale', this 'warning against that brutal, erotic and overlit realm'.<sup>8</sup>

During the 1960s when Ballard was writing *The Drowned World*, there was a paradigm shift among the avant-garde which turned 'no places' into 'not yet' places. Out of this, a range of Promethean writings emerged which strove for 'a liberation of indeterminate energy'.<sup>9</sup> While *The Drowned World* might not show 'any obvious ways forward for the human race'<sup>10</sup> in the manner of Fromm or Marcuse, Ballard's writings are far from pessimistic: Ballard has been described as 'a seeker of transcendence',<sup>11</sup> and, with regards to *Crash*, that his heroes are 'driven by a dream of a perfectible world, a better world'.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, Ballard's utopias have always been a lot more cautious and self-aware than that of many of his contemporaries.<sup>13</sup>

Vaughan, with whose death the tale starts and finishes, is the seductive,<sup>14</sup> omnisexual Prometheus of a new race, created by a 'new sexuality born from a perverse technology'.<sup>15</sup> His voice echoes the dark energy of Marinetti's *Futurist Manifesto*, celebrating the new 'beauty of speed' of the 'racing automobile with its bonnet

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<sup>8</sup> Ballard, *Crash*, Introduction.

<sup>9</sup> J. Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulations - XIII. Simulacra and Science Fiction* translated by S. F. Glaser. Available: <<http://www.egs.edu/faculty/jean-baudrillard/articles/simulacra-and-simulations-xiii-simulacra-and-science-fiction/>> [Accessed 16.07.14].

<sup>10</sup> Ballard qtd in Wagar, *J.G. Ballard and the Transvaluation of Utopia*, 55.

<sup>11</sup> Manuel, Frank E. *et al.*, *Utopian Thought in the Western World*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1979), 6.

<sup>12</sup> Ballard quoted in Wagar, *J.G. Ballard and the Transvaluation of Utopia*, 55.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 56.

<sup>14</sup> Like a kind of cyber-sexual Zeus, Vaughan sleeps with nearly every character in the novel or it is implied that he already has. During the car-crash show, James has 'the sense that Vaughan was controlling us all, giving each of us what we most wanted and most feared', Ballard, *Crash*, 76.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

adorned with great tubes like serpents with explosive breath ... a roaring motor car which seems to run on machine-gun fire'.<sup>16</sup> Through Vaughan's obsession with Elizabeth Taylor, photos of bodies mutilated by car crashes, 'the mysterious eroticism of wounds; the perverse logic of blood-soaked instrument panels, seat-belts smeared with excrement, sun visors lined with brain tissue',<sup>17</sup> a perverse sinister world unfolds in front of the reader's imagination.

Manuel, in his writings on utopian thought states that:

When a social order is dissolving, some of its members will strip the body before it is cold. They perform autopsies on the carcass while it still has a breath of life in it.<sup>18</sup>

Ballard undertakes such an autopsy, and describes with the necessary critical and emotional distance of a physician the symptoms of time and society which sets the background for *Crash*.<sup>19</sup> He describes the twentieth-century as dominated by 'the marriage of reason and nightmare', 'sinister technologies and the dreams that money can buy', in which sex and paranoia reign supremely over people's lives. Past and future have ceased to exist, and people live in an infantilised world 'where any demand, any possibility, whether for life-styles, travel, sexual roles and identities, can be satisfied instantly'. We live in an ever more ambiguous world, which makes everyone complicit in the celebration of ultimate consumerism. With the situation being as such, *Crash* acts as 'an extreme metaphor for an extreme situation, a kit of desperate measures only for use in an extreme crisis'. *Crash* was first published as a short story in Ballard's *The Atrocity Exhibition*, which, to some extent, is an even

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<sup>16</sup> 'We declare that the splendour of the world has been enriched by a new beauty. We will sing of (...) the nocturnal vibration of the arsenals and the workshops beneath their violent electric moons: the gluttonous railway stations devouring smoking serpents; (...) great-breasted locomotives, puffing on the rails like enormous steel horses with long tubes for bridle.' F. T. Marinetti, 'Futurist Manifesto' in U. Apollonio (ed.), *Documents of 20th Century Art: Futurist Manifestos* (New York, 1973).

