

**EDUARDO PAOLOZZI AND J.G. BALLARD: REPRESENTING NEW BRITISH
MODERNITIES, c. 1966-1980**

**A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of
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Abstract

The significance of the relationship between Scottish artist Sir Eduardo Paolozzi (1924-2005) and English novelist J.G. Ballard (1930-2009) has previously been overlooked in art historical and literary scholarship. This thesis fills this research gap through the analysis of how the pair's works overlapped thematically to represent a particular strain of British modernity. By looking at shared cultural circumstances after World War II, parallels will be drawn between the work of Paolozzi and Ballard in the late years of British modernism. Drawing upon the topics of science fiction, Surrealism, the neo-avant-garde and militaristic and crash aesthetics, this thesis explores the various themes which Paolozzi and Ballard encountered during the period of their friendship.

Overall, this comparative analysis reveals that despite dissimilar upbringings, Paolozzi and Ballard's harrowing experiences of the Second World War culminated in a dual reaction against the stagnant flow of British modernism during the late postwar era. My thesis demonstrates this through their involvement with literary magazines as well as their mutually shared interests as expressed in their works of art and writings. By creating works which appropriated early twentieth century traditions, Paolozzi and Ballard rejected their immediate modernist inheritance and turned to the modernist past with renewed avant-garde intent. As exemplified in their works, the pair together represented the late postwar transition of British modernity during the dawn of what would come to be called 'postmodernism'.

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Introduction

'I tried to visualise myself at the moment of the collision, the failure of the technical relationship between my own body, the assumptions of the skin, and the engineering structure which supported it. I remembered visiting the Imperial War Museum with a close friend, and the paths that surrounded the cockpit segment of a World War II Japanese Zero fighter aircraft.'¹



Figure 0.1. Eduardo Paolozzi and J.G. Ballard at the Imperial War Museum, 1971. Paolozzi Archive, Dean Gallery, Edinburgh.

Five years ago whilst looking at the prints of Scottish artist Sir Eduardo Paolozzi (1924-2005) in Robin Spencer's *Eduardo Paolozzi: Writings and Interviews*,² I came across a photograph which captured my imagination (figure 0.1). It was a playful photo of Paolozzi engaged in conversation with British novelist James Graham Ballard (1930-2009) at the Imperial War Museum in London, dated 1971. Ballard had long been a favourite author of mine, after reading his novels *Empire of the Sun* (1984) and *Crash* (1973). After I learned that Paolozzi had been close friends with Ballard during the time he would have been writing *Crash*, I gave the novel another reading and discovered quotes from the novel which potentially referenced Paolozzi. In the novel, Ballard uses his own name, hinting at the possibility for speculating other non-fiction affiliations. Most notably, the character James Ballard visits the Imperial War Museum with a friend as well as a Road Research Laboratory in west London, a place where Paolozzi would likely have visited as well.³

¹ J.G. Ballard. *Crash*. New York: Picador, 1973. 68.

² Robin Spencer, ed. *Eduardo Paolozzi: Writings and Interviews*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

³ *Crash*. 10.

Left frustrated by the lack of literature about this pairing of creative minds, I decided to begin a research project to satisfy my curiosity about them. Why is their relationship so often downplayed and overlooked? Few photos exist of Paolozzi and Ballard together. One of these photos, dated 1968, portrays Ballard having a laugh at Paolozzi's studio in Chelsea (figure 0.2). This is the earliest published photograph of them together.



Figure 0.2. Ballard at Paolozzi's Chelsea studio, 1968. J.G. Ballard. *Miracles of Life*.

After I pursued the connections between Paolozzi and Ballard more in detail, I had the pleasure of meeting prolific author Michael Moorcock (1939 -), former editor of *New Worlds*, who explained to me that he introduced Ballard and Paolozzi over lunch during the summer of 1966 after he decided to include the work of contemporary artists into his science fiction monthly. I had initial intentions to interview Ballard at the start of my research, but he passed away from cancer in the spring of 2009.

After much consideration, I decided to base my research on Paolozzi and Ballard's relationship around their mutual understanding of particular themes that were significant during the 'last gasp of modernism'⁴ which occurred during the late Sixties and looked backwards and forwards from there. I toyed with the idea of focusing my research around their mutual obsession with technology. However, this narrow focus would not have provided a wide enough account of what was significant about their interests. Although I do not present a full spectrum of their recurring tropes in this thesis, instead my focus is on key elements shared between them during a crucial shift in modernism in Britain. The research

⁴ Michael Moorcock. Interview with the author. 31 January 2010.

question I pursue in the following thesis is how the works of Paolozzi and Ballard presented new British identities, including ones that often maintained a pre-war cultural perspective. Their often retrospective outlooks combined with emerging, alternative literary and artistic forms during a period of cultural shift and change in Britain. This resulted in the production of a distinct counterculture, raising the question of how their works signify an innovative period of British modernity.

Related scholarship

Around the time of Paolozzi's mid-career retrospective at Tate Gallery in 1971, several books discussing his work of the Fifties and Sixties were published. Substantial scholarship about Paolozzi includes writing from Rosemary Miles and Diane Kirkpatrick, with shorter works including essays from Robin Spencer, Uwe Schneede and Frank Whitford.⁵ Spencer has edited two books about Paolozzi and is currently working on Paolozzi's biography. One of Spencer's books, *Eduardo Paolozzi: Writing and Interviews*, is an edited compilation of Paolozzi's essays and contains transcripts of many of his interviews leading up to 2000.

More recent, but less extensive studies of Paolozzi's work have been produced by cultural historians David Brittain and Ben Highmore. Brittain's essay 'The Jet Age Compendium: Eduardo Paolozzi at *Ambit*'⁶ looked briefly at Paolozzi's contributions to the magazine, including the time period in which Ballard served as prose editor. Brittain gave a short history of the magazine, tracing its avant-garde roots back to the early twentieth century and assessing its major preoccupations during the years Paolozzi was a contributor, 1967 to 1980. Relevant to this thesis, Brittain drew parallels between the work of Paolozzi and Ballard. Notably, he referenced their contributions to *Ambit* magazine and cited similarities in popular culture as key subject matter for both Paolozzi's collages and Ballard's

⁵ For a general bibliography on Eduardo Paolozzi, see: Arts Council. *Eduardo Paolozzi: Sculpture, Drawings, Collages and Graphics*. Stamford: J.E.C. Potter & Son, 1976. Christopher Finch. *Paolozzi-A Print Retrospective*. London: UC Berkeley and Editions Alecto, 1968. Richard Hamilton. *Eduardo Paolozzi: Recent Sculpture, Drawings and Collage*. Newcastle: University of Newcastle, 1965. Diane Kirkpatrick. *Eduardo Paolozzi*. London: Studio Vista, 1970. Winfried Konnertz. *Eduardo Paolozzi*. Koln: DuMont, 1984. Rosemary Miles. *The Complete Prints of Eduardo Paolozzi: Prints, Drawings, Collages 1944-1977*. London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 1977. Robin Spencer (ed). *Eduardo Paolozzi: Recurring Themes*. New York: Rizzoli, 1984. Frank Whitford. *Eduardo Paolozzi*. London: Tate Gallery, 1971. Robin Spencer (ed). *Eduardo Paolozzi: Writings and Interviews*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

⁶ David Brittain. *The Jet Age Compendium*. London: Four Corners Books, 2009.

fiction. Brittain also discussed the factors explaining why Paolozzi was invited by *Ambit* editors Martin Bax and Ballard to join the editorial team, noting shared interests and obsessions as predominant reasons for their recruitment. Highmore's essay 'Image-breaking, God-making: Paolozzi's Brutalism',⁷ considered Paolozzi's New Brutalist work in relation to the Independent Group, a network of artists, architects and critics at the Institute of Contemporary Arts who invented Pop during the early Fifties. Highmore referenced a quotation from Ballard describing the bombsites left behind after World War II to illustrate the prominence of war in the minds of artists and writers during the post-war era.

Over the past five years, there has been a resurgence of interest in the work of Ballard and Paolozzi through exhibitions like the 2008 Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona's 'J.G. Ballard: Autopsia del nou mil·lenni' and the Gagosian Gallery's spring 2010 'Crash: Homage to J.G. Ballard'. Paolozzi was the feature of Raven Row Gallery's exhibition in 2009 titled 'Jet Age Compendium: Paolozzi at *Ambit*'.

As Paolozzi and Ballard are well known within the art and literary worlds, there exists plenty of solidly written scholarship about them as individuals. By contrast, scant research has previously been undertaken to understand them as making parallel creative output, as I demonstrate. My approach to this subject consists primarily of a comparative analysis of the post-war works by Ballard and Paolozzi. A previous comparison of the work of Ballard and Paolozzi was conducted by Jeannette Baxter in her 2009 study of Ballard's Surrealist heritage.⁸ She gave two specific comparisons between the pair and discussed Ballard's relationship with key members of the Independent Group (IG). Notably, she referenced Paolozzi's graphic series *Moonstrips Empire News* (1967) and *General Dynamic F.U.N.* (1965-1970) as akin to Ballard's 'aesthetic of confrontation', meaning that both preferred to confront their audiences with topics often overlooked by larger society.⁹ In another comparison, Baxter looked at several of Paolozzi's sculptures of heads, linking them to Ballard's version of radical Surrealism.¹⁰

The primary intention of the following thesis is to bridge the research gap which exists between the secondary bibliography between Paolozzi and Ballard. This thesis

⁷ Ben Highmore. 'Image-breaking, God-making: Paolozzi's Brutalism'. *OCTOBER* 136, Spring 2011. 87–104.

⁸ Jeannette Baxter. *J.G. Ballard's Surrealist Imagination: Spectacular Authorship*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.

⁹ Baxter. 66.

¹⁰ Baxter. 107-108.

expands upon Baxter's methodology by entering into a greater comparative enquiry regarding other thematic approaches which Ballard and Paolozzi undertook, some of which likely resulted from their friendship. These themes include science fiction, Surrealism, military aesthetics, neo-avant-garde and the crash. Each theme is given attention with a view to how both Paolozzi and Ballard interpreted them using relevant references to cultural counterparts.

Scholarship about Ballard's literature and his relationship to science fiction and postmodernism is vast.¹¹ For this thesis, I focus on several key secondary works which discuss Ballard, the first three decades of his fiction and/or his relationship to art. The most useful primary source for personal history is Ballard's autobiography *Miracles of Life: From Shanghai to Shepperton*, published the year prior to the author's death.¹² In the book, Ballard candidly discussed his relationship with Paolozzi, which he admitted was rocky at times. He also presented an encompassing vision of what the intellectual culture of London was like in the late Sixties and Seventies, including run-ins with fellow *New Worlds* and *Ambit* contributors and editors.

In addition to taking into consideration primary and secondary sources, the original research undertaken on this project has led to the conclusion that although Paolozzi and Ballard remained friends until about the late Seventies, the work produced during the following years no longer follows a similar trajectory. Perhaps the most significant contribution of new information contained in the thesis is a series of ongoing interviews held with Moorcock. There was no collaboration or joint project between Paolozzi and Ballard, although they proposed a project with Dr Christopher Evans in 1968. Notably, but not indicative of an intellectual fusion or crossover, Paolozzi made an homage to Ballard in an early 1980 issue of *Ambit*.¹³

¹¹ For key secondary literature about Ballard's fiction, see: Scott Bukatman. *Terminal Identity: The Virtual Subject in Postmodern Science Fiction*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993. Jean Baudrillard. *Simulations*. Trans. P. Foss, P. Patton and P. Beitchman. New York: Semiotext[e], 1983. Andrzej Gasiorek. *J.G. Ballard*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005. Iain Sinclair. *Crash*. London: British Film Institute, 1999. Roger Luckhurst. *'The Angle Between Two Walls': The Fiction of J.G. Ballard*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997. Jeannette Baxter. *J.G. Ballard's Surrealist Imagination: Spectacular Authorship*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009. Michael Moorcock. Edited by Langdon Jones. *The New SF: An original anthology of modern speculative fiction*. London: Arrow Books, 1971.

¹² J.G. Ballard. *Miracles of Life: From Shanghai to Shepperton*. London: Harper Perennial, 2008.

¹³ Some minor correspondence exists between the pair and from Ballard to Robin Spencer concerning Paolozzi, but I have not been granted access to these by Spencer. There are no existing extended letters between the pair according to what Spencer and the British Library (in possession of Ballard's archives) have informed me.

The political and aesthetic resonances shared between Paolozzi and Ballard are discussed in the following work. In particular, the pair both expressed anti-Vietnam War sentiments as well as more generally critiques of American politics and culture. Additionally, they shared a common interest in a military aesthetic as demonstrated in Ballard's descriptive writing and Paolozzi's collages. Their works touched upon the prolific American use of media as propaganda for promoting war and consumerism. Repeatedly throughout the duration of their relationship, Paolozzi manipulated American adverts for his collages in a similar manner that Ballard drew upon American media references for his experimental literature. Their mutual appropriation of pop culture dated back to an early twentieth century avant-garde tradition rooted in the Surrealist and Dada movements. On a personal level, Paolozzi and Ballard's life experiences as young men - though different - informed their creative preferences as adults.

Biographical contexts

This section addresses the formational life events of both Paolozzi and Ballard and therefore presents a historical context in order to provide a justification for the thematic crossovers within their works produced up until 1980. Paolozzi and Ballard came from different social backgrounds. Paolozzi was born into a working-class Italian immigrant family in Leith, just outside Edinburgh, Scotland. Ballard's parents were upper middle-class British expatriates who lived in Shanghai, China, until after World War II. Paolozzi and Ballard's interest in a survival aesthetic was intrinsically linked with their wartime experiences during the Second World War, particularly Ballard's imprisonment and Paolozzi's loss of family.

In an attempt to explain the age difference between Paolozzi and Ballard, Jeff Nuttall wrote, 'What way we made in 1945 and in the following years depended largely on our age, for right at that point, at the point of the dropping of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the generations became divided in a very crucial way.'¹⁴ This division of generations, Nuttall argues, was based around one's age in relation to puberty in 1945. Paolozzi was 21 years old at the time the bombs were dropped in 1945; Ballard was 15, and therefore right in the

¹⁴ Jeff Nuttall. *Bomb Culture*. London: Granada, 1968. 20. For more on Nuttall and his role in small-time publishing in the late 1960s, see David Brittain. 'Little, British...' *Eye* 65. 2007.

middle of his pubescent years. Although Paolozzi was only six years older than Ballard, that six years meant Paolozzi was drafted as a soldier during the war.¹⁵

Nuttall's hypothesis about the outlook of Britons during the time the Americans dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 provides insight to Paolozzi and Ballard's reactions, given their age difference at the time the bomb was dropped. Those who were post-pubescent in 1945, such as Paolozzi, 'found that they were incapable of conceiving of life *without* a future.'¹⁶ Nuttall presented the idea that a future had been blocked by the H-bomb, and therefore in order to thrive socially, one had to compensate accordingly by reacting to the bomb in a positive way. Nuttall wrote that people in Ballard's younger age group 'were incapable of conceiving of life *with* a future... They never knew a sense of future.'¹⁷ This concept of not being able to conceive hope for the future will be explored later with Ballard's memories of the war and how he adapted them into his writing, most obviously and famously with his semi-autobiographical *Empire of the Sun* (1984). The novel was based on Ballard's boyhood experiences growing up in Shanghai as the son of wealthy British immigrants. Ballard remarked in a radio interview in 2002, that upon his first arrival in England in 1946, he found little relevance for his childhood experience in Shanghai because, as he understood it, people living in England were concerned with World War II as it had occurred in Europe.¹⁸

Despite this, Ballard admitted there were psychological strands of his war-time experiences in his fiction leading up to *Empire of the Sun*, although this represented the first time his writing directly reflected upon his life spent in Shanghai.¹⁹ In the same interview, Ballard quoted himself, saying he felt as though it took him 'twenty years to forget Shanghai, and then another twenty years to remember it.'²⁰ Ballard repeated this phrase again in *Miracles of Life*, however by 2008, he admitted that his tumultuous youth was certainly an issue he wished to address in his work.²¹ Christopher Frayling argued that more than likely, Paolozzi's interest in technology and warfare, by contrast, is linked to the tragic event which killed his father, uncle and grandfather when they were deported to Canada from Scotland

¹⁵ Ballard did join the Royal Air Force later (by choice), in 1953, nearly ten years after the end of World War II.

¹⁶ Nuttall. *Bomb Culture*. 20.

¹⁷ Ibid 20.

¹⁸ J.G. Ballard. 'Bookclub' with James Naughtie. BBC Radio 4. Original broadcast 3 Feb 2002.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid. 248.

as aliens and their ship was torpedoed and sunk.²² Although Paolozzi spent some of his childhood summers at Fascist camps in Italy, this was a common practice for most Italian children as a way to get out of the city for a holiday.

Dissimilar to Paolozzi's family, Ballard's family was not personally affected by the tragedy of death in the family during the war. However, death as a subject still proved to be a strong component in Ballard's memory of his Shanghai childhood. Looking back on his own formative years, Ballard recollected:

Death was everywhere... Tens of thousands died on the streets every year; cholera, smallpox, typhoid were rife. I mean it was a place that sort of challenged every conceivable assumption that we now make about what constitutes civilised life.²³

A member of the younger generation, Ballard was initially more vocal about the Vietnam War than Paolozzi, whose disenchantment with the Americanisation of British culture came more gradually and was often less pronounced than Ballard's, as will be discussed in the third chapter. If and when relics of war were used in Ballard and Paolozzi's creative output – sculpture, collage, painting, writing – they were expressed differently and in ways that related pointedly to their backgrounds.

Ballard remarked in a radio interview in 2002 that upon first arrival in England in 1946, he found little relevance for pre-1945 memories because, as he understood it, people living in England were concerned with World War II as it had occurred in Europe more than in the Far East.²⁴ Despite this, Ballard admitted there were psychological strands of his war-time experiences in his fiction leading up to *Empire of the Sun*, although this represented the first time his writing directly reflected upon his life in Shanghai.²⁵ In the same interview,

²² Christopher Frayling, 'Great Lives: Series 25'. Eduardo Paolozzi. Host Matthew Parris interviewing Antonio Carluccio and Christopher Frayling. BBC Radio 4. Broadcast 23 Aug 2011.

²³ J.G. Ballard, 'Marinated in war and violence': Philip Dodd interviews J.G. Ballard. Published 7 Feb 2008. <http://www.ballardian.com/marinaded-in-war-and-violence-philip-dodd-interviews-jg-ballard>.

²⁴ Ballard, 'Bookclub'. 3 Feb 2002.

²⁵ Ibid.

Ballard quoted himself, saying he felt as though it took him 'twenty years to forget Shanghai, and then another twenty years to remember it.'²⁶

Although Paolozzi spent some of his childhood summers at Fascist camps in Italy, this was a common practice for most Italian children as a way to get out of the city for a holiday. Frayling commented that more than likely, Paolozzi's interest in technology and warfare is linked to the tragic event which killed his father, uncle and grandfather when they were deported to Canada from Scotland as aliens and their ship was torpedoed and sunk rather than his time spent at Fascist summer camps.²⁷ These biographical contexts, as I present in the following thesis, provide the basis for many of Paolozzi and Ballard's creative decisions. Although Ballard did not explicitly write about his wartime experiences until *Empire of the Sun*, he did previously publish short stories that described the impact of war on soldiers. Paolozzi also incorporated military themes into his work.

Key terms

Within the overall narrative of this thesis, several significant terms – which signal larger 'projects' - arise, unfold and are put into question in relation to literature and visual art. These include modernism, postmodernism, the avant-garde and neo-avant-garde. The task of defining these terms encounters some difficulty when considering the multiplicity of their definitions. Each of them carries particular connotations in the visual arts, architecture and literature. However, this thesis centres on the threads dealt with in visual art and literature, primarily short stories, novels and the occasional mixed media collage. The term 'modernism', for example, applies to Italian Futurism, its British counterpart Vorticism and the two variations of Surrealism discussed in this thesis. Modernism is perhaps the sole exception to this group of oft-garbled terminologies, as several of its participants penned manifestoes outlining their agendas. Even so, there exist shades of difference between the outcomes of modernism. For example, the Surrealist project as practiced on the European continent and in Britain developed in similar yet sometimes diverging ways, which will be dealt with later in the second chapter.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Frayling. 'Great Lives: Series 25 - Eduardo Paolozzi'. 23 Aug 2011.

Expressive of the experience of capitalism and quickly developing industrialisation, 'modernism' stands as a blanket term encompassing a movement of movements during a period of modernisation.²⁸ Dominating cultural output of the twentieth century, some of these movements were similar, with others reacting against each other. Modernism is often represented differently in literature and the visual arts, thereby obfuscating a determinate meaning at times. In literature, for example, historic modernism dealt primarily with a 'dissociation with traditional narrative' beginning around the mid-nineteenth century according to Jochen Schulte-Sasse.²⁹ Within this thesis, I have often made a concerted effort to relate the work of Paolozzi and Ballard to the end of modernism or to 'late modernism' rather than directly affiliate their work to the postmodern itself. For example, from a literary perspective, Ballard departed from using what Schulte-Sasse would have deemed 'traditional narrative' in the mid-1960s, or the later years of modernism leading up to the postmodern era. Paolozzi too broke away from linear narrative format during the same years by creating loose leaf screenprinted texts using fragmentation.

Postmodern theories which developed in the late Seventies and Eighties ignited the debate surrounding what the term 'modernity' meant, as it was, of course, deemed necessary to define the latter to make sense of the former. Postmodernism is a rather problematic term, as it has instigated multiple definitions amongst critics and writers.³⁰ Along similar lines, Perry Anderson defines postmodernism as analogous to the developments of modernism. Anderson categorises modernism's end according to a negative series of political turns. Similarly, postmodernism began based on political elements for Anderson: 'aesthetically little more than a minor twist in the downward spiral of modernism, though ideologically of much greater significance – should be seen as a product of the political

²⁸ For influential and firsthand accounts of major modernist movements which are useful in grasping how modernisation affected art, see: Filippo Tommaso Marinetti. 'The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism'. Trans. R.W. Flint. *Marinetti's Selected Writings*. London: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971. Robert Delaunay. 'On the Construction of Reality in Pure Painting'. Trans. Susan Suleiman. Leroy Breunig, ed. *Apollinaire on Art*. London: MFA Publications, 1972. Wyndham Lewis. 'Our Vortex'. *Blast*. London, June 1914. Guillaume Apollinaire. 'On the Subject in Modern Painting'. Breunig, op. cit. Tristan Tzara. 'Dada Manifesto 1918'. Trans. Ralph Mannheim. Robert Motherwell, ed. *The Dada Painters and Poets*. New York: Harvard University Press, 1951. Andre Breton. 'First Manifesto of Surrealism.' *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1969.

²⁹ Jochen Schulte-Sasse. Foreword. *Theory of the Avant-Garde*. Peter Burger. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1984. xii.

³⁰ Key secondary literature exploring the vanguard of postmodern theory includes: Raymond Williams. 'When Was Modernism?' *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*. London: Verso, 1989. Jean-Francois Lyotard. 'What is Postmodernism?' Trans. Regis Durand. Ihab and Sally Hassan (eds). *Innovation/Renovation*. Madison: University of Wisconsin: 1983. Julia Kristeva. 'Powers of Horror'. Trans. Leon Roudiez. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

defeat of the radical generation of the late Sixties.³¹ Another example can be found in the essay on the postmodern project by Frederic Jameson, 'The Deconstruction of Expression' (1984).³² In Jameson's essay, he proceeded to describe how a 'waning of affect' presented itself within art objects as different to the way they were presented during the modernist era – meaning that feelings, emotions or subjectivity was rendered void, particularly in relation to the human figure.³³ Similarly, Jameson cited Warhol's famous replication of Marilyn Monroe as an example of waning affect present in the postmodern. This thesis explores the extent to which some of the work by Ballard, Paolozzi and other artists influenced by popular culture used the postmodernist project as more than a simple stylistic descent from the modern or late modern.

Part of the dynamic relationship between the modern and the postmodern examined in this thesis is the relationship between the avant-garde and the neo-avant-garde. I will distinguish the different shades of meaning shared between these two complex, problematic terms.³⁴ Critic Hal Foster recently declared the dysfunctional nature of categorising the avant-garde and the neo-avant-garde which was popular during the Eighties, not to mention the modern and the postmodern as well. Even so, these terms still provide a useful, if often vague or abstract organizational framework to understand the work of Ballard and Paolozzi alongside their contemporaries. These are problematic terms rife with varying definitions, to be sure. My aim in this thesis, for example in chapter four's discussion of the neo-avant-garde, is not to solve any structural dilemmas regarding these problematic definitions, but rather to loosely provide a framework in which Paolozzi and Ballard's works can be organised. For instance, Clement Greenberg in his pioneering 1939 essay 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', wrote that the 'avant-garde poet or artist tries in effect to imitate God by creating something valid solely on its own terms' and 'independent of meanings, similar or originals'.³⁵ Rosalind Krauss, in a somewhat different approach, identified originality as one of the cornerstones of modernism and as a major claim of the avant-garde.³⁶ Accordingly,

³¹ Perry Anderson. *The Origins of Postmodernity*. London: Verso, 1998. 78.

³² Frederic Jameson. 'The Deconstruction of Expression'. *New Left Review*. London, 146, July/August 1984. 53-92.

³³ Ibid. 55.

³⁴ For key readings on the avant-garde and its successors, see: Mark Crinson and Claire Zimmerman, eds. *Neo-avant-garde and Postmodern Postwar Architecture in Britain and Beyond*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010. Hal Foster. *Compulsive Beauty*. London: MIT Press, 1993. Clement Greenberg. *Art and Culture: Critical Essays*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989.