<sup>17</sup> Ballard, *Crash*, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Wagar, *J.G. Ballard and the Transvaluation of Utopia*, 54.

<sup>19</sup> 1983, Ballard, interview with Graeme Revell: 'In a sense, I'm assembling the materials of an autopsy, and I'm treating reality- the reality we inhabit-as if it were a cadaver, or, let's say, the contents of a special kind of forensic inquisition' quoted in *Ibid.*, 64.

more extreme version of this particular kind of utopian criticism of the flaws in the 'late capitalist machine'.<sup>20</sup>

Anti-pornography feminists have almost unanimously criticised porn on the basis that it leads to an objectification of women.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, as Zadie Smith writes, the book's 'phallogentric' obsession with cars, as well as descriptions of 'penises entering the leg wounds of disabled lady drivers' will undoubtedly strike an inflammatory chord amongst those concerned with the patriarchal suppression of women.<sup>22</sup>

Yet Ballard deliberately objectifies every single one of his characters, turning them into mere objects of consumption. But the driving force behind this objectification is not the patriarchy, but society as a whole, and everyone, from the fascinated but passive onlookers of car crash sites to the characters themselves, is complicit in this objectification, as the following passages illustrates:

A considerable number of children were present, many lifted on their parent's shoulders to give them a better view. (...) None of the spectators showed any signs of alarm. They looked down at the scene with the calm and studied interest of intelligent buyers at a leading bloodstock sale. Their relaxed postures implied a shared understanding of the most subtle points, as if they all realised the full significance of the displacement of the limousine's radiator grille, the distortion of the taxi's body frame, the patterns of frosting on its shattered windshield.<sup>23</sup>

Greenland, as well as Delville<sup>24</sup> has described the characters in a Ballard story as 'subordinated to their values as roles or signs'.<sup>25</sup> As such, they are devoid of any psychological traits that would explain their actions, 'human beings from whom all

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<sup>20</sup> D. A. Foster, 'J. G. Ballard's Empire of the Senses: Perversion and the Failure of Authority' (1993) 108:3 *PMLA* 519.

<sup>21</sup> C. A. MacKinnon, 'Francis Biddle's sister: pornography, civil rights, and speech' in *Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law* (Harvard, 1987), 176.

<sup>22</sup> Z. Smith, *Sex and Wheels*.

<sup>23</sup> Ballard, *Crash*, 127.

<sup>24</sup> M. Delville, *J.G. Ballard*, (Plymouth, 1998), 4.

<sup>25</sup> C. Greenland, *The Entropy Exhibition: Michael Moorcock and the British 'New Wave' in Science Fiction* (London, 1983), 99.

time has been eroded, and reduced to the essence of their own geometries'.<sup>26</sup> Working high-profile jobs, beautiful, self-assured, his characters are utterly perfect: Catherine Ballard (an independent woman by all accounts),<sup>27</sup> Dr Helen Remington, and James, are all as clean and perfect as the objects they consume: despite their individual sexual depravities. Yet this post-emotional, hyper-sexual world in which 'human beings emerge as strangely distanced and detached observers'<sup>28</sup> does not allow for the expression of real eroticism and desire.<sup>29</sup>

It is only with the destruction of the body that they awaken into a new realm of sensuality and indeed reality. In a much quoted passage, James notes 'after the commonplaces of everyday life, with their muffled dramas, all my organic expertise for dealing with physical injury had long been blunted or forgotten. The crash was the only real experience I had been through for years'.<sup>30</sup> Dr Helen Remington, her sexuality previously 'untouched', is 'reborn' into a new realm of liberated sexuality after her car crash.<sup>31</sup> Before she gets crippled in a car-crash, Gabrielle is described as 'a conventional young woman whose symmetrical face and unstretched skin spelled out the whole economy of a cozy and passive life, of minor flirtations in the backs of cheap cars enjoyed without any sense of the real possibilities of her body'.<sup>32</sup> They all discover true reality in the sublime world of 'benevolent technologies',<sup>33</sup> beyond the all conventional notions of good and evil.<sup>34</sup>

In Lacan's and Bataille's terms, the only real possibility to experience pleasure is through pain.<sup>35</sup> In the union between the organic and the technological, Ballard's characters experience what Bataille would call true eroticism: 'true' because it takes

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<sup>26</sup> Ballard, *A Users Guide to the Millenium* (London, 1996), 86.