³⁵ Clement Greenberg. 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch'. *Art and Culture: Critical Essays*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989. 6.

³⁶ Rosalind Krauss. 'The Originality of the Avant-Garde'. *October* 18. Cambridge, Fall 1981.

for Greenberg, the avant-garde attempted to produce that which is brand new in spite of the potentially artistically-dulling effects of capitalism's mass reproduction. As a successor to the avant-garde, the neo-avant-garde adapted the self-conscious mode of artistic construction as the avant-garde.³⁷ As Adorno had explained about the subjects of the late capitalist society, an original experience is not achievable. As such, this pessimistic notion was exemplified in neo-avant-garde repetitions, which were part in parcel of an increase in commodified subjectivity related to the later period of capitalism.³⁸

Chapter sequence

The following chapters describe how a selection of Paolozzi and Ballard's works overlap thematically to represent a particular strain of British modernity through shared cultural circumstances after World War II. The first chapter gives the social framework for Ballard and Paolozzi's interest in and involvement with science fiction magazines, as well as a relevant overview of Paolozzi's collection practices within the genre. Since Ballard's work from this period was later classified as 'New Wave,' how did his fiction differ from that of the other genre writers? What made his fiction more progressive, and therefore appealing to editors such as Moorcock? The second chapter extends several issues addressed in the first chapter in regards to Surrealism, particularly technology and trauma. How did Paolozzi and Ballard's versions of Surrealism relate to and differ from British and continental Surrealism? Whereas Surrealism was a concept based on fantasy, Ballard and Paolozzi's use of a military aesthetic demonstrated their interest in actual experiences. How did they show they were not escapists, a trait attributed to many pop culture appropriators? How did they represent disorder through the use of airplane imagery? These first three chapters, which discuss topics of a military aesthetic, Surrealism and science fiction, can all be absorbed under the umbrella of neo-avant-garde practices. The neo-avant-garde in Sixties Britain both recycled and appropriated techniques from British and continental early twentieth-century avant-gardes. The fourth chapter combines elements of the previous chapters by considering what innovations, methods and subject matters were relevant to their anti-modernist practices at *Ambit* magazine. Culminating the ideas addressed in the preceding

³⁷ David Hopkins, ed. *Neo-Avant-Garde*. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 2006. 54.

³⁸ Ibid. 64.

chapters, in the final, fifth chapter, the concept of the crash is critiqued against and within the historical avant-garde. This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the possibility of a unique British car culture during the Sixties and Seventies through the lens of Ballard's and, to a lesser extent, Paolozzi's neo-avant-garde practices. How does Ballard's literary obsession with crashes represent a uniquely British neo-avant-garde?

Overall, the aforementioned questions I have addressed in this thesis seek to draw parallels between the work of Ballard and Paolozzi during a pivotal historical point in British modernisms. The range of analyses and material discussed establish new research, thereby filling the previous void of scholarship about the relationship between the pair. Though my initial interest in Ballard and Paolozzi was based largely on Ballard's cult novel *Crash*, the research undertaken has demonstrated that their connection deeply intertwined with the British neo-avant-garde and the early stages of postmodernism.

Chapter 1

New Wave Science Fiction

'The New Wave collapsed because, unlike art, it had no infrastructure to sustain it. It wasn't properly recognised for being what it was, therefore it wasn't valued and was allowed to fade away even by its practitioners. It took great energy to inflate it. When its main exponents ran out of energy there was no one to replace them. Many of its writers such as Sladek and Disch did their best work for it. Writers like myself published our only serious work there. In art terms, the space where we showed our work had suddenly gone.'³⁹

Like most creative movements, British New Wave science fiction is best understood in hindsight. A short-lived era of experimental fiction, the New Wave brought together science fiction writers and artists from Britain and America in an unprecedented manner and aimed to change the existing form of pulp science fiction. The main publisher of the New Wave, writer and editor Michael Moorcock, admitted that speculative fiction sat neither with Utopian nor Dystopian fiction but was rather a 'sophisticated visionary impulse' expressed by writers.⁴⁰ Alongside this somewhat Romantic impulse, the forms used in speculative fiction took on a non-linear form, as exemplified by contributing writers such as William Burroughs and Ballard.

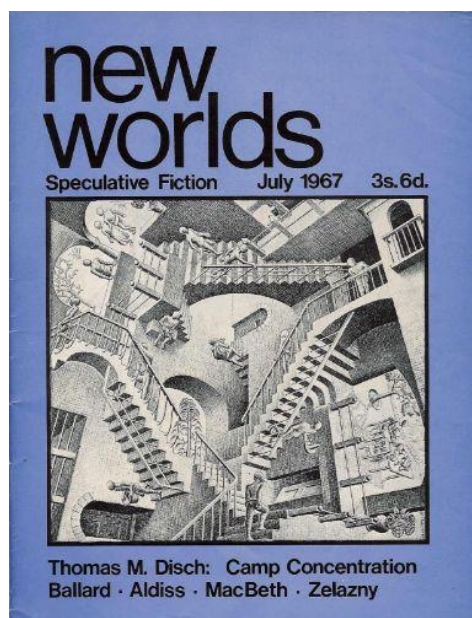


Figure 1.1. *New Worlds* cover. Number 174. July 1967.

³⁹ Michael Butterworth. Interview with the author. 19 January 2010.

⁴⁰ Michael Moorcock. Edited by Langdon Jones. *The New SF: An original anthology of modern speculative fiction*. London: Arrow Books, 1971. 7-8.

This chapter explores the connections Paolozzi and Ballard had to New Wave science fiction in the late 1960s through *New Worlds* magazine (figure 1.1). *New Worlds* during the late 1960s and early 1970s evolved from a pulp science fiction magazine into a showcase for speculative fiction and popular artists. My underlying argument is that the British New Wave re-articulated lowbrow science fiction as high art, mimicking its artistic precursor, the Independent Group, through the production of magazines such as *New Worlds* and one-offs like *Ronald Reagan, The Magazine of Poetry* (1968, figure 1.2). Through Paolozzi's give-and-take relationship with the more traditional science fiction periodical *New Worlds*, which frequently published Ballard, both figures were able to translate lowbrow art into something which appealed to a more educated readership whilst remaining under the guise of science fiction.



Figure 1.2. Cover of *Ronald Reagan, The Magazine of Poetry*. 1968.

Other Pop artists like Paolozzi, Richard Hamilton and Peter Blake sourced material from science fiction magazines for collages and in turn, genre authors like Ballard and John Sladek were looking to historical avant-gardes like Dada and Surrealism for inspiration. Paolozzi contributed to science fiction magazines where possible, particularly in the case of *New Worlds*, for which he served on the editorial team as 'Aeronautics Advisor' during the

late 1960s; this was after the magazine became more arts-oriented and adopted a large format with the sole purpose of printing contemporary art. According to Moorcock, it was 'drunkenly decided' that Paolozzi should be the Aeronautics Advisor because of their shared interest in flying magazines, particularly when they showcased military airplanes.⁴¹ Other artists presented in *New Worlds* were Pop artists Peter Phillips and Richard Hamilton as well.

This chapter aims to demonstrate how artists were involved with Britain's New Wave science fiction and to show that it did not represent only a literary phenomenon, but an artistic one as well. *New Worlds* in the late 1960s exemplifies this. Alongside Paolozzi, artists such as IG member Hamilton, American artist-turned-writer Pamela Zoline, illustrator and author Mervyn Peake, photographer Roy Cornwall and cartoonist Malcolm Dean were contributors to *New Worlds* during the height of its artistic run. Assistant editor of *New Worlds* Langdon Jones and design editor Charles Platt - aided in later issues by Nigel Francis - supplied the publication with not only a visually experimental layout, but also with illustrations, collages, and visual essays which correlated with the tradition of writing produced by the likes of editor Michael Moorcock and their key writer Ballard. Furthermore, writers like the American John Sladek expressed themselves in a manner which could be interpreted as conceptual, anti-aesthetic verbalisation through unconventional writing techniques, such as concrete poetry which fronted as neo-Dada word collages. Ballard created fictional adverts which were published in the magazine in cooperation with photographers or collectors like Paolozzi who supplied him with surrealist material.⁴²

Additionally, Moorcock encouraged *New Worlds* authors to dictate the layout and form through which their work would be presented, taking into account graphic design, illustrations, and typeset. The unconventional format of *New Worlds* set it apart from other science fiction magazines and highlights the New Wave's flair for experimentalism and the historical British avant-garde which reached its peak by 1970. To redefine the genre meant to risk and endure critical backlash, particularly from the science fiction establishment and

⁴¹ Michael Moorcock. Interview with the author. 31 January 2010.

⁴² These 'advertiser's announcements' were published in *New Worlds*, but more frequently in Martin Bax's *Ambit* magazine, which was also based in London and still is.

even the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), but this did not deter its contributors, many of whom considered *New Worlds* as the primary venue to publish their most 'serious' work.⁴³

This chapter describes how Ballard and Paolozzi's contributions, along with the work of their colleagues, can be considered fine art according to how it functioned as part of a late avant-garde movement, as well as a precursor to the postmodernism of the early 1970s. The New Wave was derogatory towards its predecessors not in the sense that it was against pulp fiction as a whole, but against what it regarded as the closed-mindedness of certain aspects of pulp.⁴⁴ Practitioners of the New Wave often drew from pulp for satirical purposes, integrating versions of old texts into new forms.⁴⁵ The history of *New Worlds* and its progression into an arts and not purely literary magazine helps to provide a re-definition of the British strain of New Wave science fiction, or New SF.

The relationship between Paolozzi and Ballard allows for the New SF to be introduced in an art historical context, providing it with an audience outside of a science fiction readership. Previous writing on this topic mentions the artistic components of the New Wave in passing and thus the work of artists like Paolozzi, Zoline, Sladek and Platt are often overlooked, if mentioned at all. For example, David Brittain's *The Jet Age Compendium* overlooks the significance that *New Worlds* had when considering its contribution to the arts as the first magazine to publish Paolozzi's artwork.⁴⁶ I intend to reconstruct the history of New Wave science fiction through the lens of visual studies, which allows for a contemporary recognition of *New Worlds* as well as its contribution to postmodernism.

Paolozzi and Ballard's creative outputs followed tangential, and sometimes overlapping, trajectories despite dissimilar childhood experiences, different socio-economic backgrounds and a generational gap, if small. This chapter describes how some of their works colluded to represent a particular strain of British culture through shared cultural

⁴³ Michael Butterworth. Interview with the author. 19 January 2010.

⁴⁴ John Clute. Interview with the author. 25 January 2010. Moorcock verified this statement in an interview I did with him, saying that he was not against pulp, even though pulp was against the writing being published by the *New Worlds* group. Michael Moorcock. Interview with the author. 30 January 2010. From a writer's perspective, Michael Butterworth adds that 'so-called pulp was a great repertoire of ideas, that as writers we mined. We took from it the same way that artists like Hamilton did.' Michael Butterworth. Interview with the author. 19 January 2010.

⁴⁵ For example, Moorcock wrote his speculative Jerry Cornelius stories pulling from his own Elric sword and sorcery fiction. Michael Moorcock. Interview with the author. 30 January 2010.

⁴⁶ See David Brittain. *The Jet Age Compendium*. London: Four Corners Books, 2009. 14; endnotes 27, 37. Brittain mistakes that Ballard, rather than Moorcock, commissioned Paolozzi's work for *New Worlds*. Paolozzi's work appeared in both *New Worlds* (number 174, August 1967) and *Ambit* (number 33, 1967) in the same year, but was first published in *New Worlds*. Michael Butterworth. Interview with the author. 29 January 2010.

circumstances after 1945. The merging of writing and art in the Independent Group, later re-represented in the New Wave of science fiction, demonstrates this shared pathway.

To begin, this chapter will provide a description of the generational differences between Ballard and Paolozzi and then proceed to describe the collection of Paolozzi's science fiction magazines with particular emphasis on the issues of *New Worlds* which can be found in the Krazy Kat Arkive of Twentieth Century Popular Culture at the Victoria & Albert Museum's archive, Paolozzi's personal collection of twentieth century ephemera. This will give an introduction to a wider discussion of *New Worlds* which will address the history of the magazine during the Sixties and its tense relationship with the IG, including Ballard's early writing career when he began contributing to the periodical. After considering Paolozzi and Ballard's affiliations with New Wave science fiction, this chapter will conclude with a discussion of how *New Worlds* underwent the transformation into a bona fide arts magazine.

If Paolozzi may be considered a member of the first wave of British Pop art, Peter Blake, a member of the second wave of Pop art in Britain, was also known for amassing a great quantity of collectible objects and images, although he was attracted to different sources and references. The discussion of the artist as collector leads to the role the IG had in collating this dispersion of vast interests, at once bringing together multiple and often times contrasting disciplines into a coherent body of work through major exhibitions like 'Parallel of Life and Art' (1953) and 'This is Tomorrow' (1956). Notably and not surprisingly, the post-apocalyptic display that was presented in 'This is Tomorrow' inspired the young Ballard and an even younger Moorcock who would integrate the ideas put forward by the IG into their writing. This genre of writing became known as speculative fiction, a branch of science fiction which incorporated the very tenets set forth by the IG, albeit nearly ten years after the exhibition.

When Moorcock became editor of *New Worlds* science fiction magazine in 1964, he immediately began publishing this as an alternative to traditional, pulp science fiction. However, in 1967, the magazine took a turn towards the visual arts and began to include not only fiction, but works of contemporary artists and scientific articles as well. It is in this later phase, I argue, that the radicalisation of the print magazine established itself as a paradigm for a distinctively British neo-avant-garde. Recalling traditional avant-gardes of the early

twentieth century, *New Worlds* published collage, assemblage and Dada-like wordplays under the guise of speculative fiction.

Collecting science fiction

Paolozzi's interest in science fiction began when he was a small boy living in Leith, Edinburgh. Reading science fiction comics in the back of his father's ice cream shop, he was enticed by the fantastic adventures which only science fiction comics could offer. This fascination for science fiction remained a lifelong interest for him as is reflected in his Krazy Kat Arkive at the Victoria & Albert Museum. This archive contains an overwhelming amount of toys and other random objects that have been collected and stored away to form a curiosity cabinet of peculiar and everyday culture including articles of science fiction. The bric-a-brac collected, dating from about 1900 to 1994, represents nearly a lifetime of collecting and organising bits and pieces of popular culture. Within the display room are a number of random playthings from Pez containers to robots, cowboy figurines, miniature airplanes, board games and books. This archive greatly interested Ballard, who integrated Pop iconography into his work in a similar way that Paolozzi used materials from his archive to create graphic prints.⁴⁷ The entire collection, which Paolozzi started in the 1930s, contains around 20,000 files, consisting of not only toys and books, but magazine articles, photographs, and other print ephemera.

It is unknown when Paolozzi collected certain objects, but, based on his artworks, we can determine why he chose to save particular things. For instance, a dominant theme for the artist was the iconography of science fiction, which can be traced through many of his collages, screenprints, and sculptures. His science fictional interests did not rest solely with the man-as-machine or the heroic figure of the astronaut, but were expanded to include fantastical figures like monsters and aliens, as well as psychic phenomena.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Ballard. *Miracles of Life*. 216-220.

⁴⁸ Although Paolozzi was involved with *New Worlds* during its stage of speculative fiction, Paolozzi's collection does not reflect an interest in this type of work as he saved the issues of *New Worlds* only from 1956 to 1966. Interestingly, Paolozzi was involved with the magazine from 1967 onwards. To this regard, Moorcock suggests that Paolozzi may have given these later issues away. Michael Moorcock. Interview with the author. 31 January 2010.

Although science fiction was produced mostly in magazines as short fiction during the 1940s and 1950s,⁴⁹ Paolozzi did collect mainstream science fiction novels by authors such as Arthur C. Clarke, H.J. Campbell and, later, Philip K. Dick.⁵⁰ Amongst his collection are boxes filled with science fiction magazines, of which Paolozzi was clearly a fan. In some cases he kept just the covers of magazines for their images, rather than saving the entire periodical. He used fragments of these covers in his multi-media projections for the IG, of which Paolozzi was a founding member, in the 1950s. At the first IG meeting in 1952, Paolozzi projected collages made up of cutouts taken from the covers of science fiction magazines including *Amazing Stories*, *Science Fantasy*, and *Thrilling Wonder Stories*.⁵¹ The artist also created collages which integrated magazine covers, such as *The Ultimate Planet* (1952, figure 1.3) which contains covers from *Science Fantasy* and *Thrilling Wonder Stories*. *The Ultimate Planet* is a collage in its most minimalist format; Paolozzi simply juxtaposed the two covers on a piece of card.



Figure 1.3. Eduardo Paolozzi. *The Ultimate Planet*. 1952. Tate. 251 x 381 mm.

The major science fiction magazines he collected were predominantly American and British, including *Amazing Stories* (US; 1931 to 1966), *Astounding Stories* (US; 1935 to 1937), *Fantasy and Science Fiction* (US; 1950 to 1971), *Science Fantasy* (UK; 1950 to

⁴⁹ Edward James. *Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994. 62.

⁵⁰ This is according to my research at the Krazy Kat Arkive at the Victoria & Albert Museum.

⁵¹ Eugenie Tsai. 'The Sci-Fi Connection: The IG, J.G. Ballard, and Robert Smithson.' Chapter in *Modern Dreams: The Rise and Fall and Rise of Pop*. Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1989. 71.

1966), and *New Worlds* (UK; 1956 to 1966).⁵² It is the latter two publications which showcased the most progressive science fiction of the day. Paolozzi also collected science fiction from Germany, where he lived and taught for several years during the early 1960s. Among Paolozzi's collection of science fiction magazines, there are three main publications which published Ballard's work: *Science Fantasy*, *New Worlds* and *Amazing Stories*. It is in these magazines where Paolozzi would have encountered Ballard's writing for the first time and subsequently become a fan.⁵³

The Independent Group and the impact of 'This is Tomorrow'

The IG's fascination for science fiction was based on how it served as an expression of the post-war technological expansion within British and American culture.⁵⁴ The IG opposed the then-president of the ICA, Herbert Read, and his traditional academic view of what constituted high art - to which he had subsumed modern art. In contrast, the IG, who initiated the Pop art movement in the UK in the 1950s, believed that popular culture provided the most accurate portrayal of contemporary living and should therefore be represented through art.⁵⁵

Lawrence Alloway, the leader of the IG, expressed how his disdain for academic culture contributed to his attraction to science fiction. He lectured at the ICA on science fiction in January of 1954.⁵⁶ In general, British intellectuals disregarded science fiction because of its status as a branch of mass culture, for its interest in 'technological modernity', and for the fact that it was predominantly an American export.⁵⁷ In the 1950's, American science fiction had proliferated throughout the world.⁵⁸ However, because of the common language linking the United States and Britain, American science fiction was more easily imported and therefore cheaply printed. Furthermore, this facilitated a large readership of

⁵² This is according to Paolozzi's collection at the Krazy Kat Arkive.

⁵³ Although presumably Paolozzi read Ballard's writing which appeared in novel form because he collected *New Worlds* and others which published Ballard, Paolozzi does not have any of Ballard's books in his library collection in the Krazy Kat Arkive.

⁵⁴ Tsai. 71.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 71.

⁵⁶ There is no record of the transcript of this speech, although Alloway did write later on science fiction. See David Robbins, ed. *The Independent Group: Postwar Britain and the Aesthetics of Plenty*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1990.

⁵⁷ Roger Luckhurst. *Science Fiction*. Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005. 123.

⁵⁸ Edward James. *Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994. 72.

American science fiction among British writers through magazines and paperbacks.⁵⁹

Although British writers were deeply influenced by American pulp with its optimistic themes reflecting the space race, they were not as confident about the modernisation of the future as their American counterparts. Accordingly, after the printing restrictions were raised post-World War II, a distinct British science fiction discourse emerged.⁶⁰

Ballard's early writing career

Although Ballard was not published until 1956, he had been writing short stories from his teenage years onwards. He read extensively, although his experience with science fiction was limited to comic books he had read as a child growing up in China. Ballard wrote in his 2008 autobiography, *Miracles of Life*, 'I spent the long months of school holiday...reading relentlessly, sketching out "experimental" short stories, which usually proved the experiment had failed, and going to the cinemas in Birmingham.'⁶¹ He favoured the writings of Parisian existentialists and the cinematic expression of Italian neo-realists alongside Hollywood's B-movies, a fascination he shared with Paolozzi. Early on, he garnered an interest in writers like Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, Aldous Huxley, George Orwell as well as American and continental writing of a similar modernist vein. Science fiction in general did not interest him very much and he preferred to study the psychoanalytical writing of Freud and the Surrealists, despite the lack of their academic respectability at the time, a characteristic which only inspired him to pursue these areas more.⁶² While an undergraduate reading medicine at Cambridge University, Ballard continued writing short stories and attempted for the first time, albeit unsuccessfully, to be published. He did, however, win first prize in a student writing competition held in Cambridge.

He eventually halted his career in medicine and aspirations of becoming a psychiatrist and took a job as a copywriter at an advertising firm. Finding this to be a dead-end job of little interest to him, Ballard joined the Royal Air Force and moved to Moose Jaw

⁵⁹ Ibid. 75.

⁶⁰ Luckhurst. *Science Fiction*. 122.

⁶¹ Ballard. *Miracles of Life*. 131.

⁶² Ibid. 133.

in central Canada for pilot training.⁶³ He continued writing short stories as a hobby, turning to science fiction as an opportune genre to explore his interest in the relationship between materialism, entropy and the western human psyche. He wrote that he 'felt that for all its vitality, magazine science fiction was limited by its "what if?" approach, and that the genre was ripe for change, if not outright takeover. I was more interested in a "what now?" approach.'⁶⁴ Accordingly, science fiction would serve as a tool to facilitate the exploration of what he envisioned to be an open literary landscape, one that begged to be experimented with.⁶⁵

Upon returning to England, Ballard finally sold two stories in 1956 to science fiction magazines. His first published story was 'Prima Belladonna' in *Science Fantasy* in December 1956, followed by 'Escapement' in *New Worlds* published the same month. 'Prima Belladonna' was introduced with John Carnell's editorial text,

Once again we have the pleasure in presenting a new author to our pages with quite a fascinating approach to fantasy. In particular, we cannot remember having read such an intriguing idea about singing plants before, although there have been stories that have referred to such a possibility.⁶⁶

Coinciding with Ballard's first publications, the new writer was further inspired to reject the traditional approach to science fiction after viewing the IG's 'This Is Tomorrow' exhibition in 1956 which was held at the Whitechapel Gallery. It included a group display by Hamilton, John Voelcker, and John McHale which consisted of popular imagery, including films, advertising billboards, consumer goods and comics. Ballard related to this use of pop culture, as he integrated it into his own work as well. This proved to be a pivotal point for Ballard's nascent writing career and solidified his outlook towards science fiction, which for him would concentrate on the present and be forward-looking.

⁶³ This experience is the likely source of inspiration for Ballard's countless ex-pilot characters which recur in his writing.

⁶⁴ Ballard. *Miracles of Life*. 167. Moorcock later commented that Ballard willingly occupied the margins of science fiction writing, being a literary location which enabled him to write whatever he wanted. Incidentally, Moorcock felt the same about his own fiction. Ballard later would abandon writing science/speculative fiction after the mainstream success of *Empire of the Sun* (1984), his fictional autobiography. At this point in his career, Ballard was successful enough to publish whatever kind of writing he liked and accordingly many of his later novels are in the vein of detective, not speculative, fiction. Michael Moorcock. Interview with the author. 31 January 2010.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 167.

⁶⁶ John Carnell. Introduction. 'Prima Belladonna.' *Science Fantasy* no 45, vol 15. Nova Publications. 1961.

Certain aspects of 'Prima Belladonna', although Ballard's first short story, resemble the tone of narrative voice used in his later novels, such as *Crash* (1973). In 'Prima Belladonna' Ballard writes, 'The next three or four days at the shop were an audio-vegetative armageddon. Jane came in every morning to look at the Arachnid, and her presence was more than the flower could bear.'⁶⁷ Ballard's description of how the singing flowers in a flower shop in Vermillion Sands react to Jane's presence is written in a matter-of-fact way, similar to what he would later use to describe coitus in *Crash*.

New Worlds and New Wave science fiction

In Roger Luckhurst's study *The Angle Between Two Walls: The Fiction of JG Ballard*, he attempts to define 'avant-garde science fiction'.⁶⁸ He introduces the genre's categorisation as debatable, citing Kingsley Amis, author of *New Maps of Hell* (1960), and an anonymous author in *The Times Literary Supplement* as offering two distinct voices on what this term means. In the 1960s, New Wave science fiction took on the traditions set forth by early twentieth century artists. In light of this, Luckhurst describes the New SF as encompassing the set of definitions put forward by avant-garde science fiction. Another useful term for this could be 'speculative fiction', a genre which branched out from traditional pulp science fiction and incorporated found texts and collage. During the 1960s Ballard served as 'the voice' of speculative fiction, with Moorcock as his publisher in the magazine *New Worlds*.⁶⁹ Even if the authors at the time did not realise it, speculative fiction drew upon early Modernist art movements, including Dada, Surrealism and even Cubism.

As its name suggests, Britain's 'New SF' emerged alongside other avant-garde movements in the 1960s to radicalise and re-invent what its practitioners considered had become a derelict form of literature. The hunger possessed by space cowboys for a new frontier and the ailments of American mass consumption became easy subjects of satire for artists and writers of the *New Worlds* group⁷⁰ who expressed their discontent with fantastic

⁶⁷ J.G. Ballard. 'Prima Belladonna'. *J.G. Ballard: The Complete Short Stories: Volume 1*. London: Harper Perennial, 2006. 9.

⁶⁸ Roger Luckhurst. *The Angle Between Two Walls: The Fiction of JG Ballard*. New York: St Martin's Press, 1997. 76-77.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 76.

⁷⁰ The phrase 'New Worlds group' is taken from Michael Moorcock's preface in reference to Ballard's interview with George Macbeth in Langdon Jones, ed. *The New SF*. London: Hutchinson, 1969. 3. It refers to the writers involved

fiction, both in Britain and the United States. Their radical ideas gave birth to a set of magazines that overturned contemporary expectations. The group, which included American and British luminaries such as Thomas Pynchon, Ballard, Burroughs, Brian Aldiss and Mervyn Peake, heralded a distinct period of fiction and new media creativity that was to eventually encourage a hybrid of genres including Pop, Conceptual art, graphic design and poetry.

Under Moorcock's editorial term from 1967 to 1970, *New Worlds* magazine, the major proponent of the New Wave, was exemplary of science fiction's connection with an artistic avant-garde, not only in consideration of the motivation behind the content, but additionally in its graphic form during the crisis of modernism in Britain. Additionally, the collaboration among *New Worlds* contributors evokes the spirit of the Surrealists - pioneers of the automatic, unreal and inner life of the mind. Editor Moorcock encouraged staff, authors and artists to be involved in the layout of their work, making for a cut-up layout alongside the anarchic content. The unconventional format of *New Worlds* set it apart from other science fiction magazines, and highlights the British New Wave's flair for experimentalism that reached its peak by 1970.

This exchange between artists and writers at *New Worlds* can be traced to the collaborative and automatic techniques used amongst the Surrealists, Dadaists and later adopted by the New York Abstract Expressionists such as Jackson Pollock and Robert Motherwell. The New York School poets, taking their inspiration directly from the Abstract Expressionists, embraced collectivity amongst its contributors as well as combined media. Their journals *Locus Solus* and *Locus Solus II*, published in Geneva in the early 1960s and including contributions by Burroughs, served as precursors to the writing that would later be considered British New Wave science fiction.

During the mid-1960s and continuing through the early 1970s, mainstream British science fiction was challenged by the stylistic New Wave, which carried the genre away from narrow-minded traditional pulp. Labeled New Wave only retrospectively by Jim Linwood, the term was initially used to describe fanzines by Platt and Weston.⁷¹ Fronted by editor Moorcock and the magazine *New Worlds*, the British New Wave can be traced to beginning

with the reshaping of British science fiction and who contributed to *New Worlds* science fiction/speculative fiction magazine in the mid-to-late 1960s and early 1970s.

⁷¹ Michael Moorcock. Interview with the author. 30 January 2010.

around 1962 when Ballard declared in a guest editorial for *New Worlds* that 'science fiction must jettison its present narrative forms and plots... Inner space, not outer, needs to be explored. The only true alien planet is Earth.'⁷² Along these lines, Ballard believed that the current trends in science fiction did not address present issues, and were therefore backward looking. In this sense, he was drawing upon the mass array of media wealth set forth by the IG in the previous decade. Furthermore, he wanted to integrate human psychology into the genre, as indicated by the term 'inner space'.

Although the New Wave is frequently associated with *New Worlds* magazine, it first appeared in another publication, *Science Fantasy*, in the mid-Fifties, according to Moorcock.⁷³ E. J. 'John' Carnell, then editor of both *New Worlds* and *Science Fantasy*, appreciated Ballard's style of writing and was excited to publish his work alongside other progressive science fiction writers such as Aldiss, James White, Bob Shaw, John Brunner and Arthur Sellings. Ballard's writing was heavily fuelled not only by an interest in human psychology, but also by the Surrealists as well as experimental writers such as William Burroughs and James Joyce.⁷⁴ In 1964 Ballard wrote in *New Worlds* that the 'inability of English critics to understand Burroughs is as much a social failure as a literary one, a refusal to recognise the materials of the present decade as acceptable for literary purposes.'⁷⁵ For the avant-garde, science fiction had morphed into something somewhat different, called 'speculative fiction'.

According to Ballard, some distinctive characteristics of this new form of writing were a non-linear narrative, a focus on the present rather than the past, flat characters, and an emphasis on the internal landscape of the human mind.⁷⁶ Speculative fiction received criticism from fans of pulp science fiction, although writers of speculative fiction were not entirely opposed to pulp itself.⁷⁷ As Langdon Jones wrote in March 1968,

It is perhaps not surprising that many of the bright new British writers who have been publicised lately are uniformly bad. It is significant that the better British

⁷² J.G. Ballard. *A User's Guide to the Millenium*. New York: Picador, 1996. 195-198.

⁷³ Michael Moorcock, ed. *New Worlds: An Anthology*. London: Fontana, 1983. np.

⁷⁴ J.G. Ballard. 'William Burroughs 20th Century Myth Maker.' *New Worlds SF* 48/142. May-June 1964. 121.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 122.

⁷⁶ J.G. Ballard. 'The New Science Fiction: A conversation between J.G. Ballard and George MacBeth.' *The New S.F.: An original anthology of modern speculative fiction*. Langdon Jones, ed. London: Hutchinson, 1969. 46-54.

⁷⁷ Michael Moorcock. Interview with the author. 30 January 2010.

writers have experimented, even if only to a minor extent, with unusual forms or techniques. It is also significant that many of these better writers have come from inside the field of speculative fiction, and that many of those from the “mainstream” of fiction, like Colin Spencer, have utilised the images and techniques of this field.⁷⁸

Accordingly, speculative fiction was a genre which served as an alternative to pulp science fiction but still strayed away from the mainstream. Jones’ recognised certain writers’ rejection of a particular strain of English culture.⁷⁹ This rejection, in turn, served as a resolution of speculative fiction writers to create something counter to the mainstream. Moorcock explained in an interview that he and other writers at the time believed that modernism was ‘lacking in vitality and relevance’, especially as seen in social fiction.⁸⁰ In writing speculative fiction, they were deliberately distancing themselves from the approved establishment.

The extent to which authors of speculative fiction wrote for the purpose of expressing the psychological concept of ‘inner space’, however, is questionable. This calls to mind Ballard’s argument that there was in fact no concrete New Wave, but rather a cohesive group of individualistic writers who had found a shared mouthpiece through the style of speculative fiction.⁸¹ For instance, Michael Butterworth, one of the younger writers in the generation of the New Wave, tended to write intuitively rather than with a specific objective in mind, even though some of his writing captured the essence of Ballard’s inner space unintentionally.⁸² As he wrote in his short story ‘6B 4C DD1 22’ (1970), published in *New Worlds*, ‘The bedroom seems suddenly alien and unfamiliar. I feel it pressing at my back, pressing at my sides while I wash. I look at the clock on the mantelpiece. The desert extends into the sun.’⁸³ For the writer in this example, although the expression of inner psychology presented itself, it was not intentional but rather coincidental. For Butterworth, speculative fiction writing was simply expressive art, not written in consideration of or attempting to write

⁷⁸ Langdon Jones. Quoted in *New Worlds* 180. March 1968. 2-3.

⁷⁹ Andrzej Gasiorek. *J.G. Ballard*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005. 5.

⁸⁰ Michael Moorcock. Interview with the author. 30 January 2010.

⁸¹ J.G. Ballard, ‘Peter Linnett: Interview with J.G. Ballard.’ *Corridor* 5. 1974. The interview dates from February 1973.

⁸² Michael Butterworth. Interview with the author. 27 January 2010.

⁸³ Michael Butterworth. ‘6B 4C DD1 22.’ *New Worlds* 198. Feb. 1970.14.

about inner, or even outer, space, as traditional science fiction often did.⁸⁴ Butterworth recalled,

In the way that ideas in *New Worlds* were approached and portrayed by writers such as Thomas M Disch, Ballard and John Sladek, the term “speculative fiction”, which was applied to *New Worlds*, could have been interchangeable with conceptual art. Sladek was a kind of cross between John Baldessari and Bruce Nauman in work and manner. New Wave science fiction and post-Duchamp “Second Wave” conceptualism happened alongside each other. I’ve often been struck by the similarities of style and approach.⁸⁵

Looking overall at science fiction, British genre magazines in the 1960s had become broadly divided into two separate groups. They had either partly embraced literary styles, as *Science Fantasy* had done, or remained resolutely old guard. Under Moorcock’s editorial reign, *New Worlds* received much criticism from established science fiction writers, as well as from critics and fans from both the United States and Britain. Moorcock had admittedly expected readers to ‘be more open to new kinds of writing’.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, circulation had temporarily risen and Moorcock continued publishing experimental works by authors such as the Americans Thomas Disch and John Sladek, as well as Langdon Jones and his own Jerry Cornelius stories. Ballard’s contributions to *New Worlds* became more or less regular and his early ‘concentrated novels’ such as ‘The Assassination Weapon’ which would later become *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1970) were published under the flag of the New SF.

***New Worlds* and the turn to visual art**

In the early 1960s, Moorcock played with the idea of publishing an entirely new magazine that would specialise in a hybridisation of popular science fiction and an artistic avant-garde, showcasing the work of artists such as Paolozzi.⁸⁷ However, this magazine did

⁸⁴ Michael Butterworth. Interview with the author. 27 January 2010.

⁸⁵ Michael Butterworth. Interview with the author. 19 January 2010.

⁸⁶ Michael Moorcock. Quoted in: Colin Greenland. *The Entropy Exhibition*. London: Routledge, 1983. 21.

⁸⁷ Michael Moorcock, ed. ‘Introduction.’ *New Worlds: An Anthology*. London: Fontana, 1983. 9-26.

not immediately come to fruition as Moorcock, by chance, was offered the job of editing the reinstated *New Worlds* after it had been bought by David Warburton of Roberts and Vinter. Printed on cheap paper in the format of a paperback book, Moorcock's first issue of *New Worlds* appeared for the May/June printing in 1964. The issue contained a brief selection from Ballard's *The Crystal World* (1966) in addition to an article about William Burroughs also written by Ballard, and an editorial on Burroughs by Moorcock that set the path the magazine was to tread.

But in 1966, Roberts and Vinter went bankrupt and so *New Worlds* was again to collapse. Despite several threats of cancellation, Moorcock remained optimistic, if naïvely so, to keep the magazine running in the tradition of a popular literary avant-garde. Fighting to keep *New Worlds* from complete demise he was helped by Brian Aldiss, who applied for Arts Council support on the magazine's behalf, and Angus Wilson, then Chair of the Arts Council Literature Panel. An application was successful, and Moorcock just managed to keep the magazine afloat,⁸⁸ with Warburton agreeing to contribute the remaining funds needed to publish the magazine. In July 1967, Moorcock's 'new' *New Worlds*⁸⁹ was released, featuring a cover by M.C. Escher (figure 1.1). The magazine had shed its small, paperback size and was now published in a large format in order to feature contemporary artworks, thus entering a new, more artistically oriented phase. The head of its design, Charles Platt, also frequently contributed to the magazine's content.

The following issue of *New Worlds* featured the headlining article titled 'Language Mechanisms' about Paolozzi by Christopher Finch.⁹⁰ This was Finch's first venture into art writing, as well as Paolozzi's first inclusion in a predominantly literary periodical. Also included in this issue were stories by Thomas Disch, Michael Butterworth, and Aldiss. The cover art of this issue was a collage of Paolozzi's from *Moonstrips Empire News*, a series of a hundred screenprints of images and text collage (figure 1.4).

⁸⁸ Michael Moorcock, ed. 'Introduction.' 9-26.

⁸⁹ This is volume 51, number 173.

⁹⁰ This is issue number 174 from August 1967.

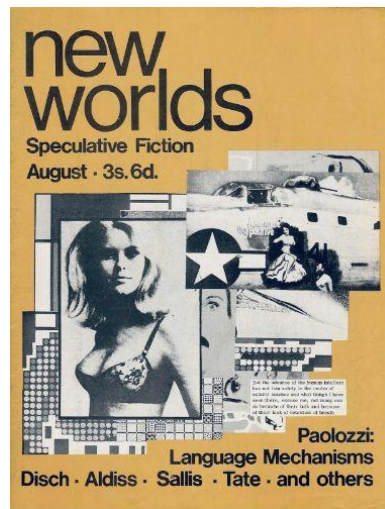


Figure 1.4. *New Worlds* cover. Number 174. August 1967.

Pamela Zoline designed it from snippets of *Moonstrips* with Paolozzi's permission.⁹¹ Zoline's own work was deeply influenced by painters like R.B. Kitaj and Paolozzi, as well as more familiar figures like Lichtenstein or Warhol. Predominantly a painter, Zoline held exhibitions at the Tate and the United States Embassy in the London Group.⁹²

At this stage of *New Worlds*, the by-line for the magazine was no longer 'science fiction' but rather the borderline 'speculative fiction'. With aspirations to be published, Paolozzi used collage and random word association in the tradition of William Burroughs and Dadaists like Tristan Tzara. For example, on the cover of *New Worlds* number 174, were his typeset words, 'But the advance of the human intellect has not lain solely in the realm of natural science and what things I have seen there, excuse me, not many can do because of their bulk and because of their lack of retention of breath'. This text is positioned next to a female model in a bra, half the face of a woman with a moustache, and an airplane facade with a star and the logo 'Accentuate the Positive'. Zoline's layout is reminiscent of Paolozzi's characteristic style that frequently juxtaposes seductive figures next to impressive machinery, such as military airplanes. Because Paolozzi did not design the collage, it is difficult to interpret the artist's intentions. However, the supposed randomness of the collage does not presuppose a lack of meaning. Zoline's configuration broke the meaning of the original format as well as produced a new dimension to be seen in Paolozzi's work.

⁹¹ Michael Moorcock. Interview with the author. 30 January 2010.

⁹² Michael Moorcock. 'The Authors.' *New Worlds* 173. July 1967. 64. This issue was printed with the assistance of the Arts Council of Great Britain.

Hamilton's Robbie the Robot image from the Whitechapel Art Gallery's 1956 exhibit *This is Tomorrow* was included as the cover image for *New Worlds* October 1967 (figure 1.5).⁹³ This recycling of Hamilton's robot by *New Worlds* twelve years later pointed to the relevance that the IG held for the New Wave. This issue featured an article about Hamilton and the 'Fine Pop Art Continuum' by Christopher Finch, that discusses Hamilton's working style as being scientific, such as the way photography and cinematography function.

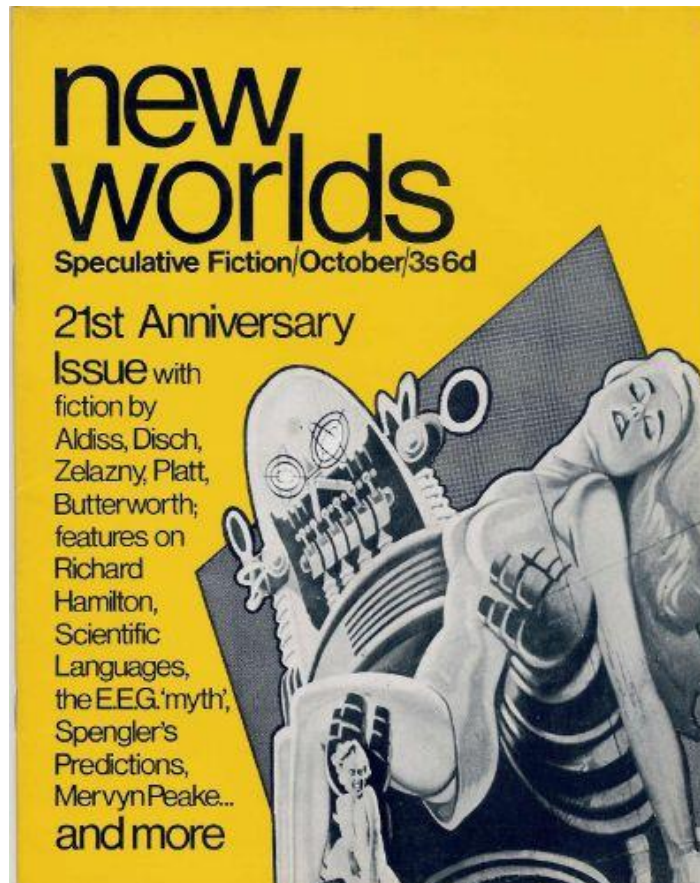


Figure 1.5. *New Worlds* cover. Number 176. October 1967.

The progressive nature of the New SF did not come without its critics. Significantly, at the Brighton Arts Festival in 1968, which was organised by ICA director Michael Kustow, Hamilton along with veteran SF author E.C. Tubb accused the new science fiction of 'destroying' science fiction.⁹⁴ According to Moorcock, Hamilton disliked the 'intellectualisation' of science fiction in which innovative writers were participants. In an interview, Moorcock recalled,

⁹³ Specifically number 176, volume 51.

⁹⁴ Michael Moorcock. Interview with the author. 30 January 2010.

SF fans came to the discussion and there was a classic confrontation, the main speakers from the floor being E.C. Tubb, an established sf (sic) writer and Richard Hamilton, both of whom accused us of “destroying sf”. Hamilton was passionately opposed to “intellectualising” sf. Oddly, we were more on the same side than he imagined. He liked the vulgar aspects of sf - Buck Rogers spaceships, ray guns and so on.⁹⁵

As previously mentioned, Moorcock had intended to develop a magazine that incorporated innovative literature with radical art. It seems as though this most recognisably occurred with *New Worlds* issue number 178, published for December 1967 and January 1968. The subheading for the magazine was now ‘Fiction. Science. Art.’ and included a greater number of visual essays and artworks alongside the written works. With Langdon Jones as assistant editor and Charles Platt in charge of design, the periodical became more visually expressive than ever before. Ballard’s cerebral ‘advertiser’s announcement’, also featured in a contemporary issue of *Ambit* magazine,⁹⁶ ran as the back cover and exemplified this change in the direction at *New Worlds* (figure 1.6).⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Specifically issue number 33, August 1967.

⁹⁷ Ballard printed other advertiser’s announcements mostly in *Ambit* magazine. His advertisements were a sort of joke, as they advertised nothing commercially. Ballard was interested in Paolozzi’s collection of pornographic images and used one of these photographs Paolozzi had for his ‘A Neural Interval’ advert in *Ambit*, no. 36. Michael Moorcock. Interview with the author. 31 January 2010.



Figure 1.6. J.G. Ballard. 'Advertiser's Announcement'. *New Worlds*. Number 178. December 1967.

Ballard's advertiser's announcement could be viewed as an extension of his writing as well as representative of his artistic endeavours. Featuring a black and white abstract photograph by John Blomfield, the title 'Does the angle between two walls have a happy ending?' appears in white typeset on a black background above an androgynous face tilted back in either slumber or ecstasy. Below the reclining head are the words, 'Fiction is a branch of neurology: the scenarios of nerve and blood vessel are the written mythologies of memory and desire.' For Ballard, this advert perhaps epitomises the essence of inner space, that difficult marriage between the cold objectivity of the present and the desires of the unconscious mind. Furthermore, the advertiser's announcement draws upon elements taken from concrete poetry, an international movement beginning in the mid-1950s. Keeping in line with Ballard's dislike of traditional narrative during this time frame, often artists used concrete poetry as a reaction against logical form, such as Kurt Schwitters' *Poem 25* (1922). In *Poem 25*, Schwitters devised a pattern of numbers following a set of guidelines which he repeated. During the time in which Ballard's advert was printed, some artists and writers had already

moved onto post-concrete poetry – a form which created new texts based upon pre-existing ones. Paolozzi, for instance, used this approach in *Moonstrips Empire News* (1967) and *General Dynamic F.U.N.* (1965-1970), which will be discussed at a later stage in this thesis.

New Worlds also promoted contemporary conceptual artworks such as John Sladek's. Born in the state of Iowa, Sladek was a student of mechanical engineering and later English literature and writing at the University of Minnesota. He moved to England in 1967 and contributed pieces to *Playboy*, *Ambit*, *The Magazine of Fantasy* and *Galaxy* magazines.⁹⁸ Similar to Ballard, he did not read much science fiction when he was growing up although he eventually wrote for the genre. In the previous issue of *New Worlds*, number 181, of April 1968, his mock-questionnaire 'New Forms' demonstrates the erasure of personal interaction through the itemisation of our existence.⁹⁹ Certificates and the bureaucracy that governs them are demonised in this five-page layout consisting of several questionnaires. Among them are an 'Indiana Name Opinion Register', an 'Individual Bend Record', a 'Poetry Itemization' and a 'Character Simulation Form' that amusingly asks the reader to write down his worries and describe his or her facial features. Significantly, all these 'forms', printed in typewriter font, are not filled out, either allowing the reader to participate in the artwork or to signify Sladek's notion of 'disposable identity'. This identity, Sladek writes in the introduction, has been replaced by 'we clerks of the world'.¹⁰⁰ However, the irony of the work persists even if the reader completes the forms, as though doing so would only reinforce the material basis for one's modern existence. He comically describes the story of how all paper records of a man were misplaced or destroyed, but he cannot remember the man's name.

Sladek created another questionnaire, 'New Forms II', for issue number 186 of January 1969 in response to the popularity of his first 'New Forms'.¹⁰¹ Also titled 'Anxietal Register B', the five-page form asks general questions of the reader, such as occupation, criminal history, health history, and so on (figure 1.7).

⁹⁸ Sladek was also the editor along with Pamela Zoline of the *Ronald Reagan Magazine of Poetry*, 1968. In this single issue magazine, a one-page companion cartoon strip to 'Plastitutes' appears, titled 'Plastitone'. This magazine is the first place where Ballard published the condensed novel 'Why I Want to Fuck Ronald Reagan', which would later be published in *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1970).

⁹⁹ John Sladek. 'New Forms'. *New Worlds* 181. April 1968. 33-37.

¹⁰⁰ Sladek claims that at birth he was not given an official birthday due to a clerical error made by the hospital in which he was born and the Iowa state government. This anecdote may explain his fascination with the transience of one's identity in contemporary society. Moorcock. Editor's introduction. *New Worlds* 181. April 1968. 3.

¹⁰¹ John Sladek. 'New Forms II: Anxietal Register B'. *New Worlds* 186. January 1969. 11-15.

NEW FORMS II JOHN T. SLADEK

ANXIETAL REGISTER B

Directions.
 READ CAREFULLY. Before answering any of the questions below, be sure to have all pages of this form, in order. Fill out in triplicate, using ballpoint pen or, preferably, indelible pencil. Press hard. PLEASE PRINT. Sign name to all copies.

1. State full name at present: _____
2. Full name at birth, or baptism: _____
3. Give any aliases, abbreviations, or nicknames by which you have ever been known: _____
4. Attach copies of birth and baptismal certificates. _____
5. Social security number: _____
6. Name on your last income tax return: _____
7. Date: _____ 8. Date of tax return: _____
9. State your full permanent address: _____
10. Where may you be quickly reached by: a) Mail: _____
 b) Telephone: _____
 c) Telegram or cable: _____ d) Messenger: _____
11. List every address at which you have resided, since birth, in chronological order. Include every address, with the following exceptions: a) Hotel accommodations in the United States, Mexico or Canada, for stays of up to or less than three days, occurring more than five years ago. b) Accommodations at U.S. Embassies, in other than an official capacity, for any duration, occurring more than seventeen years ago. c) Antarctic expeditions not using APO addresses. ALL OTHER ADDRESSES MUST BE GIVEN, WITHOUT EXCEPTION. Note: extra sheets (Form AS-B Supplem) may be attached.
 Street address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Date from: _____ Date to: _____
12. Occupation: _____
13. Name and address of company where you are presently employed/were last employed: _____
- 13a Last position held: _____
14. Salary: _____ 15. Name of superior: _____
16. Starting date: _____ 17. Terminating date: _____
18. Attach references. 19. If unemployed, give reason: _____

Figure 1.7. John Sladek. 'New Forms II'. *New Worlds*. Number 186. January 1969.

As the questionnaire continues, the questions become more personal, asking, 'Do you love your mother more than your father?' and 'If you are merely reading this form, why do you believe you have not been asked to fill it out?'. This latter question not only surprises the reader out of the mechanical behaviour of silent reading, but again mocks the formality of the paper questionnaire for its inability to be personal. This type of meta-narrative that Sladek employed correlated with the postmodern turn in literature. Sladek's irreverent attitude towards a traditional narrative demonstrated the general trend of New SF to eradicate the major tenets of modernism.

As an editor, Moorcock liked to place the more progressive works such as Sladek and Dr Christopher Evans's computer-created fictions, alongside the more or less 'traditional' short stories, in order to appeal to a wider audience.¹⁰² An example of experimental poetry that he published is Langdon Jones' first concrete poem 'Flower-Gathering' in June 1969, issue number 191.¹⁰³ Using all capital letters composing words that

¹⁰² Michael Moorcock. Interview with the author. 31 January 2010.