<sup>27</sup> 'Catherine was now taking flying lessons, and with one of her boyfriends had started a small air-tourist charter firm. All these activities she pursued with a single mind, deliberately marking out her independence and self-reliance as if staking her claim to a terrain that would later soar in value' Ballard, *Crash*, 20.

<sup>28</sup> Delville, *J.G. Ballard*, 5.

<sup>29</sup> J. Baudrillard, 'Ballard's *Crash*' translated by A. B. Evan, (1991) 18:3 *Science Fiction Studies* 317.

<sup>30</sup> Ballard, *Crash*, 28.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 16f.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>34</sup> Wagar, *J.G. Ballard and the Transvaluation of Utopia*, 54.

<sup>35</sup> E. Dylan, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (London, 2002), 93.

the individual to 'farthest bounds of possibility' which is only in death.<sup>36</sup> It is the ultimate mystical negation of logical positivism, of any conventional understanding of pleasure. In his *Accursed Share*, Bataille writes:

But how can we solve the enigma, how can we measure up to the universe if we content ourselves with the slumber of conventional knowledge? If one has the patience, and the courage, to read my book, one will see that it contains studies conducted according to the rules of a reason that does not relent, and solutions to political problems deriving from a traditional wisdom, but one will also find in it this affirmation: that the sexual is in time, when the tiger is in space. The comparison follows from considerations of energy economy that leave no room for poetic fantasy, but it requires thinking on a level with a play of forces that runs counter to ordinary calculations.<sup>37</sup>

In an interview with Graeme Revell, Ballard said his purpose is 'to break the conventional enamel that encases everything', to transcend the world by engaging it directly and without fear. Deviant and perverse ideas may have more power to lead us to 'some sort of moral truth' than ideas borrowed from 'conventional morality'.<sup>38</sup> There is a strong potential for subversion in this lethal mystical utopia, this 'thirst for spiritual renewal' through destruction of the self: like the Futurists, Vaughan rehearses and plans his own death.<sup>39</sup> The new world can only arise if one is willing to sacrifice oneself. In this idea, the same logic reigns that pervades the writings of de Sade: 'Nothing would be reborn, nothing would be regenerated without destructions. Destruction, hence, like creation, is one of Nature's mandates'.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> G. Bataille, *Eroticism* translated by M. Dalwood (London, 1987), 24.

<sup>37</sup> G. Bataille, *The Accursed Share* translated by R. Hurley (Brooklyn, 2013), 11f.

<sup>38</sup> Ballard quoted Wagar, *J.G. Ballard and the Transvaluation of Utopia*, 61.

<sup>39</sup> Delville, *J.G. Ballard*, 39.

<sup>40</sup> D. A. F. De Sade, *Philosophy in the Bedroom* translated by R. Seaver & A. Wainhouse (2002), digitised by Supervert 32C Inc, 73. Available:

<[https://itp.nyu.edu/classes/germline-spring2013/files/2013/01/philosophy\\_in\\_the\\_bedroom.pdf](https://itp.nyu.edu/classes/germline-spring2013/files/2013/01/philosophy_in_the_bedroom.pdf)>  
[Accessed 15.07.14].



As Baudrillard has argued, the aspect of photography and cinema is inseparable from the fusion of the technical and the sexual.<sup>41</sup> In the world of *Crash*, the oversaturation with images of violence has led to a certain lethargy, boredom and passiveness among their audience. Due to this, empathy and care has become mere 'pantomimes', 'gestures' and 'moral gymnastics'.<sup>42</sup>

In her sophisticated eyes, I was already becoming a kind of emotional cassette, taking my place with all those scenes of pain and violence that illuminated the margins of our lives-television newsreels of wars and student riots, natural disasters and police brutality which we vaguely watched on the colour TV set in our bedroom as we masturbated each other.