¹⁰³ Langdon Jones. 'Flower-Gathering'. *New Worlds* 191. June 1969. 36.

can be read only in part, the rectangular text block is separated by negative spaces between the typed letters to create a repeating diamond pattern separated by vertical stripes. A dizzying visual effect bordering on optical illusion, the combination of letters either kinetically bounces off the page or recedes into the background, depending on how one views the poem. Jones later published a similar poem, titled 'Transplant', in number 194 from September/October 1969 (figure 1.8).¹⁰⁴

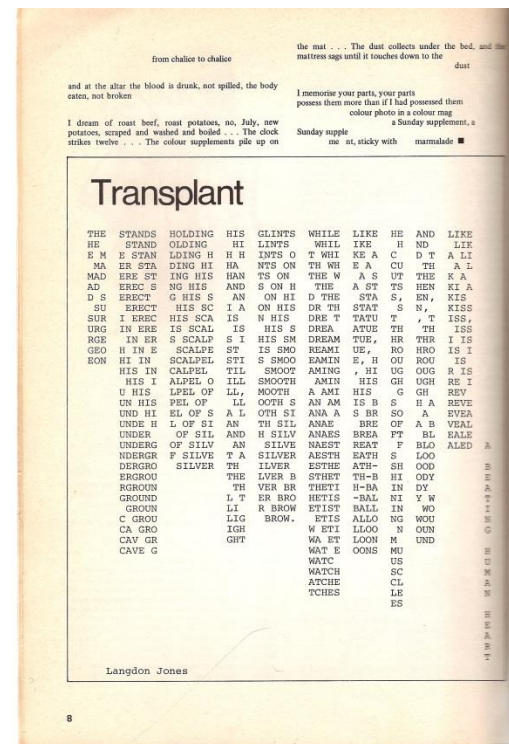


Figure 1.8. John Sladek. 'Transplant'. *New Worlds*. Number 194. September/October 1969.

For 'Transplant', Jones designed a series of horizontal zig-zags which occupy the negative space, while vertical typed columns varying in length constitute the foreground. Does this expressive use of language and form signify what Fredric Jameson considered to be the 'end of art'?¹⁰⁵ I would argue that Jones' design signals a shift in the value of what was considered 'beautiful' and therefore pointed towards a change in modernist values.

Because of *New Worlds* progressive nature, with its inclusion of the artistic avant-garde, it did not sit easily within the conservative magazine trade, and the large format

¹⁰⁴ Langdon Jones. 'Transplant'. *New Worlds* 194. September-October 1969. 8.

¹⁰⁵ Frederic Jameson. *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998*. London: Verso, 1998. 84.

newsstand editions of *New Worlds* eventually folded in 1970. The main problem, according to Moorcock, was that distributor WH Smith was deliberately blocking sales, having been forced by press disapproval to reinstate the journal following serialisation of Norman Spinrad's novel *Bug Jack Barron*. Spinrad's story, about a video-jock exposing corporate racism and scandal, had brought complaints because of its strong language. Questions had been asked in the Houses of Parliament, leading the distributor to withdraw the issue from circulation.

Large format, small press editions of *New Worlds* containing art and writing did appear sporadically up until 1979. Moorcock himself still occasionally produces large format editions, but there has been no concerted effort to re-launch it in that form. The title appeared in various paperback forms under different editors — *New Worlds Quarterly* ran until 1976 with Moorcock, Hilary Bailey and Charles Platt variously at the helm, and a series of annual paperbacks edited by David Garnett flew the flag in the 1990s.

Conclusion

The artistic development of *New Worlds* shows its growth into not only a speculative fiction magazine, but an arts periodical as well. Unfortunately, as it happened, it was *New Worlds'* turn towards art that eventually caused its demise. *New Worlds* began to incorporate alternative science fiction as well as artwork which reflected its radical agenda to transform science fiction into something new. Paolozzi and Ballard's contributions to the magazine, although different in form, both reflect this shift in direction that the magazine took during the mid to late 1960s.

Paolozzi and Ballard's contributions to *New Worlds* are significant in that they demonstrate their willingness to make their work accessible to a new audience, a more open-minded science fiction readership. As an artist, Paolozzi's work was initially produced for a small elite interested in high art. Yet his desire to be published as a writer drew him to Moorcock and afterwards, Ballard, who opened the door for Paolozzi to be frequently published in *Ambit* which will be discussed in the fourth chapter.

Chapter 2

Technology and trauma: legacies of British Surrealism

'You know I'd have thought an air raid was just the thing for a *surréaliste*; it ought to give you plenty of compositions – limbs and things lying about in odd places.'¹⁰⁶

As a continuation of exploring common threads shared between Paolozzi and Ballard, this chapter identifies to what extent Ballard and Paolozzi's efforts could be considered Surrealist. The chapter will also provide a contextual background which will situate the pair in relation to British Surrealism after it was imported to London from Paris in the mid-1930s. I argue that although Ballard and Paolozzi would like to be viewed as outsiders to the British artistic community in more respects than that of Surrealism, and in some ways were in fact just this; however, they cannot be placed solidly into this category of outsider-ship. As such, the slippery foothold on which the artist and writer stand in relation to other movements including Surrealism will be explored throughout the chapter.

The previous chapter provided a history of Ballard and Paolozzi's interrogation into science fiction specifically through the venue of *New Worlds* magazine which morphed into an avant-garde literary publication in the late Sixties. Beyond the scope of science fiction, however, *New Worlds* offered a publishing platform for Ballard to explore his interest in Surrealism. He wrote in 1966, 'The images of surrealism are the iconography of inner space.'¹⁰⁷ Inner space, as discussed in the preceding chapter, was Ballard's chosen direction for all forthcoming science fiction as of his so-called New Wave manifesto written in 1962, 'The Coming of the Unconscious'. Ballard believed that the current trends in science fiction such as space exploration, alternate universes, and battling robots did not address present issues, and were therefore backward looking. Furthermore, he wanted to integrate human psychology into the genre, as indicated by his adaptation of the term 'inner space'. Through engagement with Surrealist ancestors and precedents, Ballard hoped to produce a conduit through which inner space could be expressed.

References to continental Surrealist paintings are frequent in Ballard's early short fiction of the 1960s. For example, each of the premises of his series of four disaster novels,

¹⁰⁶ Evelyn Waugh. *Put Out More Flags*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1942. 39.

¹⁰⁷ J.G. Ballard. 'The Coming of the Unconscious.' *New Worlds* 164. July 1966. 141. See full article pp.141-145 for Ballard's literary reviews of *Surrealism* by Patrick Waldberg and *The History of Surrealist Painting* by Marcel Jean.

including *The Drowned World* (1962) and *The Crystal World* (1966), could be viewed as descriptions of Surrealist paintings within a Surrealist text. Furthermore, paintings by Delvaux, Dalí and Magritte were drawn upon in Ballard's descriptions of chaotic landscapes and mental states dripping with sensory and mental disillusion. Some paintings were referred to directly in order to illustrate a place or character for his readers, demonstrating Ballard's connoisseurship of Surrealist painting and its history.

Paolozzi adapted concepts of Surrealism earlier into his body of work than Ballard had done. As early as 1949, after Paolozzi's formational trip to Paris, his sculpture and drawings reflected French Surrealist artistic interests. He became engrossed in creating organic shapes and his interest in natural history flourished. However, this tendency towards describing the natural in his artwork was fleeting, although remnants of this interest remained over the years. In fact, even as an art student, Paolozzi preferred sketching images of the machines at the Science Museum rather than practicing in the life room at the Slade.¹⁰⁸ It was instinctual, although out of the ordinary for his contemporaries to do the same.

The Surrealist tendencies that Paolozzi and Ballard engaged with, especially throughout the late Fifties and Sixties, set them apart from the practicing British Surrealists of previous generations. As Paul C. Ray described,¹⁰⁹ British Surrealism was not as radical as its French counterpart for several reasons, mainly because a fundamental aspect of Surrealism, automatism, was misinterpreted by Herbert Read and other British Surrealists. The majority of Surrealist literature originating from Britain was merely descriptions of dreams or of Surrealist paintings, coming nowhere close to the automatic writing which Breton had promoted.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, British Surrealists tended to respond to landscapes rather than urban scenes like André Breton did in the first Surrealist novel, *Nadja* (1928).¹¹¹

Contrary to most British Surrealists, Paolozzi embraced the strategy of automatism in his sculpture and collages. Although Ballard did not adhere completely to this practice, he, like Paolozzi, used elements of urban environments to express Surrealist notions of identity.

¹⁰⁸ Eduardo Paolozzi. Interview with Richard Hamilton, 35-36. Arts Council Exhibition 1976. np.

¹⁰⁹ Paul C. Ray. 'Sir Herbert Read and English Surrealism.' *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 24, 3 (Spring 1966). 402.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 403.

¹¹¹ André Breton. *Nadja*. Paris: Gallimard, 1964. (Original publication date 1928).

As previously mentioned, Ballard also incorporated psychology into his texts, often used to describe human characters, objects and places. Even though Paolozzi remarked in an interview published in 1960 that he believed he had 'adapted to the plastic arts some of the principles of Raymond Roussel's *Poetics*. But very few people in England are interested in this kind of experiment. The English accept Dada and Surrealism only as humour, or else as valuable historical documentary evidence concerning the aberrations of modern art in foreign countries.'¹¹² This quotation embodies the frustration that both Paolozzi and Ballard felt with British Surrealism as well as their disappointment with contemporary critiques of continental Surrealism. But, even so, were Paolozzi and Ballard guilty of doing the same as their British compatriots?

Until recently the significance of Ballard's use of Surrealist expression in his writing had been overlooked. Jeannette Baxter's 2009 study, *J.G. Ballard's Surrealist Imagination: Spectacular Authorship*, resolved to amend previous scholarship which viewed Ballard's work solely in terms of its negative, dystopic style and as a cross between modernism and postmodernism of the early Seventies. This tendency within critical writing excluded the artistic influences that persist throughout Ballard's writing. Within his body of work, Surrealism, Pop, Dada and Vorticism could all be traced. Specifically, however, Baxter seeks to draw links between the Surrealists and Ballard's graphic style of writing as well as within his collages and advertisers' announcements.

Continuing in the same vein as Baxter, but with some scepticism, this chapter will elaborate on the Surrealist elements of the collage-texts produced by Ballard and several of Paolozzi's sculptures and collages, but will also consider a Dada heritage. For instance, Ballard, produced a little known series of works on paper in the late 1950s, called *Project for a New Novel* (1958, figure 2.1), which uses collage methods harkening back to a Surrealist and Dada visual format.

¹¹² Eduardo Paolozzi. Quoted in: Edouard Roditi. *Dialogues on Art*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1960. 153-154.

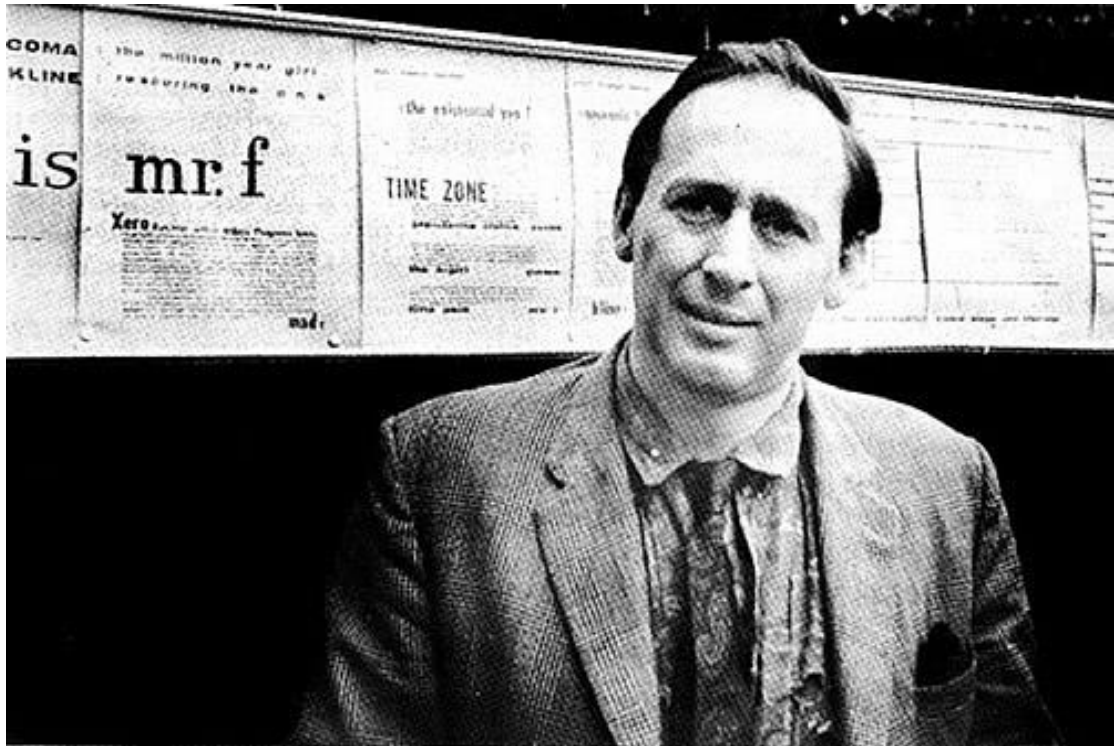


Figure 2.1. J.G. Ballard standing in front of *Project for a New Novel*. c. 1957. Ballardian.com.

Because Surrealism is such a predominant thread running throughout Paolozzi's body of works, for the sake of economy I have selected a chosen few to analyse within the framework of this chapter. The following will provide an analysis of the ways in which these particular works of art intersect in order to provide insight into how Ballard and Paolozzi integrated Surrealist motivations and techniques into their works generally throughout the late Fifties to early Sixties. The chapter will assess both how the artist and author were impacted differently by French Surrealism and to what extent their work can be considered Surrealist. Moreover, I will describe how certain works demonstrate their tentative position as outsiders of British Surrealism, which set them apart from the narrow scope which it offered them.

Specifically, this chapter will discuss Ballard and Paolozzi's discovery of continental Surrealism along with their practices involving their interpretation of Surrealist notions of personal identity, particularly through the impacts of technology and post-1945 trauma. In particular, the works that will be addressed are Paolozzi's *His Majesty the Wheel* (1958-59, figure 2.2) and Ballard's *Project for a New Novel* (c. 1957), as well as Paolozzi's 'Manikins

for Destruction' (1970, figures 2.3 and 2.4) and Ballard's *The Summer Cannibals* (1969, figures 2.5 and 2.6).

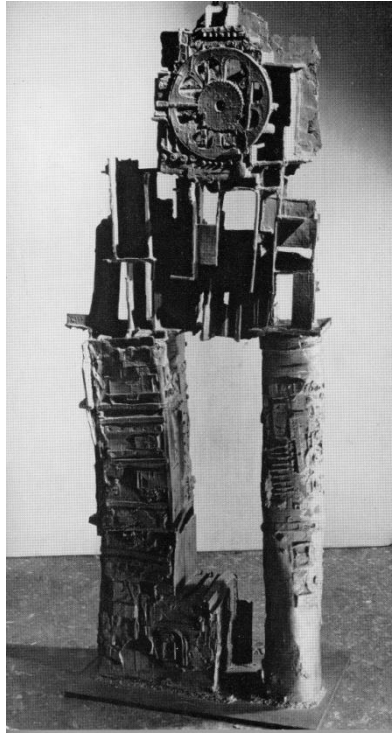


Figure 2.2. Eduardo Paolozzi. *His Majesty the Wheel*. 1958-1959. National Galleries of Scotland.



Figure 2.3. Eduardo Paolozzi. 1 of 5 in series 'Manikins for Destruction' in *Conditional Probability Machine*. 1970. Tate.

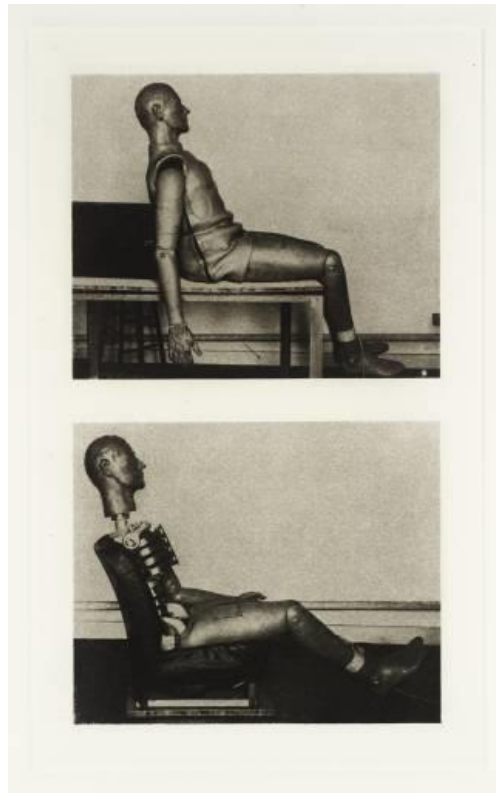


Figure 2.4. Eduardo Paolozzi. 1 of 5 in series 'Manikins for Destruction' in *Conditional Probability Machine*. 1970. Tate.



Figure 2.5. J.G. Ballard. Page from *The Summer Cannibals*. *New Worlds*. Number 186. January 1969.

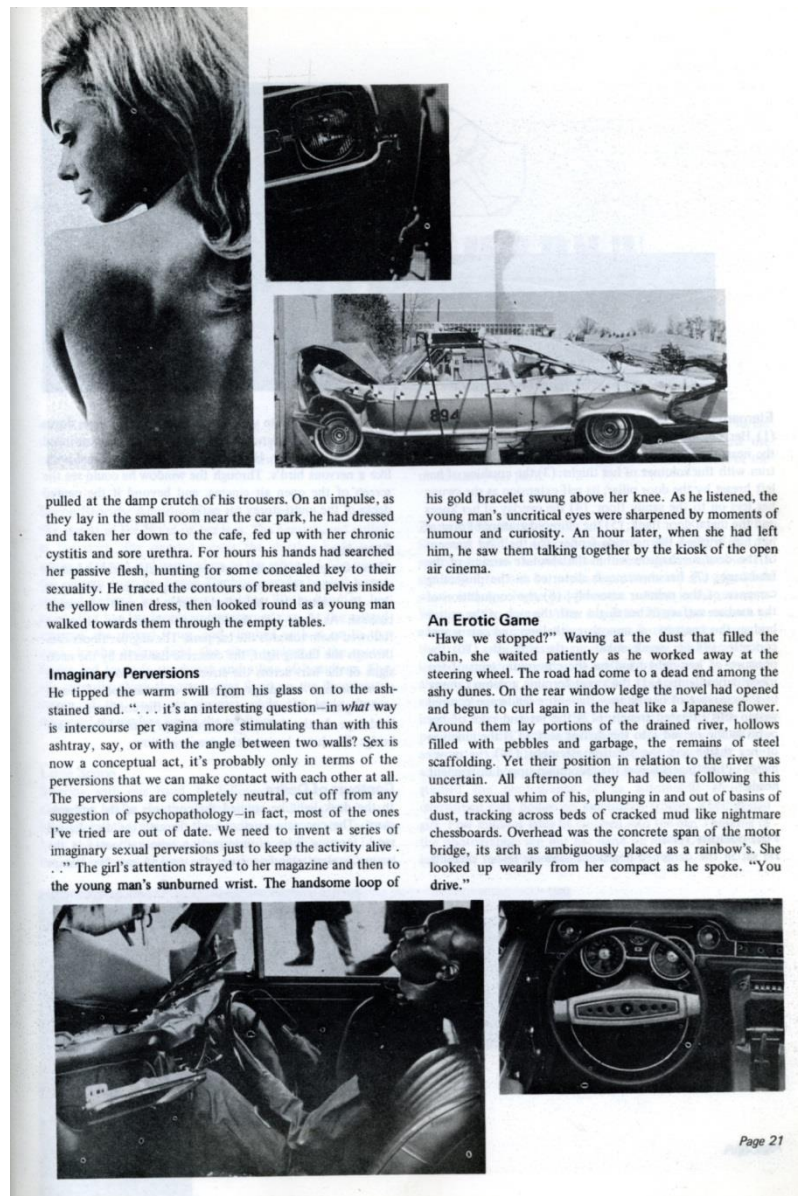


Figure 2.6. J.G. Ballard. Page from *The Summer Cannibals*. *New Worlds*. Number 186. January 1969.

The first set of comparisons will highlight the pair's use of Surrealist automatism and collage. It will also describe their adherence to the Surrealist belief that a dystopian reality results from increased mechanisation and technology. Breton wrote in 1926, 'It is not by "mechanism" that the Western peoples can be saved – the watchword "electrification" may be the order of the day, but it is not thereby that they will escape the moral disease of which they are dying'.¹¹³ The second pairing will underscore Ballard and Paolozzi's tendency to

¹¹³ André Breton. 'Legitimate Defense'. Trans. Richard Howard. Maurice Nadeau. *The History of Surrealism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989. 253.

express the aforementioned mechanical elements in a Surrealist manner which embodies the trauma created by the World Wars and its aftermath in Britain. Both comparisons are useful in understanding the ways in which Ballard and Paolozzi extended the tradition of Parisian Surrealism in a way that differed from the British style.

Even though the pair could be considered outsiders of British Surrealism stylistically, thematically and in practice, their interest in Surrealism was largely retrospective, looking back at the high years of Parisian Surrealism predominantly before World War II. Their practices were not contemporaneous to French Surrealism, but rather viewed from a distance which could not be fully bridged because of their political and geographic position as British artists. Although they felt the desire to have an outsider standing with regards to their British contemporaries, they could not completely depart from their British heritage. A major contributing factor to this was the lack of support which continental Surrealism suffered from the harsh British critics, and this was something about which Ballard complained. Furthermore, Ballard and Paolozzi shared the lack of political activism of the British Surrealists in the Sixties as compared to the French during these years. Finally, within this chapter, I aim to create an image of both the limitations which British Surrealism provided Ballard and Paolozzi and also why it was alluring to them.

Before initiating this chapter's argument based on the two comparisons, I will begin by giving a detailed description of how Ballard and Paolozzi discovered Surrealism as well as their early uses of it. Paolozzi began constructing models which resembled the Parisian Surrealists in the late Forties, while Ballard began to emulate Surrealist techniques in the late Fifties. This description will provide a contextual background which will set the scene for a further analysis of Ballard and Paolozzi's interaction with Surrealism from the perspective of a British outsider. Furthermore, attention will be paid to the climate of British Surrealism during the Fifties so as to describe the kind of atmosphere that Ballard and Paolozzi were working in during their forays into Surrealist practice. In sum, the underlying question of the chapter will be to what extent this Surrealist practice can actually be considered as outsider or not, and how this practice relates to the history of British Surrealism during the mid-twentieth century.

Early interest in Surrealism

As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, Ballard arrived in England in 1945 after having spent much of the war in a Japanese internment camp. The author recalls that he first came across Surrealism at age 16, in 1946, along with Freudian analysis, later describing them both 'as a stick of bombs that fell in front of [him] and destroyed all the bridges that [he] was hesitating to cross'.¹¹⁴ By this, Ballard meant the study of books such as those written about abnormal psychology as well as guides to modern philosophy.¹¹⁵ With Surrealism, he found a different type of inspiration than that of Kafka and Joyce, but rather found himself to be attracted to the idea that Surrealism and psychoanalysis offered insights into human truths.¹¹⁶ The writer remembered that they offered an 'escape route' from the years after Hiroshima and the impending rise of Mao Tse-tung, which served as a bitter reminder that Ballard would seemingly never return to his birthplace, Shanghai.¹¹⁷ The Surrealist reaction against rationality captured Ballard's imagination as well as restored his faith that there was an alternative to the way the conventional world functioned and could be represented artistically.

In an interview in 2007, Ballard remembered that Surrealism allowed for a new way to represent the peculiarity he saw in British culture:

Surrealism had a big effect on me then, and still does. It explained things. Partly it was that war is surreal in its effects: the bus on top of a block of apartments, thrown there by a bomb; the whole wall of a tall building collapsed, so you can see dozens of flats, like a doll's house, with the furniture still in place. I think I began to feel that Surrealism explained what was going on in England; if you looked at things through the eyes of the surrealist painters, everything was upside down and you got bizarre things being looked on as though they were completely ordinary... I've always had a very inquiring approach to everything I write. Most English novelists accept the English landscape as it is, and analyse it and its social relationships. I've never

¹¹⁴ J.G. Ballard. *Miracles of Life*. 133.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* 133.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* 133.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* 134.

adopted this approach. I've always been interested in understanding what's going on, in analysing the peculiar things about England.¹¹⁸

These remarks are particularly relevant in that Ballard addresses the English landscape, which was a source of inspiration for the original British Surrealists in the 1930s.

In contrast to Ballard, Paolozzi, who was six years older than Ballard, discovered Surrealism outside of Britain on a trip to Paris that he took specifically to learn about it after his years at the Slade School of Art. Paolozzi decided to go to Paris without graduating from the Slade, where he found the academic environment to be exemplary of what he did not want in an art school. The young artist spent formative years in Paris from 1947 to 1948, where he met Mary Reynolds, a long-term partner of Marcel Duchamp who later donated her collection to the Chicago Art Institute in 1951. While abroad, Paolozzi also met Helion, Braque, Arp, Leger, Brancusi, Giacometti, Dubuffet, and Tzara, who introduced him to a variety of artistic practices including continental Surrealism.¹¹⁹ Paolozzi's introductions to a variety of continental artists during his formative years perhaps gave him an advantage over British artists who never had the opportunity to travel to France. French Surrealism and its legacies underwent significant changes during World War II, and many of the practising Surrealists dropped the Surrealist project for other pursuits post-1945. For instance, Giacometti's postwar artworks departed from a Surrealist style and became more observational. Further, other artists which Paolozzi encountered such as Tzara and Leger were never practising Surrealists; Tzara was instead a key founder of Parisian Dada and Leger was a figurative Cubist painter.

Even though Surrealism in France had already reached its peak before these years, its effects resonated with artists like Paolozzi who subsequently followed in its tradition for the remainder of his career. One of these practices was collecting clippings into scrapbooks from American magazines like Duchamp had done. Another instance was his practice upon his return from Paris when he built a pair of bronze sculptures which echoed Giacometti's style and form. The first of these is titled *Table Sculpture (Growth)* (1949, figure 2.7) and the

¹¹⁸ J.G. Ballard. Interview with Benedicte Page. *Bookseller* 5307. 16 November 2007. 26.

¹¹⁹ David Thistlewood. 'The Independent Group and Art Education in Britain 1950 - 1965.' David Robbins, ed. *The Independent Group: Postwar Britain and the Aesthetics of Plenty*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1990. 217.

second *Forms on a Bow* (1949, figure 2.8). Both emulate the long, sinuous forms for which Giacometti and his contemporary Dali are known for producing during the Thirties. Furthermore, both the Paolozzi sculptures reflect a natural, organic quality which he would rapidly shed upon returning to England after his stay in Paris.



Figure 2.7. Eduardo Paolozzi. *Table Sculpture (Growth)*. 1949. National Galleries of Scotland.



Figure 2.8. Eduardo Paolozzi. *Forms on a Bow*. 1949. Tate.

The contemporary situation in Britain was compared retrospectively by Ballard when he said in a 2007 interview that, 'In the 1950s, when I was hunting for illustrations of the latest Dalí or Magritte, I was more likely to find them in the *Daily Mirror* or *Daily Express*, held up as objects of ridicule.'¹²⁰ He later added that they were perceived as a 'tired joke' by serious newspapers and that Surrealism took decades to receive respectability.¹²¹ Despite Surrealism's seeming unpopularity, however, the Institute of Contemporary Arts in 1948 held the exhibition *40 Years of Modern Art: 1907-1947* at George Hoellering's Academy Hall, which included a substantial number of Surrealist works.¹²² Even in the early Fifties, the majority of cultural institutions and cultural arbiters in Britain remained sceptical that Surrealism could be a legitimate art practice. In any case, the critical rejection of Surrealism and its accompanying philosophy of psychoanalysis only made Ballard appreciate them all the more.¹²³

¹²⁰ J.G. Ballard. 'Shock and gore.' *The Guardian*. 26 May 2007.

¹²¹ J.G. Ballard. *Miracles of Life*. 133.

¹²² David Robbins, ed. *The Independent Group*. 240.

¹²³ J.G. Ballard. *Miracles of Life*. 133.

Ballard admitted to a belief that while he acknowledged that his work made Surrealist references, Surrealism was merely a one-generational movement and consequently he could not agree to his own use of Surrealist techniques.¹²⁴ In general, Ballard's writing held parallels with the Surrealists of the early twentieth century until the moment when, from writing science fiction, he turned towards a style which approached a more apocalyptic realism.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, he found Surrealist themes to be useful in his writing. He wrote in 1964 in the critical essay 'The Coming of the Unconscious', that 'surrealist painting has one dominant characteristic: a glassy isolation, as if all the objects in its landscapes had been drained of their emotional associations.'¹²⁶ This quotation carries a good description of Ballardian characters, which are usually flat, emotionless and function as though they are merely architectural props within the narrative. Even Ballard's romantic scenes are written notoriously cold and detached, a trademark apparent in the novel *Crash* (1973).

Another example demonstrating Ballard's engagement with Surrealism is an excerpt from a short story he wrote about paintings that change according to the erotic relationship between the three main characters. He describes these Surrealist portraits in the short story 'Cry Hope, Cry Fury!' in *Vermilion Sands* (1971) in which the sitters' faces morph on the canvas over time. They change as the relationship between Hope and the narrator develops into a distorted relationship which revolves around Hope believing that he is her lost lover re-incarnated. Ballard described, 'So Rademaeker had returned, his presence in some way warping the pigments in our portraits.'¹²⁷ As the climax of the story unfolds, and Rademaeker does indeed return to claim Hope, Ballard wrote of Hope's portrait, 'the livid colours of Hope's pus-filled face ran like putrefying flesh.'¹²⁸ Thus, the final blow is given to Hope's chance of sanity, and by the end of the story she returns to her initial lost state of mind.

¹²⁴ J.G. Ballard. 'Speculative Illustrations: Eduardo Paolozzi in conversation with J.G. Ballard and Frank Whitford.' *Studio International* 182, 1971, 136-143.

¹²⁵ James Campbell uses the phrase 'apocalyptic realism' to describe Ballard's 'other' style of writing besides science fiction up to the 1980's. James Campbell. 'Strange Fiction.' *The Guardian*. 14 June 2008.

¹²⁶ J.G. Ballard. 'The Coming of the Unconscious.' *New Worlds* 164. July 1966. 144.

¹²⁷ J.G. Ballard. *Vermilion Sands*. London: Vintage, 2001. 105.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* 107.

Climate of Surrealism in Britain

Although Surrealism was at its peak in the 1920s in Paris, it eventually reached the public eye in Britain in the mid-1930s. In 1935 poet David Gascoyne published the first British Surrealist manifesto. Printed in France, the manifesto reflected Andre Breton's Surrealist principles and Marxist attitude. More influential than this, however, was Gascoyne's 'A Short Survey of Surrealism' written from July to September 1935 which summarised the major French Surrealist phases.¹²⁹ The following year in 1936 an international Surrealist exhibition which included British art was held at the New Burlington Galleries in London. According to Remy, this was the first time that a group of British artists had come together to call themselves Surrealist.¹³⁰ Roland Penrose, a young British artist at the time, began to collect Surrealist artworks and befriended many of the Surrealists. He later operated the London Gallery which held Surrealist exhibitions organised by E.L.T. Mesens, a poet and collagist, who sought to publicise living Surrealist artists in England. Mesens wished to create a coherent group of English Surrealist artists, and therefore developed certain stipulations by which members had to abide. Some of these included the following: not belonging to any other group other than the Surrealists themselves, supporting the proletarian revolution, and believing the creation of art was not an end to itself.¹³¹

Along with Herbert Read, Penrose and Mesens founded the Institute of Contemporary Arts in 1946, promoting European modernism in Britain in reaction to established art. By this, Read implied art which followed the Renaissance tradition that was supported by the Royal Academy.¹³² In the 1920s, Penrose, like Paolozzi later had done, spent time in Paris studying art. Mesens was a keen critic of academic traditions. Toni del Renzio was another major figure for the British Surrealists who helped sustain the movement during the war, having moved from Paris to London in 1940. During this year he joined the British Surrealist group, attended its Barcelona restaurant meetings and sought to redefine surrealism's pathway in Britain.

Notably, Read wrote in *The Meaning of Art* (1936) that Surrealism:

¹²⁹ Michel Remy. *Surrealism in Britain*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999. 71-72.

¹³⁰ Ibid. 81.

¹³¹ Silvano Levy. *The Scandalous Eye: The Surrealism of Conrad Maddox*. Verona: Editoriale Bortolazzi Stei, 2003. 59.

¹³² Herbert Read. *Art and Society*. London and Toronto: William Heinemann Ltd, 1937. 242.

is totally distinct from all other contemporary schools, and indeed makes a complete break with all the accepted traditions of artistic expression. Inevitably, therefore, it arouses the bitterest opposition, not only in academic circles (generally content to dismiss it as an absurdity), but even from those painters and critics who are normally accepted as modernists. But such blind opposition has so often proved wrong in the past that we should at least make an attempt to understand what these determined artists are driving at, and for this purpose we might take Max Ernst and Salvador Dali as representative.¹³³

As such, there was a strand of Surrealism in Britain, but it lacked the same intensity as its parental French movement. Despite some of the British Surrealists', such as del Renzio's, efforts to model themselves after their Parisian predecessors by adopting specific principles and meeting regularly, they still did not succeed in reproducing the same momentum as Parisian or Belgian movements. For example, the essays in *Surrealism* (1936), edited by Herbert Read, set out to define British Surrealism but it misguidedly linked French Surrealism with British ancestors such as Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear and William Blake.¹³⁴ It wrongly tied Surrealism to English Romanticism and Victorian literature, making it seem as though British Surrealism was a mere extension of Britain's Romantic tradition. Remy also notes that unlike the French movement, Surrealism in England placed an emphasis on nature, rather than the urban environment as Breton had done in *Nadja*.¹³⁵ As this chapter continues, these shades of difference will be accounted for in the following sections which will analyse the ways Paolozzi and Ballard departed from and yet upheld British Surrealist tradition.

Mechanisation of the modern world

Paolozzi's *His Majesty the Wheel* is a free-standing cast bronze sculpture which glorifies the mechanisation of the modern world through the symbol of the wheel. By using

¹³³ Herbert Read. *The Meaning of Art*. 2nd ed. London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1936. 206.

¹³⁴ Michel Remy. *Surrealism in Britain*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999. 97.

¹³⁵ Ibid. 337.

this symbol as the sculpture's focal point, Paolozzi has elevated it upon two columns as though to present it in a courtly manner. Its presence is oppressive as its destructive qualities preside over the viewer. Not sleek and shiny like Paolozzi's later geometric sculptures from the Sixties, the rough, edgy surface of *His Majesty the Wheel* indicates a negative perspective of the glorification of the wheel and its connotations for over-consumption through the automobile and even death – as will be later shown in Paolozzi's 'Manikins for Destruction'.

In the creation of the sculpture, Paolozzi admitted to not using an automatic technique, although his work *His Majesty the Wheel*, which uses found objects, may suggest otherwise. In an interview in 1960, he said,

The use of *objets trouvés* as the raw materials of sculpture make it possible to suggest a kind of spontaneity that is of the same nature as that of much modern painting, even if, in my case, this spontaneity turns out to be, after all, an illusion.¹³⁶

It may be gathered from this that the object's arbitrary style was a precise calculation, similar to the practice of other British Surrealists who did not take Breton's manifesto at face value.

Nevertheless, Paolozzi did use the Surrealist method of finding random objects in order to produce a sculpture. He would search through car wreckage and used machine parts for pieces to incorporate into his sculptures, using chance as an impetus for the initiation of a new project. His method of working in order to produce a sculpture such as *His Majesty the Wheel* was particularly tailored to suit his desired outcome. Paolozzi stated,

I build up my model by cementing my salvaged *objets trouvés* together with clay, after which I make, with my assistant, a plaster cast of them, and in this cast a wax mould that is finally sent to be cast in bronze. This is what imposes,

¹³⁶ Eduardo Paolozzi. *Dialogues on Art*. 162.

in addition to a formal metamorphosis, a material meta-morphosis on all my materials. In the finished casting, the original *objets trouvés* are no longer present at all, as they are in the Dada and Surrealist compositions of this kind. They survive in my sculptures only as ghosts of forms that still haunt the bronze, details of its surface or its actual structure.¹³⁷

It is this style which made Paolozzi unique among his contemporaries. The way he foraged in wreck yards for objects to use was something that no one else was doing at this same time. This was also a practice for which Ballard appreciated him.

Furthermore, Paolozzi's choice of objects to include in his plaster cast for *His Majesty the Wheel* suggest a Surrealism that stands apart from the mainstream of the British movement. Typically, landscapes in painting and natural artefacts in sculpture were depicted within the canon of British Surrealism. By using Surrealist techniques such as found objects and simulating an arbitrary pattern sequence, Paolozzi pushed the boundaries of British Surrealism to include objects outside of the natural – the detritus and debris of mechanised objects. By stretching the limitations of what could be represented within the confines of British approaches to Surrealism, Paolozzi was able to produce his own version of Parisian Surrealism, one that extended the tradition as he intended.

For Ballard, Surrealism posed a different problem of depiction. How would one translate the visual into a textually Surrealist work? As Ballard wrote in his autobiography, 'The surrealist painters were deeply inspiring, but there was no easy way to translate the visually surreal into prose, or prose that was readable.'¹³⁸ To his regret, he never became a painter, but instead developed his Surrealist ideas through the written word as well as collage, as *Project for a New Novel* demonstrated.¹³⁹ But that does not imply that he strayed from experimenting with collages, which in his case were mostly word-based and followed a

¹³⁷ Eduardo Paolozzi. Quoted in: Edouard Roditi. *Dialogues on Art*. 162.

¹³⁸ J.G. Ballard. *Miracles of Life*. 150.

¹³⁹ Ballard's artistic ventures also included his advertiser's announcements which will be discussed at length in the next chapter on *Ambit* magazine.

magazine or advertisement-style format. Around 1957,¹⁴⁰ Ballard produced a collage series consisting of at least five two-page spreads which he titled *Project for a New Novel* (figures 2.9, 2.10 and 2.11).¹⁴¹

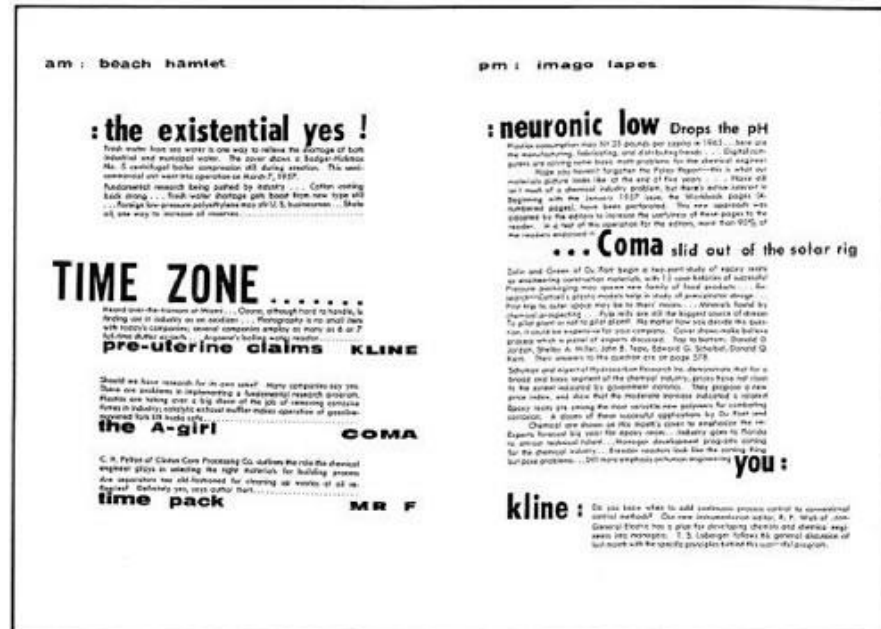


Figure 2.9. J.G. Ballard. Page from *Project for a New Novel*. c. 1957.

¹⁴⁰ As Jeannette Baxter has noted, *Project for a New Novel* 'has a sketchy publication history.' In her book, *J.G. Ballard's Surrealist Imagination*, which is the first (and only to date) major analysis of Ballard's associations with Surrealism, she credits the collage to circa 1957. See Jeannette Baxter, *J.G. Ballard's Surrealist Imagination: Spectacular Authorship*. Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate, 2009. 63. Most internet sources, such as Simon Sellars' www.ballardian.com, date *Project for a New Novel* to 1958.

¹⁴¹ According to the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona's exhibition catalogue from 2008, five spreads have been accounted for. See *J.G. Ballard Autopsia del nou mil·lenni*. Barcelona: Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, 2008.

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Exhibition.¹⁴² The collage is an amalgamation of collaged articles, wherein headlines are combined alongside selections of clippings from scientific journals in order to create a fantastic reading of the journals themselves. When looking at the examples of collages Ballard produced, they each have a clear headline in large typeset of some sort accompanied by smaller sections of articles in a reduced font size. Just as with reading a magazine or newspaper, a general rule can be applied to reading Ballard's *Project for a New Novel* – that the most important sequences are printed largest and decrease gradually by importance.

Jeannette Baxter claimed that these articles were 'extracted arbitrarily', following the Surrealist tradition,¹⁴³ but Ballard has stated that he never used automatic techniques. If Ballard's collages in *Project for a New Novel* can be compared with Burroughs' cut-up writing style, which topically draws from all aspects of western popular culture, it would explain why he would use an automatic technique when selecting the snippets for the collages, and deliberately create a stylised form of collage. However, he did not use the automatic cut-up technique of the Surrealists that his contemporary William Burroughs used in *The Soft Machine*, the sequel to *Naked Lunch*. Ballard did not consider himself to be extending the tradition of Surrealism, saying, 'you can refer to the Surrealists in connection with my own fiction, but I certainly don't use the basic techniques of Surrealism, automatic writing, for instance.'¹⁴⁴ Thematically, *Project for a New Novel* served as a visual map to his writings which analyse 'inner space', or his interpretation of the human psyche as represented through the urban environment. As a methodology, Ballard's use of inner space cohered with what he believed the Surrealists were trying to achieve with their artworks and writings.

Accordingly, both Paolozzi's *His Majesty the Wheel* and Ballard's *Project for a New Novel* indicate an artistic process which focuses on randomness and the lack of clarity of inner space. Both demonstrate a dystopic environment based on technological advancement and its accompanying consumerism, particularly in the case of *His Majesty the Wheel*. Within this example, *His Majesty the Wheel* has shown Paolozzi's idiosyncratic version of the

¹⁴² *Project for a New Novel* was displayed in full at the 2008 exhibit 'J.G. Ballard: Autopsy of the New Millennium' at the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona. The prints were again shown at the 'Crash' exhibition at the Gagosian Gallery, London, in early 2010.

¹⁴³ Jeannette Baxter. *J.G. Ballard's Surrealist Imagination*. 63.

¹⁴⁴ J.G. Ballard. 'Speculative Illustrations: Eduardo Paolozzi in conversation with J.G. Ballard and Frank Whitford.' Originally published in *Studio International* 182. 1971. 136-143.

glorification of the automobile by centring the sculpture around the simple round shape of the wheel. Implicit in this sculpture, including its title of course, is the symbolic demonstration of how contemporary society revolves around the consumerism of objects such as cars which were slowly becoming more affordable during this era. This emphasis distanced Ballard and Paolozzi from the approach of British Surrealism which tended to focus on the natural world. Furthermore, Paolozzi's use of collage made by found objects reflect the Surrealist tendency to incorporate things discovered by chance. However, neither Ballard nor Paolozzi used automatic techniques for their artworks and writings, but instead purposefully made them appear this way. In this sense, the artist and writer both adopted and altered the methods used by French Surrealism during its high years.

In an interview in 1999 in *Art Newspaper*, Ballard said that he was 'absolutely knocked out by the early Paolozzis such as *His Majesty the Wheel* and *Jason*'.¹⁴⁵ When in 2003 Ballard was asked if he believed he had an influence on these sculptures, he responded that he did not think he served as any sort of inspiration for these totemic sculptures in any way because they show more of an American style of science fiction through their reference to high technology.¹⁴⁶ Along with the unstable boundary between what can be considered human and machine, a sense of the estrangement of mankind and fear of nuclear holocaust remains deep-seated in the works of these two categories. For example, this theme runs throughout the Paolozzi free-standing bronze sculptures of the late Fifties and early Sixties, such as the solitary figure of *St. Sebastian No. 2* (1957, figure 2.12), which illustrate the dynamic produced when an object is composed of both reminiscently human and mechanical parts.

¹⁴⁵ J.G. Ballard. 'The film of Kennedy's assassination is the Sistine Chapel of our era.' *The Art Newspaper* 94. Interview at the Tate Gallery with William Feaver on 24 March, 1999.

¹⁴⁶ J.G. Ballard. Interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist for the Beck's Futures 2003 art exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London.



Figure 2.12. Eduardo Paolozzi. *St. Sebastian No. 2*. 1957. Guggenheim.

Paolozzi's fascination with science fiction included the man-as-machine, the heroic figure of the astronaut as well as fantastic figures which were oppositional to the kind of work that Ballard wrote and promoted in the Sixties with his affiliation with New Wave science fiction. Ballard was the founder of speculative fiction which he believed reflected the Surrealist tradition. It was this latter genre of speculative fiction that gave a nod to Surrealism from Ballard's perspective. For the avant-garde, science fiction had morphed into something else, called 'speculative fiction'. According to Ballard, some distinctive characteristics of this style of writing were non-linear narrative, a focus on the present rather than the past, flat characters, and an emphasis on the internal landscape of the human mind.¹⁴⁷ The writing received criticism from fans of pulp science fiction, although writers of speculative fiction were not entirely opposed to pulp itself.¹⁴⁸ Yet, despite its criticism, the importance placed on the psyche by Ballard recalls the Freudian psychoanalytical tendencies of the Surrealists. This is one area where Ballard's difference from British Surrealism lies.

Another departure is when this interest carried over into Ballard's artistic ventures, the first being *Project for a New Novel*, which were not published until the late 1960s and not displayed publicly until 2008 and again in 2010. While in terms of Ballard's literature this was just before his turn towards speculative fiction, and what he termed the exploration of 'inner space'. Artistically he was in tune with the collages being produced and the images collected by his friend Paolozzi (a collection later to be donated to the Krazy Kat Arkive). Paolozzi had

¹⁴⁷ J.G. Ballard. 'The New Science Fiction: A conversation between J.G. Ballard and George MacBeth.' *The New S.F.: An original anthology of modern speculative fiction*. Langdon Jones, ed. London: Hutchinson, 1969. 46-54.

¹⁴⁸ Michael Moorcock. Interview with the author. 30 January 2010.

been saving this collection since his boyhood. During the late Sixties Paolozzi was gathering images and text for *Moonstrips Empire News* and *General Dynamic F.U.N.*, both of which were large series of screenprint collages completed by 1970.

In an interview in *Studio International* in 1971, Paolozzi declared,

Any book on Surrealism excites me still. I don't mind trying to extend the tradition. It's easier for me to identify with that tradition than to allow myself to be described by some term, invented by others, called "Pop"; which immediately means you dive into a barrel of Coca-Cola bottles. What I like to think I'm doing is an extension of radical Surrealism.¹⁴⁹

With this statement, the artist intended to signify his rejection of the categorisation of British Pop art whilst looking towards a more retrospective style which sought to resurrect Surrealism as well as Dada. However, when considering his major series of screenprints in the late 1960s, *General Dynamic F.U.N.* and *Moonstrips Empire News*, their Pop tendencies so strongly compete with the seemingly Surrealist throwback to the automatic collage imposed on the prints that this remark seems self-contradictory. If Paolozzi is referring to his contemporary work or his early collages and scrapbooks from the late 1940s and early 1950s, then the statement could be more clearly interpreted. These collages more directly demonstrate a Surrealist approach through the way they deal with the relation between a person and his or her surroundings, whereby the person remains the primitive element in an ever-increasingly technological and consumerist society in which once-used objects become yesterday's junk.¹⁵⁰ This attitude is apparent when considering the artist's *His Majesty the Wheel* which incorporates seemingly arbitrarily selected pieces of used metal scraps to compose the freestanding sculptures.

Another way in which Ballard branched out from British Surrealism is in his text, *The Atrocity Exhibition*. *The Atrocity Exhibition* itself is a collaged written work of gathered short texts, in the Surrealist style. An excerpt from this novel seamlessly combines elements

¹⁴⁹ Eduardo Paolozzi. 'Speculative Illustrations: Eduardo Paolozzi in conversation with J.G. Ballard and Frank Whitford.' Originally published in *Studio International* 182, 1971, 136-143.

¹⁵⁰ David Robbins, ed. *The Independent Group: Postwar Britain and the Aesthetics of Plenty*. Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, 1990. 240.

drawn from Parisian Surrealism in a manner atypical for British Surrealist writers. For instance, when Ballard first began writing disaster novels in the early 1960s, he made references to Surrealist paintings, but these were only references. As mentioned previously, Remy notes that British Surrealists lacked the impetus to do anything more than create mere descriptions of a Surrealist scene. Similarly, upon returning from Paris, Paolozzi had made near reproductions of Giacometti sculptures, rather than adaptations. By the time Ballard published *The Atrocity Exhibition*, he had refined his Surrealist practice to incorporate the typical themes found in a Surrealist text or painting. Additionally, Ballard's interest in Paolozzi's sculptures becomes physically evident when he includes a Paolozzi sculpture as a prop in one of his short stories, 'The University of Death' (1969). In this, *The Atrocity Exhibition*'s second chapter, Ballard made a reference to a Paolozzi sculpture which is placed next to a bench in a sculpture garden built for apartment blocks.¹⁵¹ Ballard wrote,

The sallow-faced young man in the fascist overcoat who had followed her all week was sitting on the bench beside the Paolozzi. His paranoid eyes, with their fusion of passion and duplicity, had watched her like a rapist's across the cafe tables. Talbot's bruised hands were lifting her breasts, as if weighing their heavy curvatures against some more plausible alternative. The landscape of highways obsessed him, the rear moulding of automobiles.¹⁵²

This excerpt, which embodied many of Ballard's thematic obsessions, demonstrated the identifiable overlap between Paolozzi's and Ballard's work, as well as the kind of Surrealist tendencies which draw the pair together as outsiders of British Surrealism. But it also showed the way in which Paolozzi left a lasting imprint on Ballard, so much so, that Ballard felt secure enough to use a Paolozzi sculpture as a cultural reference point in a short story. With this, Ballard was able to imply the oppressive nature of the protagonist Talbot by merely placing him next to one of Paolozzi's sculptures. Although the story does not mention what Paolozzi sculpture it is, it may be implied from Ballard's proclaimed appreciation for the early, free-standing cast bronze Paolozzis that it was one of these. Furthermore, this excerpt

¹⁵¹ J.G. Ballard. *The Atrocity Exhibition*. San Francisco: RE/Search, 1990. 24.

¹⁵² *Ibid.* 24.

ties nicely together with the second thematic aspect of Ballard and Paolozzi's Surrealist works, the violence and trauma caused by the World Wars and its aftermath in Britain, including the austerity years.