It is unsurprising that it was adapted for the screen. The film's notorious opening sequence consists of three sexual acts set in a plane garage, a storage room full of cameras and on a balcony overlooking a seemingly infinite net of motorways. In these few minutes encapsulate what James in the novel describes as:

a glimpse of an unmoving world, of the thousands of drivers sitting passively in their cars on the motorway embankments along the horizon, seemed to be a unique vision of this machine landscape, an invitation to explore the viaducts of our minds.<sup>43</sup>

The classical structure of mainstream films can be characterised by 'continuum of cause and effect' and hence, an overall linear narrative that lives off the 'desires' driving individual characters and actions, and creating chains of cause and effect.<sup>44</sup> The visual and musical aesthetic steers its audience's emotions, allowing them to come to conclusions as to the film's moral content. Cronenberg's *Crash* does have all of these features, yet they are stripped of any kind of comfort that traditional storytelling might have provided. In fact, Cronenberg's American agent suggested the insertion of a

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<sup>41</sup> Baudrillard, *Ballard's Crash*, 317.

<sup>42</sup> Ballard, *Crash*, 24.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>44</sup> D. Bordwell & K. Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (New York, 1990), 70.

voice-over commentator 'a voice of comfort and to explain the film to everybody'.<sup>45</sup> Yet critical self-scrutiny and uncertainty was precisely what Cronenberg wanted.

His characters desire sexual satisfaction, and this is the only thing they are moved by, which is contrasted by a cinematic aesthetic that renders their sexual depravities almost disconcertingly un-erotic. The repetitive nature of the opening sequence and the inability to discern any kind of motivation in the minds of these serenely beautiful libertines make it nearly impossible to discern some kind of moral message from the film. In this, it is a perfect translation of the literary autopsy Ballard conducts in his novel. The film, however adds another layer: Howard Shore's score, in bringing together electric and classical instruments, absorbs the viewer into a claustrophobic and yet romantic world. The juxtaposition of these images, which might easily be construed as crude and pornographic, and of the lyrical soundtrack create a sense of unease.

The story is framed by the sentence 'Maybe next time', referring to this one, unattainable orgasm that keeps both Catherine and James moving from one sexual encounter to the next. The very last picture shows them lying side by side in the grass next to the wreck of Catherine's car. 'Are you hurt?' asks James, but she is not. 'Maybe next time' he says, by now entirely caught in Vaughan's universe in which the only way pleasure can be experienced is through a car crash. This drives the obscene logic of consumer culture to its uttermost extremes.

And it undoubtedly hit a nerve, not only in the UK but also in the US and France.<sup>46</sup> When the film was released, Alexander Walker, an outspoken critic of censorship and longstanding defender of *A Clockwork Orange*, issued a report from Cannes that condemned *Crash*. The report was then published in the *London Evening Standard* under the headline 'A movie beyond the bounds of depravity'.<sup>47</sup> It was under this headline that veritable storm was released: About 400 reports, articles and statements of politicians appeared on the radio, television, and in the newspapers. The writers of *The Crash Controversy* state that it was the very vagueness of Walker's original article which turned *Crash* into a projection surface for all kinds of cultural and moral

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<sup>45</sup> M. Barker, J. Arthurs & R. Harindranath, *The Crash Controversy – Censoring Campaigns and Film Reception* (London, 2001), 5.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 1f.

anxieties, often expressed by people who had not even seen the film. *The Daily Mail* was leading the campaign against the film, turning into a matter of 'national significance'.<sup>48</sup> What is interesting is that many of the film's most outspoken critics were aware of the fact that this was not about 'imaginary disasters', but a 'symptom of a universal moral decline'.<sup>49</sup> Bell Mooney from *The Daily Mail* wrote that:

The limits of the freedom of expression [is] one of the most vital issues we have to confront today. About whether we shall allow our society to be corrupted by a handful of people who believe that there are no boundaries to what the screen should show or the writer describe. (...) I have argued that unless people like myself take a stand against the seemingly endless downward spiral of sex and violence in books, film and on television, the world that I was born into will disappear forever, and we shall allow our children to inherit a moral vacuum, not a civilised community.<sup>50</sup>

John Bell from the Westminster City Council justified the ban in the cinemas in West London, where it remains banned until today,<sup>51</sup> by stating that he cannot accept a film as this 'So much of this kind of violence is going on and we have had enough of it. Let us stop it'.<sup>52</sup> What the critics feared was copycat behaviour,<sup>53</sup> in an audience that was defined as putatively vulnerable, corrupt or depraved: 'weak egos', 'incomplete' in their moral conditioning.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid. 1f/11 ff.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>51</sup> 'Squeezed into Somebody else's Mould' in Ballard, *Crash*, 20 (Appendix).