Trauma and aftermath of World Wars

After 1945, the main exponents of Surrealism returned to France and with a more serious manner than before. The war had passed, and austerity was settling in, particularly in Britain. The memory of the pair's mutual losses during wartime stayed with them and can be traced through their artworks which do not shy away from conveying a message of looming destruction. Tying into the previous section about mechanisation, this section will further demonstrate this fascination but with the idea that it eventually leads to ruination, a concept which Surrealists expressed and represented in art and other media.

In the immediate post-Second World War era, the legacy of Surrealism lingered in the British cultural memory as an adopted artistic institution from France. As David Hare wrote to Enrico Donati in 1947,

The general [French] public accepts Surrealism, not as anything new but as past history which they never very clearly understood but which they have come to accept not because they have understood it but partly because they have become accustomed to it and perhaps mostly because they say to themselves "After all, it is French, it developed in France and now has come back again. We are pleased to have it back because it belongs to us but how could one expect us after what we have been through in the war to take it very seriously".¹⁵³

With this excerpt from Hare's letter, it can also be perceived how the British public responded to British Surrealism. Did Surrealism still have a place in Britain after World War II? Perhaps it did for outsiders of British Surrealism like Ballard and Paolozzi who

¹⁵³ David Hare. Quoted in: Alyce Mahon. *Surrealism and the Politics of Eros, 1938 – 1968*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2005. 139.

were not afraid to address the present issues rather than the fantastic. For Ballard, psychology was held in high regard as a tool to be used to analyse the current situation, even decades after the World War had ended. He used technology and lust as tropes to create an image of the aftermath of war and its incumbent increased mechanisation for violent purposes.

Paolozzi's intaglio prints 'Manikins for Destruction' from the silkscreen print series *Conditional Probability Machine* and Ballard's condensed novel 'The Summer Cannibals' (1969) further demonstrate retrospective Surrealist endeavours, while considering present issues such as the car crash. 'The Summer Cannibals' was published in *New Worlds* magazine in January 1969, issue 186. At this time, Paolozzi was serving as the aeronautics advisor for *New Worlds* and Dr Christopher Evans was the science editor.¹⁵⁴ 'The Summer Cannibals' later became the seventh chapter in Ballard's compilation of condensed novels, *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1970). Named for a work by Raymond Roussel, who had also found a fan in Paolozzi, 'The Summer Cannibals' takes place in an imagined setting similar to the beach resort of San Juan, Spain.

The text of 'The Summer Cannibals' is divided into brief paragraphs, similar to the rest of *The Atrocity Exhibition*. None of them are sequential, yet they string together to produce a coherent if fragmented narrative. When the text of 'The Summer Cannibals' was originally published in *New Worlds* it was accompanied by photographs which depicted crash test dummies, crashed cars, nude women, steering wheels and motorways. The overall effect when reading the text is that of the experience of reading a collage thick with words filling the page. As for the text itself, it does not follow a linear narrative format, but rather creates a Surrealist assemblage of the violence of a car crash, disfiguration, psychological isolation and lust.

This isolation is similar to the previously mentioned Paolozzi sculpture *His Majesty the Wheel*. In constructing this work, Paolozzi made imprints from found objects. Disfiguration of the found object comes from the contortion which it endured as the artist welded it into place while designing the sculpture. With the imprint, he left behind the so-called 'ghosts of objects' on the surface of the sculpture. This notion echoes the Surrealist

¹⁵⁴ Evans was the basis for the character Vaughn in the novel *Crash*.

idea of isolation and loss, as well as disfiguration. The objects imprinted become isolated onto the plaster cast one by one and eventually suffer a loss of presence as they are removed from the cast and replaced with bronze.



Figure 2.13. Eduardo Paolozzi. *Crash*. 1964. Ulster Museum.

In Paolozzi's sculpture *Crash* (1964, figure 2.13), the artist implemented a sculptural equivalent to the creation of a collage by welding together bits of engineering scrap metal instead of paragraphs like Ballard had done for 'The Summer Cannibals'. By adding to the sculpture section by section, Paolozzi created a swirling visual effect with different pieces of scrap and detritus which included a wheel. By continuing the theme of the wheel in *Crash*, Paolozzi carried on with his own Surrealist tradition through the manufacture of a three-dimensional collage using found objects. He also carried on with his recurring theme of violence caused by human manufacturing of machines, in this case the car or airplane. It is this theme which Ballard uses in 'The Summer Cannibals' to indicate the despair of the present day situation which is compounded by the automobile crash.

In 'The Summer Cannibals', Ballard anticipates the car crash in the section titled, 'Elements of an Orgasm',

(1) Her ungainly transit across the passenger seat through the nearside door;
(2) the conjunction of aluminised gutter trim with the volumes of her thighs; (3)
the crushing of her left breast by the door pillar, its self-extension as she
swung her legs on to the sandy floor; (4) the overlay of her knees and the
metal door flank; (5) the ellipsoid erasure of dust as her hip brushed the
nearside fender; (6) the hard transept of the door mechanism within the
absolute erosion of the landscape...¹⁵⁵

This foreshadowing is followed by a paragraph titled 'Contours of Desire' in which the crash occurs when the driver 'without thinking' 'drove across the road into the oncoming lane.'¹⁵⁶ The Surrealist combination of death and desire is typical in Ballard's writing, particularly that of car crashes, which will be discussed at length in the final chapter. The section 'The Contours of Desire' is followed by a description of the aftermath of the incident:

She stared at the blood on her legs. The heavy liquid pulled at her skirt. She stepped across a car seat and vomited onto the oily sand. She wiped the phlegm from her knees. The bruise under her left breast reached behind her sternum, seizing like a hand at her heart. Her bag lay beside an overturned car. At second attempt she picked it up, and climbed with it on to the road.¹⁵⁷

Rather than championing reconstruction or hope, the fragmented text indicates disfiguration and loss of self through the car accident. The woman attempts to gather herself after just having an accident and cleans herself off. As Ballard writes, the car beside her is on its side, and she has no choice but to walk away from the scene, consequently suffering a loss of ownership and control over the car.

Car accidents are further explored by Paolozzi's 'Manikins for Destruction', which recalls *His Majesty the Wheel*, being a series of collaged photographs of crash test

¹⁵⁵ J.G. Ballard. 'The Summer Cannibals'. *New Worlds* 186. Jan 1969. 22.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. 22-23.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. 23.

dummies. 'Manikins for Destruction' used a more direct portrayal than *His Majesty the Wheel* to emphasise the negative potentiality of the automobile. While *His Majesty the Wheel* merely implies the dystopic nature of mechanisation through rough edges and the look of incompleteness, 'Manikins for Destruction' demonstrates the human death drive by showing the possible effects to the human body in the occurrence of an automobile accident.

Ballard used similar images in 'The Summer Cannibals' to 'Manikins for Destruction'. The photograph of the crash test dummy, a recurring symbol in Paolozzi's body of work, indicates Ballard and Paolozzi's shared interest in the manifestation of fear in the consumer. For Ballard, this fear is translated as desire, as evidenced through 'The Summer Cannibals'. Ballard has taken the automobile crash, eroticised it, and consequently distorted a real event into a fictional event which occurs in the mind using psychoanalysis. Drawing from Paolozzi's sculpture *Crash* and 'Manikins for Destruction', it can be demonstrated that Paolozzi shared similar ideas to Ballard although it is more difficult to define these intentions because of the lack of the written word in these works.

Outsiders of British Surrealism?

Although the implication might be that Paolozzi and Ballard were in fact outsiders of British Surrealism, can they really be described in this way? Using *Project for a New Novel*, *His Majesty the Wheel*, 'The Summer Cannibals', and 'Manikins for Destruction' as exemplars of Ballard and Paolozzi's ventures into Surrealism, this chapter argued that these works demonstrated a reaction against the climate of Surrealism in Britain during the 1950s and 1960s. But, how did they relate to or conform with the strategies of British Surrealism? As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Surrealism in Britain did not achieve critical approval and was held up as something to be ridiculed despite efforts by the ICA and independent galleries to promote it. While this excited Ballard and made him more interested in Surrealism as a practice, how did he successfully withstand the same criticism? Paolozzi more directly used Surrealist methods and yet still had a successful artistic career in Britain and abroad, particularly in Germany.

First, neither Ballard nor Paolozzi used automatism in the creation of their collages or fragmented texts. This practice, drawing from a Dadaist methodology, was implied in the

work of *Project for a New Novel*, which was constructed by taking snippets from science magazines. But, even though the work appears to be arbitrary, Ballard has said that he never used automatic techniques when creating a collage. Paolozzi, who also did not use automatism, also used found objects like Ballard in the production of his sculptures and collages. The overlap between Ballard's *Project for a New Novel* and Paolozzi's *His Majesty the Wheel* provide just one case in point for Paolozzi's opinion that his own works shared common points with Ballard's.¹⁵⁸ Instead of using automatism, the pair both used *objets trouvés* in the production of their sculptures, collages, and writings, respectively. This Surrealist practice harkened back to the days of Parisian Surrealism in the 1930s.

More or less contemporary to each other, the sculpture and set of collages most notably demonstrate an affiliation with Surrealism through collage and a sense of arbitrariness, whether actual or not. On a more subtle level, as Dawn Ades notes in her analysis of Ballard's affinity for Surrealism, they represent an interest in their connection to the everyday world through the subconscious rather than a Surrealist revival in regards to their lack of automatic creative practices.¹⁵⁹ For Ballard, inner space was exactly that – a reflection of the psychological experiences of the average person. Furthermore, because he recognised Surrealism as one-generational, he did not want to intentionally recall its glory days in his own works.¹⁶⁰ Additionally, neither Ballard nor Paolozzi wanted to participate in the fantasy-driven, whimsical style of British Surrealism which was commonplace during the mid-century.¹⁶¹ Perhaps this explains why Paolozzi turned towards Brutalism and Pop art during this same time period in addition to continental Surrealism. Furthermore, upon writing the *New Worlds* essay 'The Coming of the Unconscious', Ballard posited that inner space needed to be written about, thus departing from the stylised pulp science fiction which was popular during the early Sixties.

Like Paolozzi, Ballard, of course, did not solely use Surrealism in his work. It is through these other means that Ballard may have avoided being criticised for using Surrealist practices and themes in his oeuvre by critics who disdained Surrealism. Pop art

¹⁵⁸ Eduardo Paolozzi. 'Speculative Illustrations: Eduardo Paolozzi in conversation with J.G. Ballard and Frank Whitford.' *Studio International* 182, 1971, 136-143. See also Dawn Ades. 'JG Ballard and Surrealism'. *Crash: Homage to JG Ballard*. London: Gagosian Gallery, 2010. 31.

¹⁵⁹ Dawn Ades. 'JG Ballard and Surrealism'. 31.

¹⁶⁰ J.G. Ballard. 'Speculative Illustrations'.

¹⁶¹ Dawn Ades. 'JG Ballard and Surrealism'. 31.

runs heavily throughout his writing as cultural references abound. Themes such as mass consumerism, overabundance and overt sexuality come into play in written work like 'The Summer Cannibals' as well as through the rest of *The Atrocity Exhibition*. For instance, the use of Brigitte Bardot's photograph in 'The Summer Cannibals' distracts the viewer from making immediate Surrealist connections and instead reminds the audience of Pop art in which celebrity is upheld. As Andrzej Gasiorek has noted, Ballard's use of Pop art:

downplays what was a Surrealist preoccupation, but it seems as though Ballard felt that Surrealism's emphasis on the individual unconscious deflected attention away from a social unconscious that was being exteriorised on a daily basis in the realm of public life, and that Pop Art's interventions were better able to analyse its constellations.¹⁶²

From Gasiorek's perspective, all the attention that Baxter has placed on emphasising the Surrealist connections would be in vain because the Pop tendencies overrule those of Surrealism.

Finally, during the late 1960s when France was having a cultural revolution which was supported by Surrealists, Ballard and Paolozzi's works were still focused on old methods of collage and mechanisation as a metaphor for violence and trauma. The May 1968 uprising was arguably a result of Surrealist ideologies or the culmination of Surrealist efforts, according to Alyce Mahon.¹⁶³ But in comparison, Ballard and Paolozzi's works lacked a political agenda, setting them apart from their French contemporaries. This, along with the previous arguments, makes it clear that Ballard and Paolozzi were certainly not part of the French Surrealist movement, although they were inspired by French Surrealists and considered themselves to be culturally outside of Britain.

¹⁶² Andrzej Gasiorek. *J.G. Ballard*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 2005. 15.

¹⁶³ Alyce Mahon. *Surrealism and the Politics of Eros, 1938 – 1968*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2005. 214.

Conclusion

Beginning with Paolozzi and Ballard's early interest in a broad notion of Surrealism, the chapter laid out a framework in which to place a few of their works that can be considered to carry and update Surrealist ideas. The pair's interest in Surrealism began from a fairly young age for both men and continued throughout the remainder of their careers. Ballard was even a collector of Surrealist paintings, and held a particular penchant for the work of the Belgian Surrealist Paul Delvaux. Paolozzi's interest in Surrealism was sparked while a student at the Slade and later enhanced by his trip to Paris in the late 1940s. Ballard claimed to have enjoyed reading Freudian psychoanalytical theory as a teenager and appreciated Dali from a young age. Paolozzi's works after discovering Surrealism showed a direct link to the Surrealists he had met in Paris, namely Giacometti. Ballard's early novels showed a more British style of Surrealism, one which described paintings rather than created its own narrative.

The chapter briefly outlined the climate of British Surrealism from its nascent stages in order to see the ways in which Ballard and Paolozzi translated its practices to create its own modes. Alongside works of art, poetry and novels were written that demonstrated the particular British form of Surrealism. As Remy wrote, 'British Surrealism constantly brought nature into the dock.'¹⁶⁴ The representation of nature was among the key distinguishing factors between French and British Surrealism, one that is attributed specifically to British Surrealism. From early on in their careers, Paolozzi and Ballard both demonstrated an attachment to Surrealism which differed from other British Surrealists, but not entirely, as we have shown. However, the emulation of French Surrealists by British artists did not deter Ballard or Paolozzi from attempting to reproduce Surrealist techniques, themes, and symbols in their works. Their attempts at creating Surrealist works were either, in Paolozzi's case, an effort to extend the tradition of radical Surrealism and project it into the times in which he lived, or in Ballard's case, an attempt to recognise and appreciate Surrealist qualities within the written text. Although neither Ballard nor Paolozzi adhered completely to Parisian Surrealism, they both worked within their respective mediums as outsiders of British Surrealism. Through their use of Surrealist practices, techniques, as well as their

¹⁶⁴ Michel Remy. *Surrealism in Britain*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999. 337.

incorporation of Surrealist themes such as the destructive nature of a dystopic form of mechanisation and the suffering caused by the World Wars and the austerity years in Britain, both Ballard and Paolozzi created a niche for themselves within British Surrealism, one which sets them apart.

Chapter 3

The aftermath of war: airplanes and a military aesthetic

'The military, resistant to new technology, needed new technology from the creative, private and civilian sector. For those who believed in this way of thinking about military technology, the results of military conservatives meeting progressive civilian technology were unfortunate. Peacetime military technology had a grotesque, distorted quality. The military corrupted essentially civil technologies. There was then, and this has continued since, a systematic downplaying of the military origins and significance of the aeroplane. Indeed in the 1930's many concerned with writing about aviation saw the military aeroplane as a corrupted and deformed aeroplane.'¹⁶⁵

In David Edgerton's recent book about warfare technologies, he presents the idea that the airplane has been given too much importance in existing literature when considering the number of deaths the plane has caused during wartime. Specifically, Edgerton argued that airplanes as a military weapon have caused fewer civilian deaths than ground combat during World War II, which he claims to be an often misjudged fact. However, Edgerton overlooked the fact that planes were used to mobilise and transport soldiers more than ever before during World War II, and therefore contributed to the number of deaths these human killing machines caused.

Beginning prior to World War I, the development of technologies such as the radio, radar, atomic bomb and the airplane accelerated because of their practical usage during wartime. As Edgerton argued, war and technology have traditionally been written about as following an innovation-centric narrative. This conventional trajectory traces the induction of civilian warfare to the end of the twentieth century.¹⁶⁶ Edgerton's argument stands in contrast to traditional mid-century technophobes such as Jacques Ellul who argued that the new sciences were manufactured specifically for use during combat as well as servicing war propaganda. Translated into English in 1965, Jacques Ellul's *The Technological Society* (1954) proposed that accelerated technological development had caused the 'disappearance of reality in a world of hallucinations.'¹⁶⁷ Ellul's vision of technological propaganda causing an abstraction or disruption of reality was placed during the aftermath of the World Wars. Technologies that had been developed during and for war were now beginning to be used to

¹⁶⁵ David Edgerton. *The Shock of the Old: Technology and Global History Since 1900*. London: Profile Books, 2008. 142.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. 139.

¹⁶⁷ Jacques Ellul. *The Technological Society*. Trans. John Wilkinson. London: Jonathan Cape, 1964. 372.

stimulate growth within devastated economies. As Ellul argued, innovations with sinister beginnings such as radio, television and airplanes became camouflaged as neutral components of the economy. Along these lines, Ellul presented the concept that technology has allowed for the spread of propaganda, particularly that of war.¹⁶⁸

Technology played an important role in the artistic psyches of Paolozzi and Ballard, just as their wartime experiences did. As mentioned previously in this thesis, the artist and writer produced works that drew upon their memories and observations of World War II, as its tragedies were heavily imprinted on the pair's psyches. The life-altering occurrences during their youth included imprisonment and internment during the Second World War. The trauma of witnessing violence first-hand later manifested itself into short stories, novels and artworks. This aspect provided a reference point for Paolozzi and Ballard's use of the airplane as a symbol in their works when considering the wide range of destruction that occurred during World War II both in Britain and overseas. Poised as catalysts for destruction, planes often played macabre roles in Paolozzi and Ballard's works. Ballard, however, also showed the 'softer' side of warplanes in his breakthrough novel *Empire of the Sun* (1984) as well as its erotic side in *Crash*.

Not typically portrayed as politically-involved figures, Paolozzi and Ballard have a surprising number of works which show their political affiliations. The pair's discontentment with American politics was accompanied by public protests in which Paolozzi and Ballard took part. Paolozzi marched in New York City in protest at the Vietnam War and Ballard published critiques in the form of short stories. This chapter will examine the iconography of machines, military subject matter and political commentary in Ballard and Paolozzi's works in the late Sixties to early Eighties.

As well as bringing devastation to civilian society, the legacy of the World Wars brought with it an abundance of new postmodern theories which attempt to explain the hybridity of man with machine. While neither Ballard nor Paolozzi's work focused exclusively on the ramifications of the mechanical body on collective human consciousness, both used a machine prosthetic as a tool to be critiqued and augmented by imagery from the mass media. Respectively, Paolozzi and Ballard relate their perception that violence is present

¹⁶⁸ Jacques Ellul. *The Technological Society*. 365.

within modern constructions of technology. Finally, the chapter will assess the ways in which Ballard and Paolozzi created hybrid texts, merging material together. The fold-in technique used by William Burroughs will be discussed as an American counter-point to the British methodology of creating a myth of arbitrariness. For instance, Burroughs used aleatory methods while Ballard and Paolozzi meticulously reworked their existing texts in order to accommodate the adjoining one.

Iconography of the warplane

The airplane has appeared as a symbol or icon in early twentieth century avant-gardes, most notably as a founding topic for the early twentieth century *aeropitturists*. Images of planes flying through the air at top speeds were typical of the *aeropitturist* genre. Found in second generation Italian Futurist works of art, artists such as Benedetta Cappa and Giulio d'Anna celebrated the power, speed and virility of aircraft. Artists involved with German Dada who had served as soldiers in World War I approached the subject as well, including Hans Richter and Max Ernst in collages. Paolozzi too served mandatory military service until he was expelled for psychiatric reasons. Furthermore, Ballard served as a pilot in the Royal Air Force in Canada.

Paolozzi's interest in the warplane manifested itself primarily within his collages and prints, although he referenced machines and machine parts in his sculptures. The artist's inclination towards reproducing machines and mechanical fragments began when he was a student at the Slade School of Art and developed further in the mid-1950s, a few years after his return from Paris and meeting with Surrealists. It was during this period when Paolozzi's works began to show a greater interest in the industrial world. Departing from the more landscape-based tradition of nature-man set forward by sculptural forerunners like Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore, Paolozzi's generation of the Independent Group took an interest in the hybrid of the machine-man. For Paolozzi, this manifested itself through anthropomorphic figures and totem-like structures. Furthermore, his interest resided in man's relationship with the machine as well as other connections between the two.

Paolozzi and Ballard's use of the plane in their works expressed broader social implications of warplanes, such as how they could yield a positive connotation. In Ballard's *Empire of the Sun*, he wrote a semi-autobiographical account of Japan's occupation of China during World War II through the eyes of himself as a young boy, Jim. Based loosely on Ballard's experiences growing up in Shanghai during the war, *Empire of the Sun* reflects upon the Japanese invasion with the curiosity of a British teenage boy. Living in China as an expatriate during a tumultuous social period, Ballard drew upon his own observations for the novel. As a story heavily dependent on a narrative based upon the struggles of Jim in a Japanese camp, the airplane plays a significant part. In *Empire of the Sun*, the plane was the point of reference he used to mediate the emotions of the novel's protagonist, Jim. The vulnerability of Jim, a teenager, is expressed according to the various airplanes that he encounters. The novel contains three chapters devoted to Jim's perception of airplanes and how they affect his psychology. Ballard transitioned between different manifestations of planes, coinciding their descriptions with Jim's experience of the war. From Jim's toy airplane to the destroyed airfields to the bomber planes flying overhead, Ballard used the airplane as a subtly influential image or figure in the novel. His interpretation presented planes as a symbol not only of war, but also of hope and resurrection.

In the third chapter titled 'The Abandoned Aerodrome', one of the defining moments is Jim's leisurely jaunt into an airfield, in which while playing with his toy plane he climbs into the ruins of an abandoned Japanese airplane. Jim describes the incomprehensible Japanese characters that marked the controls of the plane and the nostalgia he feels for the absent pilot. Later in the novel, Jim and his family are imprisoned in a Japanese internment camp in Lunghua, which they survive. For Ballard, the decaying Japanese airplane foreshadows the demise of Japan's occupation of China and the end of World War II.

The second example of a chapter which uses airplanes as a motif is found in the first half of the novel. Titled 'American Aircraft', the chapter recounts how the sight of American bombers inspires the imprisoned Jim to believe that the war's end was near. Whenever Jim felt desperate, he would begin to imagine that he sees American airplanes coming to rescue him and the other inmates. Ballard wrote, '...He thought of the American aircraft he had seen

in the clouds above Shanghai... He could almost summon them into his vision, a silver fleet on the far side of the sky. Jim saw them most when he was hungry...¹⁶⁹

The last example from *Empire of the Sun* also portrays airplanes as beacons of hope. One of the final chapters of *Empire of the Sun* is titled 'The Refrigerator in the Sky'. Ballard's word choice for this chapter's title exemplifies the positive way in which he characterised airplanes in 'American Aircraft'. Rather than being mere carriers of deadly weapons, airplanes too could offer nourishment, in this case through the American bomber dropping food-filled parachutes into the Lunghua prison camp.¹⁷⁰ What at first appears to Jim as a slow-moving bomber jet is instead an aid provider that is being used as a means of transporting food. Watching the plane fly overhead, Jim anticipates bombs dropping near him. With this, Ballard recognised the aggressive connotations associated with military airplanes that he wrote about earlier in the novel, for example in the case of the abandoned Japanese aircraft. But in this instance, the connotation of the airplane changed abruptly, foreshadowing the freedom Jim would attain after the impending Japanese defeat. In this anecdote, Jim waved to the American bomber pilot before he understood it was a 'refrigerator' full of food supplies and still thought the airplane was a threat to his life. After Jim saw the parcels falling out of the plane, the plane became a beacon of hope rather than a threat. Here Ballard highlights Jim's youthful optimism, and refers to the earlier descriptions of Jim's relationship with airplanes. Perhaps Ballard uses this to ease the reader into understanding by contrasting both the negative and positive roles the airplane plays.

In Ballard's writing, much of his interest revolved around the figure of the pilot as well. The wife of the protagonist in *Crash* was taking flying lessons, quite fitting for a man obsessed with cars. Despite *Crash* being predominantly about cars, the airplane played a significant role in the technological hierarchy which Ballard presents. Firstly, the character James Ballard lives near Heathrow Airport. Accordingly, much of the heavy traffic which James encounters is caused by the continuous flux of people travelling to and from the airport. Secondly, as mentioned, James' wife Catherine is training to be a pilot. Throughout

¹⁶⁹ J.G. Ballard. *Empire of the Sun*. 91.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 225.

the novel, there are several references to this such as when James drives Catherine to her flying lessons.

Complementing these examples in *Crash*, Ballard uses the airport's surrounding motorways as a key setting throughout the novel. The character James repeatedly encounters airport traffic, as though the consequences of the airport's presence determine the characters' moods. James becomes agitated by the slow traffic of the motorways near Heathrow. Another character in *Crash*, James's psychotic friend Vaughn, photographically documents the car crashes which occur around the airport. The idea that car accidents are more frequent in heavily trafficked areas such as outside an airport translates into Vaughn's photos which document crashed vehicles and their victims with a fierce intensity.

In other examples, the figure of the pilot often bears a sinister trait as in *The Atrocity Exhibition*. In chapter one of *The Atrocity Exhibition*, Ballard wrote,

Travis followed the bomber pilot and the young woman along the faded gravel. They walked across the foundation of a guard-house into the weapons range. The concrete aisles stretched into the darkness across the airfield. In the suburbs of Hell Travis walked in the flaring light of the petrochemical plants. The ruins of abandoned cinemas stood at the street corners, faded billboards facing them across the empty streets. In a waste lot of wrecked cars he found the burnt body of a white Pontiac... The crashed bombers lay under the trees, grass growing through their wings. The bomber pilot helped the young woman into one of the cockpits.¹⁷¹

In the passage, Ballard described the setting as junkyard filled with crashed cars and wrecked fighter planes, a minefield of detritus. The author emphasised the desolate and destroyed atmosphere of the waste lot. Travis, the protagonist, witnesses a pilot assist a young woman into one of the crashed planes. Ballard presented the scenario in a straightforward, direct manner, dismissing a more romantic route to describe a dystopian setting. His pilot seemingly introduces destruction to the young woman, who is linked with

¹⁷¹ J.G. Ballard. *The Atrocity Exhibition*. San Francisco: RE/Search Publications, 1990. 14-15.

innocence. Ballard's specific mention of a destroyed white Pontiac makes reference to his anti-American sentiments during this period.

In this example from *The Atrocity Exhibition* and others of Ballard's texts, the pilot is intrinsically linked to the destruction of the airplane. In addition, the character of the pilot recalls Ballard's own experience as a trainee RAF pilot in Canada when he was a young man. The positive connotations of airplanes in Ballard's work contrasts with Ellul's conclusion that airplanes' major cultural impact was through their causing of damage and destruction. In 1954 Ellul warned that when the real 'consequences [of propagandistic manipulations] finally appear, we will still not recognise them'.¹⁷² Planes were also used to drop soldiers using parachutes who were essentially killing machines. As mentioned in the introduction, ground combat was the main source of destruction, but planes were used to deploy more soldiers than ever before.

Paolozzi's symbolic use of airplanes in his work is not as directly presented to his viewers as it is to readers in Ballard's writing. In other words, the meaning behind Paolozzi's use of airplanes is not as easily discernable as Ballard's. This is likely based upon the fact that Ballard's medium is verbal by nature, and Paolozzi's visual. A more interesting point to note is what connotations Paolozzi creates through his use of appropriated images of airplanes in his collages. However, Paolozzi's work typically vilifies the airplane, making representations of airplanes as harbingers of disaster and catastrophe alongside modernisation. The purpose of airplanes for military tactics is explored in Paolozzi's work as well, described through images as a weapon. In Paolozzi's representations of airplanes, the presence of the pilot is often obscured. Using the screenprint *Wittgenstein in New York* (1964) from the series *As Is When* as an example, Paolozzi positioned a disproportionately large airplane at the top of the print (figure 3.1).

¹⁷² Jacques Ellul. *The Technological Society*. 368.



Figure 3.1. Eduardo Paolozzi. *Wittgenstein in New York*. 1964. Tate.

Given the freedom available to Paolozzi based on the distorted proportions he used in the composition, he could have easily incorporated the image of a pilot into this print. Instead, he chose to represent the airplane from a distance, keeping in proportion with the skyscrapers below but excluding the figures, one of whom seems to look up at the plane. This interaction between the figure and the plane gives the latter a greater significance.

While still a student at the Slade, Paolozzi created paper collages which contained airplane imagery or references to the airplane through more abstracted forms. He juxtaposed American fighter planes and American pin-up girls to offer a fresh interpretation of American culture. *Bunk!* parodied popular imagery and created gender parody through Paolozzi's cunning arrangement of ready-mades. Paolozzi's decision to incorporate aircraft and missiles into his artwork was part of a deliberate effort to prove he was not an escapist, an attribute frequently assigned to the Pop artists of his generation.¹⁷³ Consequently, the majority of the airplanes in Paolozzi's collages carry heavy connotations of war, destruction, violence, imperial conquest, and techno-masculinity.

¹⁷³ Eduardo Paolozzi. 'Speculative Illustrations'.

For his collages, which he began to silkscreen in the early 1970s, he appropriated snippets from imported American media such as magazines and comic books. Through his manipulation of kitschy images of aircraft, Paolozzi expressed his pessimistic view of mankind's technological development. In the majority of those works which feature an airplane, the figure of the airplane is not depicted neutrally. In nearly all the following examples, the airplane shirks its everyday status as a friendly form of transportation and instead implies an invasive weapon. The airplane Paolozzi depicts usually carries a form of critique with it. Even if the plane is used for domestic traveling purposes, then Paolozzi derides the notion of mass consumerism through advertisements, as seen in 'Things', the second part of 'Why We are in Vietnam' published in *Ambit* 41 in 1969. In this sense, the domestic airplane also reveals to the viewer a pessimistic view of technology – a view that indicates that advertising is implicit within technological advancement.

In particular, Paolozzi's early collage *I was a Rich Man's Plaything* (1947) demonstrates this connection between aircraft and their negative connotation (figure 3.2).



Figure 3.2. Eduardo Paolozzi. *I was a Rich Man's Plaything*. 1947. Tate.

The collage mounted on card *I was a Rich Man's Plaything* is likely the best known work from *Bunk!* considering that the word 'Pop!' is the focal point of the composition,

predating Lawrence Alloway's proclamation of the Pop style in art. *I was a Rich Man's Plaything* combines a painted, idealised female figure alongside cherries, a Coca-Cola advertisement, and American Air Force propaganda. The appeal of the commodities is similar to the fetishistic appeal of the flirtatious pin-up. In the lower corner, the military aircraft, straddled by the words 'Keep 'Em Flying!', represents American militarism and nationalism as pulp cliché.

Furthermore, a collage composed of found images from 1952, titled *Yours til the Boys Come Home*, explicitly expresses a sexualised scene within the context of a crash (figure 3.3). The parallel stop-action photographs of a crashing plane and a woman performing a striptease suggest that the backside of the scantily clad dancer caused the pilot to crash. The image of the plane's fiery explosion situated alongside the bent-over dancer insinuates the erotic pleasure that could be aroused by the destructive violence of a crash.



Figure 3.3. Eduardo Paolozzi. *Yours til the Boys Come Home*. 1952. Tate.

In this sense, the symbolism of the collage predates Ballard's *Crash*. Alternatively,

this interpretation would suggest that the driving perverted sexual theme behind *Crash* allows for this particular reading only in hindsight. Paolozzi's creative exploration of this sort of techno-masculine fantasy anticipated his later friendship with Ballard, the writer whose name is now synonymous with dystopian fantasies.

Because airplanes are mass-produced and have, since their invention, become gradually integrated into daily life, the image of the airplane can be easily overlooked and forgotten. With the intermingling of the aircraft with everyday rhetoric, its cultural and psychological implications are subsequently unnoticed. Although the airplane is a minor motif considering Paolozzi's large oeuvre, it suggests his characteristic distrust of technology by functioning as a metaphor for virility, destruction and the potential for war.

Airplanes were of interest to other artists and writers contemporary to Paolozzi and Ballard. Nigel Henderson, for example, was a fighter pilot during the war and Banham worked as a Royal Air Force technician. Also, outside the IG, the sculptor Geoffrey Clarke had been in the Royal Air Force. Bernard Myers, a contributor to *Ark* magazine at the end of 1956, was a member of the Royal Air Force.¹⁷⁴ For *Ark*, Myers wrote, 'An aeroplane's (sic) form is so closely related to its function that it is necessary to begin by saying something about the techniques of flight'.¹⁷⁵ His article discusses the mechanics of flight and the design elements which contribute to its ability to function as well as offering a historical discussion of problems to do with turbine engines, dealing with resistance. Accompanying illustrations included photographs of mostly military aircraft, including a Handley-Page Victor V-bomber. Perhaps the most striking aspect to Myers' article is that he closes with a quote from Lisle March Phillips, *Form and Colour* (1915).¹⁷⁶ Phillips wrote about how architecture could be analysed and critiqued on the same 'level of an intellectual art'.¹⁷⁷ Myers declares that if architecture could be criticised in the same manner as fine art, then too airplane design, equally, if not more so, warrants a critique in a similar vein.¹⁷⁸ He argues for a critical analysis of airplane design, similar to Le Corbusier's *Vers une architecture* (1924).¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ Bernard S. Myers. 'The Inclined Plane: An essay on form and flight'. *Ark*, no. 18, Nov 1956. 35-42.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. 35.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. 40.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. 42.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. 42.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. 42. See also: Le Corbusier. *Toward an Architecture*. Trans. John Goodman. London: Frances Lincoln, 1997.

The Vietnam War as seen in Britain

This chapter culminates with an assessment of Paolozzi and Ballard's disapproval of the Vietnam War. Their mutual critique of American involvement in the Vietnam War relates to their view of how technology has been controlled by those in power. Multiple works express this critique including Paolozzi's *Why We are in Vietnam* and *Things*, which were published in part in *Ambit*. Ballard published an anti-war short story 'Love and Napalm: Export USA' in *Ambit*, as well as the condensed novel *The Atrocity Exhibition*. Paolozzi's printed collage series *Zero Energy Experimental Pile* (1970) illustrated song tracks with pictures of nude women and airplanes alongside military tanks, Bugs Bunny, and other cartoons (figure 3.4).



Figure 3.4. Eduardo Paolozzi. *Zero Energy Experimental Pile*. 1970. Tate.

This combination of imagery suggests that militarism is related to sexual bravado. The inclusion of cartoons with pornographic figures and war iconography suggests the absurdity

of war as well as the sexualisation of violence in the media. In 1969, Paolozzi published an anti-war 'novel' titled *Why We Are in Vietnam* in *Ambit* number 40. Similar to the iconography found in *Zero Energy Experimental Pile*, some collages in the novel juxtapose strippers with missiles and cartoons of sexual intercourse with newspaper articles about bloody riots. Furthermore, Paolozzi's 1971 retrospective at the Tate included new works which sought to criticize the Tate's support of American artworks, thereby expressing his disapproval of American politics.

By the time Michael Moorcock wrote *Breakfast in the Ruins* (1971), the Vietnam War was at its height and therefore the repeated military references throughout the novel beginning with the protagonist describing his line of work as a military artist held relevance for the contemporary reader.¹⁸⁰

I'm a painter. An illustrator, really... I make my living doing military uniforms, mainly. People collect that sort of thing. It's a specialised craft. Sometimes I do work for the odd regiment which wants a picture to hang in the mess. Famous battles and stuff. You know...¹⁸¹

In this instance, coincidentally, Moorcock had described the character traits of one of his protagonists, Karl Glogauer, as quoted above, along similar lines to Paolozzi's personal interests. In the same year, another of Moorcock's books, *Cure for Cancer*, used Paolozzi's name in the context of what the science fiction author had considered, given the times, to be one of the most powerful pro-military living persons, the president of the United States. Moorcock wrote, 'U.S. President Teddy "Angel Face" Paolozzi had increased the number of military advisors sent to Europe to three million' as part of 'keeping order in Europe'.¹⁸² Ballard too had also referenced Paolozzi in *The Atrocity Exhibition* when describing one of the artist's sculptures in a garden for a block of flats.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ The Vietnam War is generally categorised as beginning with the Cold War in 1955 and continuing through to Saigon's fall in 1975.

¹⁸¹ Michael Moorcock. *Breakfast in the Ruins*. Great Britain: C. Nicholls and Company, 1973. 15-16. First edition 1971.

¹⁸² Michael Moorcock. *Cure for Cancer*. University of Michigan: Alison and Busby, 1971. 61.

¹⁸³ J.G. Ballard. *The Atrocity Exhibition*. 24.

Moorcock's military references demonstrate parallel thinking to that of Paolozzi and Ballard; they all shared experiences of World War II, of course. The pair's wartime memories as youths resurfaced during this period, when American military involvement in Vietnam had escalated and was by then accompanied with public protests in which Paolozzi took part. Although Moorcock's references to Paolozzi may at first seem obscure, they are relevant here because of the contribution of Ballard and Paolozzi to a certain British mode of artistic production. As part of a distinctively British cultural phenomenon, Ballard and Paolozzi responded to the psycho-sociological impact of American media output on British consciousness, in particular the media parade which covered the progress and aftermath of the Cold War, atomic bomb tests, American popular iconography and, eventually, the Vietnam War.¹⁸⁴

A component of this disenchantment with the proliferation of American media in Britain unfolded for Paolozzi and Ballard as part of a critique of the Vietnam War and the Cold War. The abuse of technology in foreign arenas during World War II and its aftermath maintained a strong place in the memory of both figures and this consequently resonated in their later works in the form of critique, if not protest. The omnipresence of the Vietnam War as experienced through television and other media created a different kind of impact than previous wars had done. Considering the mass proliferation of American media in Britain, Ballard wrote retrospectively in his autobiography *Miracles of Life*,

American and Russian astronauts were carrying out regular orbital flights in their spacecraft, and everyone assumed that NASA would land an American on the moon in 1969 and fulfill President Kennedy's vow on coming to office. Communications satellites had transformed the media landscape of the planet, bringing the Vietnam War into every living room.¹⁸⁵

Despite the fact that Britain was not involved in the Vietnam War, the British public experienced the effects of the war through various media outlets, predominantly television,

¹⁸⁴ Andrzej Gasiorek. *J.G. Ballard*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005. 3.

¹⁸⁵ J.G. Ballard. *Miracles of Life*. 215.

newspapers and radio. For Ballard, this critique was manifested in his writing of science fiction which verged on the political, as he addressed both the war itself and the media which presented it. According to one author, the backlash of British New Wave science fiction writers against American involvement in Vietnam notably began with Ballard's short story 'The Killing Ground' (1966).¹⁸⁶ 'The Killing Ground' was first published in *New Worlds* in March 1969, in the same issue as Moorcock's first part of *Cure for Cancer*, which also criticised the war.

Ballard wrote 'The Killing Ground' as an imagined global war thirty years after the war in South-East Asia, or 'a world Vietnam'.¹⁸⁷ The story positions American troops as foreign invaders surrounding the River Thames and depicts the bloody brutalities which injured soldiers endure. Ballard wrote, 'Even with twenty million men under arms, the Americans could spare fewer than 200,000 soldiers for the British Isles, a remote backwater in their global war against dozens of national liberation armies'.¹⁸⁸ This anti-war short story ends with a British soldier being shot down as mortar shells were fired at him from Americans hiding in the trees on the other side of the Thames. In the story, Ballard blatantly references slogans against 'US atrocities in Vietnam' as part of his apocalyptic tale of global war.¹⁸⁹

Another key text in this vein is found in Ballard's 'Love and Napalm: Export USA', which was first printed in *Ambit* 36 (1968), and later published as a 'condensed novel' in *The Atrocity Exhibition*. 'Love and Napalm: Export USA', as with most of the other short stories in *The Atrocity Exhibition*, loosely follows the story of Traven, a psychiatric patient in a mental hospital which runs various experiments on its patients. Following the trend of Ballard's writing of the late 1960s, the media displays of the Vietnam War are paired uncomfortably with the sexuality of infants and mutilation, as though to comment on how gruesome the war appeared to Ballard at the time.

¹⁸⁶ Bruce Franklin. 'The Vietnam War as American Science Fiction and Fantasy'. *Science Fiction Studies* 17/3, Nov 1990, 355. Footnote 12.

¹⁸⁷ J.G. Ballard. 'The Killing Ground'. *The Complete Short Stories: Volume 2*. London: Harper Perennial, 2006. 291.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 291.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 296.

Accordingly, video and newsreel media were a major source of inspiration for Ballard as he expressed the violence of the war through sexuality. For 'Love and Napalm: Export USA', Ballard wrote,

The latent sexual character of the war. All political and military explanations fail to provide a rationale for the war's extended duration. In its manifest phase the war can be seen as a limited military confrontation with strong audience participation via TV and news media, satisfying low-threshold fantasies of violence and aggression... Endless-loop combat newsreels were intercut with material of genital, axillary, buccal and anal character.... Prolonged exposure to these films may exercise a beneficial effect on the toilet training and psychosexual development of the present infant generation.¹⁹⁰

As demonstrated, the content of 'Love and Napalm: Export USA' was a precursor to the way Ballard used sexuality in his 1973 novel *Crash*. He sexualised the war as a method of critique. In the short story, disturbing visual imagery causes sexual arousal for the characters in the same way car crashes allow sexual gratification for the characters who purposefully crash their cars in *Crash*. 'Love and Napalm: Export USA' however plays with the role of the mediated image as presented to viewers in the story. Ballard creates an aroused state of sexuality in his characters from their viewing of television 'newsreel films depicting the torture of the Viet Cong'.¹⁹¹ Looped reels of Vietnam combat shown to psychiatric patients caused improved physiological health in the patients, such as improved blood pressure and respiratory rates.

Above all, 'Love and Napalm: Export USA' demonstrates Ballard's anti-American perspective, highlighting the biased way in which American media presented the war to a global audience. In Ballard's commentary for the story, he wrote 'the inadvertent packaging of the violence and cruelty like attractive commercial products' was certain to be a source of critique.¹⁹² By this Ballard refers to the slick way the news manipulates images of violence to

¹⁹⁰ J.G. Ballard. 'Love and Napalm: Export USA'. *The Atrocity Exhibition*. 94.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. 93.

¹⁹² Ibid. 93.

relay a certain biased point-of-view. In 'Love and Napalm: Export USA', Viet Cong women prisoners are presented as 'sexual objects' to the psychiatric patients who watch their suffering. As a further critique of the proliferation of the media, Ballard wrote, 'Deprivation of newsreel and TV screenings led to symptoms of withdrawal and a lowering of general health'.¹⁹³ Through this statement, Ballard implies that the violence of the war as televised improves the health of the viewers, again foreshadowing the use of violence as a prerequisite for producing an optimum sexual fantasy in other stories using a similar concept, such as 'The Summer Cannibals' (also in *The Atrocity Exhibition*) and *Crash*.

This disapproval of the mass media through the mode of a perverse sexualisation persists throughout Ballard's writings of the late 1960s. Another example of this, 'Why I Want to Fuck Ronald Reagan', depicts a fictional psychological depiction of Reagan and his fans. The story first appeared in *Ronald Reagan, The Magazine of Poetry*.¹⁹⁴ One American who was affiliated with the New Wave in Britain, artist Pamela Zoline, co-edited with John Sladek and designed the cover for *Ronald Reagan, The Magazine of Poetry* (1968), three years after America's occupation (figure 1.2). This compilation of poetry, stories and artworks notably contains the publication of Ballard's 'Why I Want to Fuck Ronald Reagan' as well as three poems by conceptual artist Vito Acconci, among other poems. Ballard's story begins with a 'conceptual auto-disaster' and makes comparisons between Reagan, Hitler and Nixon.¹⁹⁵ It also describes fantasies of homosexual intercourse with Reagan. Reagan was governor of California from 1967 and in 1968 was the Republican presidential candidate.¹⁹⁶ Known for his film career and good looks, he posed a trust issue with the public as someone who was first known for acting in Hollywood films. A former president of the Screen Actors' Guild and a charismatic speaker, Reagan promoted right-wing conservatism in his political campaigns through his anti-Communist disputes during the 1960s.

For Ballard, Reagan was completely untrustworthy as a governor and eventually president, as he expressed in the commentary for *The Atrocity Exhibition*.¹⁹⁷ Ballard

¹⁹³ Ibid. 95.

¹⁹⁴ 'Why I Want to Fuck Ronald Reagan' was later published in *The Atrocity Exhibition*.

¹⁹⁵ J.G. Ballard. *The Atrocity Exhibition*. San Francisco: RE/Search Publications, 1990. 10.

¹⁹⁶ Reagan would of course become US president later in 1981 and serve two terms until 1989.

¹⁹⁷ Ballard. *The Atrocity Exhibition*. 105.

described the Reagan of the 1960s as an 'often sinister figure' who was frequently shown on British television.¹⁹⁸ The author commented,

Watching his right-wing speeches, in which he castigated in sneering tones the profligate, welfare-spending, bureaucrat-infested state government, I saw a more crude and ambitious figure, far closer to the brutal crime boss he played in the 1964 movie, *The Killers*, his last Hollywood role.¹⁹⁹

This inevitable comparison between Reagan the politician and Reagan the actor was a major pitfall in Reagan's legitimacy to function as a viable politician in Ballard's view. While Ballard's above quotation may be an extreme point of view, it usefully demonstrates how a British liberal audience – like that of New Wave science fiction authors – would have perceived Reagan.

Furthermore, with regards to frequently watching Reagan on British television, Ballard remarked, 'Reagan was the first politician to exploit the fact that his TV audience would not be listening too closely, if at all, to what he was saying...'²⁰⁰ This statement reflects Ballard's interest in both 'inner space' and the ever-expanding media landscape in which America had come to the foreground during the post-1945 era in Britain. In this sense, the short text of 'Why I Want to Fuck Ronald Reagan' is both a critique of Reagan's status of Hollywood actor-turned-politician as well as a psychological form of science fiction which focuses on personal subjectivity and reflection.

This negative attitude towards Reagan is reflected in the mode of writing in which Ballard and other New Wave science fiction writers of the late 1960s worked. Their writing sought to draw readers away from pulp science fiction, which often posed Communists as a threat to society, one of the tenets which Reagan viewed as a threat. Ballard's text about Reagan emphasises the public's fascination with an attractive Hollywood star through the manipulation of film, television screens and Reagan's imagined sexuality. As Ballard observed in his writing, the mediascape increasingly became part of everyday life. Although

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. 105.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. 105.

²⁰⁰ Ballard. *The Atrocity Exhibition*.105.

in 'Why I Want to Fuck Ronald Reagan', Ballard mentions the atrocity victims of the Vietnam War, the text is more of a commentary on a society subsumed by television screens rather than a critique of the American invasion of Vietnam. As Ballard commented, the Vietnam War was brought into the homes of British television viewers live, thus changing the way war was perceived by the general public. If anything, 'Why I Want to Fuck Ronald Reagan' deepens the psychological texture of *The Atrocity Exhibition* and also functions well as a stand-alone text about an imagined version of the way in which audiences might perceive Reagan in a now media-saturated society.

Similarly, Paolozzi's impression of the war was expressed through portrayals of mass media, although primarily through newsprint rather than television or video reels. Paolozzi's declamation against the war came several years later than Ballard's, but in line with the start of *Ambit* magazine's open dismissal of American involvement in Vietnam. In 1969, Bax published *Ambit* 39 'The Stars and Stripes' issue, thus beginning *Ambit*'s bold opposition to the Vietnam War. Multiple works by Paolozzi express this critique including 'Why We Are in Vietnam' and 'Things', which were published in part in *Ambit* 40 and 41, respectively.

The anti-war set of collages titled 'Why We Are in Vietnam: A Novel' (1969) is comprised of collage with cut-out newspaper and magazine articles alongside photographs and images. One two-page spread²⁰¹ contains the words 'Bad News at the Breakfast Table (As a daily diet)' written across the top of the pages in newsprint-type (figure 3.5).

²⁰¹ Eduardo Paolozzi. 'Why We Are in Vietnam'. *Ambit* 40. 1969. 32-33.



Figure 3.5. Eduardo Paolozzi. Page from 'Why We Are in Vietnam'. *Ambit*. Number 40. 1969.

All the news articles below describe death victims and riots, as well as personal adverts. The seriousness of the news is countered by a strange comic strip in the bottom right-hand corner. The cartoon depicts a woman who is forced to copulate with the Michelin Man. Adding some further levity to the collage is a cartoon drawing of a featherless parrot with bug-eyes and human ears at the left-side of the page. This combination of cartoons and news articles highlights the way which Paolozzi played with fiction and reality.

The title of this work is arguably a response to Norman Mailer's book published two years earlier, *Why Are We in Vietnam?* (1967). Mailer's novel tells the story of an 18-year-old American male narrator who depicts a bear hunting trip in Alaska before the reader learns that it is actually the narrator's last night before he joins the American army in Vietnam. The parable of the hunting for a grizzly bear in Alaska represents America's war fought in Vietnam. Mailer introduces the reader into the mind of a young man who may be close to the end of his life. Using a stream of consciousness narration, D.J., the protagonist, quickly produces a collage of scattered references in the reader's mind. Throughout the novel, the protagonist exudes arrogance which is meant to exemplify the attitude of American soldiers.

Paolozzi's interest in appropriating the American media in his art waned after he had visited America in the 1960s. Ballard wrote in his final autobiography that Paolozzi's 'early obsession with all things American rather faded after his teaching trip to Berkeley in the late 1960s. He told me how he had taken a party of his students on a field trip to a Douglas aircraft plant, but they had been bored by the whole venture.'²⁰² Ballard continued to describe how Paolozzi's use of imagery from outside of Britain shifted towards an enthusiastic attitude towards Japan, with its automated, talking cigarette machines, for instance.²⁰³

Another aspect to Ballard's interest in machines is the existence of pseudo-cyborgs. In the novels of his mid-career, the vast majority of Ballard's cyborgs, if they can be identified as such, do not acquire the fantastical manifestation of the human-cybernetic combination that we may identify more with recent creations such as RoboCop or linked-in cyberpunks, for instance. Rather, they most typically appear as normal humans involved in the everyday activity of driving. In the novel *Crash* for example, the car serves as a prosthesis which enhances humans' ability to experience pleasure as an accessory to hedonism. Consequently, the role of the cyborg – part human, part machine – in Ballard's fiction naturally plays a key part in manufacturing the unique brand of social isolation which abounds in his work. This sense of alienation is symbolised through the often bleak existences which Ballard creates for his characters and is expounded by the looming presence of contemporary mechanisation found in the aesthetics of urban scenes such as motorways, car parks, and airfields.

Conclusion

Although the artistic outputs of Ballard and Paolozzi both demonstrate a psyche which is haunted by experiences of World War II, they expressed a tendency towards decay using different methods. The sense of alienation caused by post-1945 psychological trauma in prisoners of war that was felt by Paolozzi and Ballard was tangible to millions of others. In the early twentieth-century socio-political context, the airplane gained new connotations.