<sup>52</sup> Barker et al, *The Crash Controversy*, 3.

<sup>53</sup> M. Fisher (Labour shadow arts spokesman) criticised the Royal Automobile Club for allowing that Crash might have some 'educational' benefit saying that 'It is distasteful that the RAC is supporting the film. If there is one area of copycat behaviour, it will be car crashes' Ibid., 4.

<sup>54</sup> A Western Daily Press Editorial described the films audience in the following words 'Ram-raiding and reckless driving by youngsters for the fun of it are already endemic throughout the country, with a particular West Country favourite being a game of chicken in which the drivers of stolen cars signal they are going in one direction before going in the other. When it is a fact that scenes of violence or depravity from other films have produced real-life copycats, it is not being sensational to suggest this one's lethally reckless driving for sexual thrills, fetishism, voyeurism and sadomasochism could prove the latest game for some lunatic West thrill-seekers.' Ibid., 7.

The BBFC was at the heart of this controversy. Eventually, the board based its decision to give the film an 18 rating, uncut, on the report by psychologist Dr Paul Britton who stated that there was no known fetishism to which the film might appeal.<sup>55</sup> He later revoked this statement and claimed that:

Young people, and those whose moral and philosophical systems have not yet matured, or who are particularly impressionable, are much more likely to be influenced by the moral vacuum associated with the sexuality shown by the main characters. This is significant because sexually inexperienced people may look to the main characters as models.<sup>56</sup>

It is maybe not unsurprising that the controversy was going on in the year before the general election, in which the *Mail* was aligned with Tony Blair,<sup>57</sup> and stood up against 'liberalism', the 'anything goes' society, and the 'intellectual establishment'.<sup>58</sup>

When the book was published in 1973, the reviewer for the *New York Times* called it 'the most repulsive book [he had] ever read', 'freakish', while *The Times* stated that 'the novel's obsession with sado-masochism via car-crashing is repellent' and Martin Adams from *The Observer* called it nothing but 'an exercise in vicious whimsy'.<sup>59</sup> While all three acknowledged that it was well written, they almost unanimously advised their audience not to read it. Another commentator even went as far as saying that Ballard is 'beyond psychiatric help. Do Not Publish!'.<sup>60</sup>

With state censorship being officially abolished, critics of the book could rely on nothing but public opinion, and hope that only a small number of people would chose to read it. In 1996, when the film came out, the danger was much higher as the cinema is a far more popular and sociable medium for the formation opinions and attitudes.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 142 ff.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>59</sup> 'What the Papers said in 1973' in Ballard, *Crash*, 12f (Appendix).

<sup>60</sup> T. Goldstein, 'J.G.Ballard: Visionary of the Apocalypse' (1982) April *Heavy Metal* 38-40. Available: <[http://jgballard.ca/media/1982\\_april\\_heavy\\_metal\\_magazine.html](http://jgballard.ca/media/1982_april_heavy_metal_magazine.html)> [Accessed 15.07.14].

<sup>61</sup> Barker et al, *The Crash Controversy*, 34 f.

It has been shown how the politics of transgression in *Crash* inhabit a morally ambiguous and subversive literary and cinematic territory, in which pornography, technology and mystical utopian thought merge and become a black mirror of society. In 1982, David Pringle, a frequent Ballard critic stated that 'For the last thirty years we have been living in J. G. Ballard's world'.<sup>62</sup> The moral panic the book and the film produced, and the debate they generated certainly suggests that Ballard's particular form of social criticism struck a chord with the public.

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<sup>62</sup> Goldstein, *J.G. Ballard*.

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