²⁰² Ballard. *Miracles of Life*. 220-221. For Ballard's full narrative on the evolution of his relationship with Paolozzi, see pages 216-222.

²⁰³ *Ibid.* 221.

Paolozzi's screenprints demonstrate the iconography present in war, including bomber planes and missiles. Using the military airplane as a recurring motif in his artwork throughout his career, Paolozzi's collages and prints suggest the disintegration of society as a result of increased mechanization. For Paolozzi, the airplane functioned as a tool to metaphorically imply how the darkness of human brutality can be expressed through technology.

During the height of the Vietnam War in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Ballard and Paolozzi created anti-American novels and collages. The pair's youthful wartime experiences resurfaced during this period when American military involvement in Vietnam escalated. Like many authors and artists living in Britain at the time, Ballard and Paolozzi disapproved of America's involvement in Vietnam. A minor, yet significant proponent of their critique of the Vietnam War was expressed as a disapproval of the evolving media landscape which broadcasted the war. Protesting was one aspect of Ballard and Paolozzi's mutual fascination with what could be described as disenchantment with militaristic foreign and regeneration policies in the wake of World War II.

Chapter 4

Ballard and Paolozzi's neo-avant-garde years at *Ambit*

'I think we were all part of a broad movement which was rejecting...the played out conventions of Modernism. We were looking for methods which worked for us. Some were eventually abandoned. Some were modified. We now live in a world where many of our innovations, techniques and subjects we considered our own, have become so commonly used nobody even knows where they originally came from.'²⁰⁴

As discussed in the first chapter, Michael Moorcock was part of a re-working of the aesthetics of science fiction from roughly 1967 to 1970. As editor of the magazine *New Worlds*, Moorcock printed reproductions of recent artworks by artists such as Paolozzi and Richard Hamilton in order to illustrate the modern society which science fiction critiqued. This use of high art to complement so-called low fiction mimicked what Pop art had redefined as appropriate subject matter for new art. High fashion, advertisements and new products were reproduced to create a spectacle of contemporary society. By incorporating into *New Worlds* recognizable images of the everyday, from advertisements to the latest household appliance, Moorcock extended the tradition nearly two decades later which was born out of Independent Group meetings in the early 1950s. These meetings marked the beginnings of British Pop, which incidentally used science fiction imagery in its visual repertoire.

Similarly, Martin Bax, the editor of *Ambit* magazine since its beginnings in 1959, selected contemporary artwork to accompany the literary magazine's poetry. The interspersed artworks complemented the written word, and often on the page appeared a combination of the two. However, in contrast to *New Worlds*, *Ambit's* aesthetics were built upon avant-garde predecessors. Little magazines from the early twentieth century such as *Rhythm* set the standard for Bax's publication.²⁰⁵ Lacking a definitive manifesto, *Ambit* magazine published material which sometimes offered contrasting viewpoints.

The earliest contributors to *Ambit* were Bax's friends, poetry group members and others who worked for the magazine.²⁰⁶ When Ballard met Bax in 1965, *Ambit* was published

²⁰⁴ Michael Moorcock. 'Angry Old Men: Michael Moorcock on J.G. Ballard.' <http://www.ballardian.com/angry-old-men-michael-moorcock-on-jg-ballard>.

²⁰⁵ David Brittain. *The Jet Age Compendium: Eduardo Paolozzi at Ambit 1967-1980*. London: Four Corners Books, 2009. 19.

²⁰⁶ It initially received Arts Council funding, but lost it in 2008.

quarterly.²⁰⁷ The magazine, which emphasized poetry over artwork, promoted new styles of writing. The content of *Ambit* consisted of a combination of radical poets and artists from across a wide spectrum, often presenting contradictory agendas. *Ambit* constituted a community of artists, writers and poets which although they did not necessarily belong to the same shared beliefs, worked together to create a unique publication.²⁰⁸ Departing from his initial belief that *Ambit* should be primarily a poetry magazine, Bax began to increasingly incorporate more imagery into the design of *Ambit*. Ballard and Bax - the latter whom Paolozzi had collaborated with on a visual essay - worked closely beside art director Michael Foreman and poet Edwin Brock.²⁰⁹ Another of Paolozzi's contributions to *Ambit* was a mock interview he conducted with Diane Kirkpatrick.²¹⁰ Throughout his career, Paolozzi published a total of thirteen collages in *Ambit* between the years 1967 and 1995, including image-text material.

Paolozzi's excerpt *Moonstrips/General Dynamic F.U.N.* and one of Ballard's advertiser's announcements will be assessed in three sections of this chapter according to Moorcock's categorisation of the anti-Modernist activity which writers and artists participated in during the 1960s: innovations, techniques and subjects. Moorcock stated that the never-ending recycling of a previous generation's artistic production demonstrates a failure of art in the first decade of the twenty-first century. According to the science fiction author, this failure results from the lack of meaning and loss of historical context for the audience due to the repetition of innovations, techniques and subject matter throughout the development of literary history over the last half century. He does not recognise, however, that the circle of writers and artists to which he refers, including Paolozzi and Ballard, through their own reaction against modernism and adaptation of early twentieth century models of art, were participating in a second wave of neo-avant-garde practice. Consequently, this group reiterated and distorted a complex set of values that were present in both British and continental avant-garde movements which resided under the modernist umbrella such as Vorticism and Futurism.

²⁰⁷ J.G. Ballard. *Miracles of Life*. 209.

²⁰⁸ David Brittain. *The Jet Age Compendium: Eduardo Paolozzi at Ambit 1967-1980*. London: Four Corners Books, 2009. 19.

²⁰⁹ Ibid. 19.

²¹⁰ In *Ambit* number 51, 1972.

The term 'neo-avant-garde' presupposes many definitions, adding to the complexity of the task of defining this term. Peter Bürger's *Theory of the Avant-garde* (1984) presented the neo-avant-garde of the 1950s and 1960s as counteracting the original purpose of the early twentieth century avant-garde.²¹¹ After three decades of waffling with definitions, new definitions of the neo-avant-garde have arisen, building upon Bürger's initial categorisation. The faults found in the neo-avant-garde, such as institutionalising the avant-garde and consequently removing its meaning, have been both dismissed and supported by critics such as Hal Foster and Jürgen Habermas, as will be explained further.

In Hal Foster's 1994 essay, 'What's Neo about the Neo-Avant-Garde?', the author expands Bürger's argument which Foster uses as the central point of his critique of the neo-avant-garde. Foster argues that Bürger's own examples of the avant-garde are too narrow and widens his own thesis to include Dada and Constructivism as avant-garde models. Furthermore, Foster expands upon a Marxist reference which Bürger does not elaborate on. He writes that Bürger does not continue far enough in his argument by not appreciating the 'ambitious art of his time.'²¹² Foster makes the point that the neo-avant-garde of the 1960s, the second 'neo', challenges the institution of art, rather than just elaborating upon it.²¹³ This builds upon his definition of the modern avant-gardist project which emphasised innovation as opposed to provoking the established art institutions.

Foster, in his essay 'Who's Afraid of the Neo-avant-garde?', defines the common problems of the avant-garde as 'the ideology of progress, the presumption of originality, the elitist hermeticism, the historical exclusivity, (and) the appropriation of the culture industry.'²¹⁴ He writes that the future of the avant-garde, as represented by the neo-avant-garde, depends on 'new genealogies' which function as updates to the historiography of the avant-garde.²¹⁵ Foster's two theories of the avant-garde present Bürger's *Theory of the Avant-garde* (1984) and Jürgen Habermas' essay 'Modernity – An Incomplete Project' (1983).²¹⁶ According to Foster, Bürger's writing on the avant-garde portrays it 'as an absolute origin

²¹¹ Peter Bürger. *Theory of the Avant-garde*. Trans. Michael Shaw. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984. 58.

²¹² Hal Foster. *The Return of the Real: The Avant-garde at the end of the Century*. Cambridge, London: MIT Press, 1996. 14

²¹³ Ibid. 25.

²¹⁴ Ibid. 5.

²¹⁵ Ibid. 5.

²¹⁶ Peter Bürger. *Theory of the Avant-garde*. See also: Jürgen Habermas. 'Modernity – An Incomplete Project.' In Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. Seattle: Bay Press, 1983.

whose aesthetic transformations are fully significant and historically effective in the first instance.²¹⁷ Furthermore, Foster states that Habermas projects a heavy critique of the avant-garde, stating it was a false movement which was based on nonsense.²¹⁸ As such, even if Bürger argued that the avant-garde was culturally significant, he does not necessarily imply that it was successful, as Habermas stated.

Innovations

The first theme to be discussed in terms of Ballard and Paolozzi's neo-avant-garde activity is innovations, namely the pair's mockery of the avant-garde fixation with the machine as in the case inherited from Futurism and Vorticism as well as their critique of the media industry. In the methods to be discussed, Ballard and Paolozzi improved upon avant-garde strategies by incorporating their own views and practices into their works. A revival of avant-garde practices are demonstrated by Paolozzi's shifts in his machine aesthetic over the course of the 1950s and 1960s. For instance, during the 1950s, Paolozzi created cast impressions of found objects in his sculpture, rather than using the found object in the final artwork itself. During the 1960s, this technique was adapted to screenprinting images and photographs, correlating to the mechanical mass reproduction of images in the contemporary media sphere.

An example of a neo-avant-garde artwork which Paolozzi produced was printed in *Ambit* magazine. Paolozzi's screenprint and photolithograph series *General Dynamic F.U.N.* (1965-1970) served as the sequel to the series *Moonstrips Empire News* (1967). Together, in extracted form, they compose Paolozzi's *Moonstrips/General Dynamic F.U.N.* which was published in *Ambit* 33, 1967. The issue contains a cover taken directly from *Moonstrips Empire News* as well as eighteen pages of copy and images which are taken from both of the series. The text is mostly brief paragraphs interspersed with black and white photographs and collages. The original screenprints and photolithographs were printed in colour. During the mid-1960s, Ballard served as *Ambit's* prose editor and assisted Bax, the editor, with arranging Paolozzi's collages and texts. The texts were found by Paolozzi and

²¹⁷ Hal Foster. *The Return of the Real*. 8.

²¹⁸ Ibid. 16.

later organized in a manner befitting to the magazine in what was a collaboration between Ballard, Bax and Paolozzi himself.

Bax worked alongside Ballard and Paolozzi in what was the most tangible example of a collaboration between the author and artist.²¹⁹ Together, Ballard and Bax edited Paolozzi's submissions, including *Moonstrips/General Dynamic F.U.N.* Composed of samples taken from the two screenprint series, *Moonstrips Empire News* and *General Dynamic F.U.N.*, the excerpt printed in *Ambit* demonstrates the way in which Paolozzi interpreted writing. He used a cut-up technique which had been made popular by authors such as William S. Burroughs. Rapidly changing from one text to the next, the chaotic arrangement of topics reflected the random assortment of information which is presented by the media. At the time, he had wanted to publish *Moonstrips Empire News*, but never found a willing publisher. The excerpt in *Ambit* also emphasises the methods that Ballard, Bax and Paolozzi used in order to make the two screenprint series suitable for magazine publication. Images and text used in the two series were not kept necessarily in the same sequence for the magazine, but were instead reinterpreted to fit the magazine's layout.

An example of this cut-up technique is found in the section 'Merrywood Preserved.' 'Merrywood Preserved' is one of eleven short texts in Paolozzi's excerpts from *Moonstrips/General Dynamic F.U.N.* When considering visually the term of the ratio of image to text, typed print dominates the pages. Spread across nineteen pages, this excerpt includes only seven images. 'The Madhouse Racket'²²⁰ contains cut-up text as varied as discussing how a woman applies her makeup to safety deposits to advertisements. The text runs cohesively without any breaks from the intrusion of images. The story begins with a description of Merrywood, an estate where Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis stayed for some of her childhood years. The final sentence of the first paragraph does not finish, but is left open-ended. The next paragraph discussed Ludwig Wittgenstein's career at Cambridge. Wittgenstein was a major interest for Paolozzi during the mid-1960s, as shown with his *As Is When* screenprint series. Paolozzi abruptly ends the story by erasing half of the word 'mathematician' (mathe-). The sentence continues into information about radiators. Again,

²¹⁹ Interview with David Pringle (Ballard's archivist). 2 February, 2009.

²²⁰ *Ambit* 33. 1967. 20-24.

the paragraph changes direction for a second time with a mention of a film starring Gregory Peck and Ingrid Bergman. The remainder of 'Merrywood Preserved' continues on this way.

Both *Moonstrips Empire News* and *General Dynamic F.U.N.* were originally printed by Chris Prater at Kelpra Studios. As Paolozzi worked on *General Dynamic F.U.N.*, a project similar to *Moonstrips Empire News*, he grew weary of the collage as an art form and began to view it as lacking the ability to capture the daily life of the contemporary urban population.²²¹ He intended to make a film out of the collages, combining still images with live footage of city life.²²² Paolozzi had created something similar to this idea with the film *History of Nothing* (1962), which was composed of alternating images of photographic stills and collage using a soundtrack of the city as a backdrop. Another figure who relayed the isolation of contemporary urban life was Ballard, who had been friends with Paolozzi for several years by this time (1970). Coincidentally, Ballard wrote the introduction for *General Dynamic F.U.N.* This written contribution by Ballard to Paolozzi's work of art signifies the overlapping interests which the pair shared. Both the artist and author used contemporary media sources as fodder for making a critique of an Americanization of British culture through the proliferation of media outlets such as television, radio, newspapers and magazines.

Ballard's brief introduction to *General Dynamic F.U.N.* discussed the wide range of cultural material which Paolozzi drew from in order to create the work. Taking images demonstrative of American consumer culture, the media landscape which was represented by the artist illuminates American culture in both an ironic and humorous way. The pictures of modern life both depicted the reality of a culture that would accelerate Britain away from its postwar austerity as well as critique this culture. A key motif which Paolozzi used throughout the work is mechanical form, which Ballard comments upon. Ballard wrote in the introduction,

In *General Dynamic F.U.N.*, he brings together the happiest fruits of a benevolent technology. The leitmotiv is the California girl sunbathing on her car roof... Here the familiar materials of our everyday lives, the jostling

²²¹ Diane Kirkpatrick. *Eduardo Paolozzi*. Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society Ltd., 1970. 114-115.

²²² *Ibid.* 115.

iconographies of mass advertising and consumer goods, are manipulated to reveal their true identities.²²³

For Paolozzi, the iconography of mass advertising and consumer goods was entwined with the representation of contemporary mechanization. The 'true identities' of these aspects of everyday life which Ballard wrote of is in reference to the cynical viewpoint in which Paolozzi presented these images.

In Ballard's introduction, his impression of a 'benevolent technology' is likely an ironic remark. Printed during the time in which he was writing the novel *Crash*, a presentation of a tale of urban dwellers who achieve sexual gratification through both simulated and real car crashes, Ballard's intentions are likely also meant to be humorous. Those familiar with Ballard's writing and work would have recognised the irony of the statement, 'happiest fruits of a benevolent technology'. For instance, Ballard had staged an exhibition in 1969 of crashed cars accompanied by female strip dancers in order to test his psychological experiment on a live audience. As will be discussed later, Ballard's own use of technology in his writing, particularly through the motifs of airplanes and automobiles, demonstrate a dismissal of the traditional idea of progress. Ballard insinuated that technology is in fact not an improvement on human lifestyle, but rather a hindrance to it. This notion coheres with the downfall and aftermath of avant-garde movements including Futurism and Vorticism, which initially praised the capabilities of modern mechanization and technology. Although these movements began as promoters of the modern machine, the onset of World War I drastically diminished the vast majority of the involved artist's enthusiasm about contemporary technology, although not in the Futurists' case. Ballard and Paolozzi take this one step further by using their critique of machinery to indicate a stance set against war, for which brings the most rapid advancements in technology.

By contrast, an example taken from the original screenprint series *General Dynamic F.U.N.* demonstrates the result of one of the 'happiest fruits of a benevolent technology.' Both humorous and poignant, Paolozzi depicted a colour-by-number rendition of a drawing of Jesus' face (figure 4.1).

²²³ J.G. Ballard. 'Introduction'. *General Dynamic F.U.N.* 1965-1970.

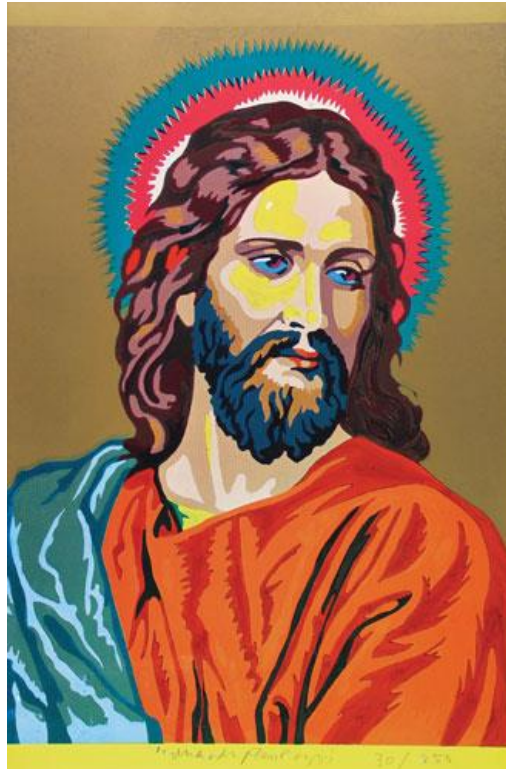


Figure 4.1. Eduardo Paolozzi. Screenprint from *General Dynamic F.U.N.* 1965-1970. National Galleries of Scotland.

This child-like representation critiques Christianity, the religion most associated with the United States' government, as it frequently is mentioned by American presidents in public speeches. The formulaic treatment of Jesus' face, which has been coloured-in section by section according to a correlating number, relays a message that Christianity requires blind adherence. With this colour-by-number scheme, Paolozzi could also be referring to the ease with which followers of Christianity accept its teachings, without thinking critically or 'colouring outside the lines' so to speak. Nonetheless, this brightly-coloured image of Jesus, complete with a face coloured in arbitrarily but according to number, is not without a sense of humour, as it is in stark contrast to traditional portraits of Jesus.

Religious images are not frequent in Paolozzi's artworks. It is for this reason that I find the image of Jesus' face to be significant, not only for its critique of religion, but also for its reference to the structure of mechanical systems such as the method of screenprinting itself. The colour-by-number template which Paolozzi used can be inferred as a reference to the way in which images are reproduced on the page through the process of screenprinting. Like a colour-by-numbers drawing, which predicts the same outcome every time with its

formulaic design, the screenprinting process is capable of reproducing the same image many times before the image becomes obscured. Accordingly, this particular screenprint is unique in that it acknowledges the very process by which it was created.

Paolozzi's print of Jesus embodies Peter Bürger's notion of chance as written about in *Theory of the Avant-garde*. Bürger wrote that the purposeful production of chance is the opposite to arbitrariness.²²⁴ While the colour-by-number pattern indicates a strict formula, the screenprint also embodies the spirit of chance through Paolozzi's use of arbitrary colours. Bürger wrote that chance 'is not the result of blind spontaneity in the handling of the material but its very opposite, the most painstaking calculation.'²²⁵ The contrast between the seemingly random, bold colours used in the image and its uniform pattern which is distributed across the print relate a message of the mechanical precision created in the screenprinting process. Rather than using chance as a practical device for the print, Paolozzi demonstrated calculated precision in both form and content. The strict adherence to the colour-by-number scheme along with the dominating image of Jesus' portrait indicate Bürger's notion that chance for the neo-avant-garde work of art is not in fact pure chance but instead the well-plotted result of planning and organisation.

This interest in repeated reproduction relates to Paolozzi's career-long interest in technology, which represents a similar trajectory of mass reproduction and uniformity in development and production. The way in which Paolozzi imagined technology shifted throughout his career leading up to *General Dynamic F.U.N.* What began initially as an interest in sketching car parts while in art school transformed into the sleek, symmetrical sculptures of the 1960s. These sculptures contrast with the rough-and-ready sculptures that Paolozzi created during the 1950s. Drawing images of machines was instinctive to Paolozzi, as demonstrated in his 1954 drawing *Automobile Head* (figure 4.2).²²⁶

²²⁴ Peter Bürger. *Theory of the Avant-garde*. 67.

²²⁵ Ibid. 67.

²²⁶ Paolozzi later made a screenprint of this drawing in 1962.



Figure 4.2. Eduardo Paolozzi. *Automobile Head*. 1954. Tate.

Along the while, Paolozzi collected photographs of crashed cars, robots, crash test dummies, and monkeys in outer space. Some of these photographs were later incorporated into his screenprint and photolithograph series *Moonstrips Empire News* and *General Dynamic F.U.N.* With the onset of the Independent Group in the early 1950s, Paolozzi's view of technology became oriented towards images reflective of science fiction. These included robots, airplanes, space shuttles, and scientists working in labs.

Different authors have assessed the development of Paolozzi's ongoing dedication to the representation of the machine throughout the course of his career. Frank Whitford wrote about the shift from Paolozzi's anthropomorphic free-standing sculptures of the late 1950s to the slickly-designed totems of the early 1960s. Diane Kirkpatrick has noted Paolozzi's lifelong fixation with robots, which he often created using found objects.²²⁷ She also recognized how Paolozzi's older methods of collaging together sculptures from *objets trouvés* contrasted starkly with the clean lines that are associated with his sculptures of the

²²⁷ Diane Kirkpatrick. *Eduardo Paolozzi*. Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society Ltd., 1970. 39.

early 1960s, as did Whitford. In an interview with Richard Hamilton, Paolozzi attributed this change in his design to the change in his workplace. Rather than building sculptures in an artist's studio, he began to work in an engineer's workshop.²²⁸ Accordingly, as the tools he used to create sculptures changed, so did his style. The techniques used to create the sculptures transformed into the practices that a welder uses. Rosemary Miles has pointed out that images of aerospace engineering began appearing in the early 1970s, citing it as a probable result from his visits to Aerospace and Road Safety Research centres in California during his two-year teaching stint at UC Berkeley in the late 1960s.²²⁹

One aspect of Paolozzi's past which is not typically discussed in the art historical literature is his peripheral affiliation with Italian Fascism. To discuss Paolozzi's interest in modern technology is to recognise his family's controversial past with Fascism. This is significant because Italian Futurism, the avant-garde artistic and literary movement associated with Fascism, used the machine as a metaphor for social progress, as Paolozzi did in his work. Even though Paolozzi grew up in Leith, Scotland, he spent several childhood summers in Italy at Fascist camps for boys. His Italian immigrant father, a supporter of Mussolini, wanted his son to engage firsthand with Italian culture and escape the city for summer holidays.

The dynamics of Paolozzi's family changed because of World War II, during which he lost both his father and grandfather. Shortly after, under the Emergency Powers Act, Paolozzi's male relatives were arrested and Paolozzi himself was detained in Saughton Gaol in Edinburgh. His father and grandfather were killed several weeks later aboard a ship headed for Canada carrying a British crew along with German and Italian prisoners.²³⁰ The ship was hit by a German torpedo and sunk. Several years later in 1943, Paolozzi was drafted into the army while he was a student at the Slade School of Art. He became a soldier in the Royal Pioneer Corps and was stationed at Slough and Windsor.²³¹ The illustrations of

²²⁸ Eduardo Paolozzi. *Eduardo Paolozzi: sculpture, drawings, collages and graphics*. London: Arts Council, 1976. 38.

²²⁹ Rosemary Miles. *The Complete Prints of Eduardo Paolozzi: prints, drawings, collages 1944-77*. London: Victoria and Albert Museum. 1977. 39.

²³⁰ Robin Spencer. *Eduardo Paolozzi: Writings and Interviews*. 9.

²³¹ Robin Spencer. *Eduardo Paolozzi: Recurring Themes*. London: Trefoil Books. 1984.140.

mechanically-oriented objects such as cars and airplanes instilled faith in the young artist to pursue his interest in machines and engineering principles.²³²

According to Robin Spencer, the tragic loss of Paolozzi's father and grandfather did not leave him bitter about the war, but instead with a new perception of a distorted world. Spencer wrote, 'So tragic an event - caused by a nation in panic and fatally inflicted on its victims by an enemy which ironically in war was the ally of their native land left no bitterness in Paolozzi's memory; only the experience of a "world turned upside down"'.²³³ The vision of a skewed world is represented in the chaotic mixture of images drawn from American culture shown in *General Dynamic F.U.N.* This opinion coincides with Paolozzi's later statement from 1971 that he wanted to remind his audience of the atrocities in the world, rather than help them to forget.²³⁴ In contrast to the way early twentieth century artists glorified the machine and its potential for human benefit, Paolozzi focused on representing the machine as a symbol of impending doom and destruction.

Paolozzi's fascination with the machine became more evident roughly in 1950 after his return from Paris, where he spent two years studying Surrealism. He had, however, sustained an interest in fantasies of the machine, such as robots, since his childhood, as demonstrated in his collection of memorabilia, the Krazy Kat Arkive at the Victoria and Albert Museum. His work around the mid-century demonstrates a keener interest in the mechanical and industrial subjects than in representations of the natural world. Paolozzi's work, which draws from Surrealism, did not necessarily reflect the British style of Surrealism, but rather a more continental style, as discussed in the previous chapter. Contrary to the importance of the organic form and landscape references in Britain's version of Surrealism, the subject matter which interested Paolozzi most were objects likely to be found in an engineer or car mechanic's workshop.²³⁵ His sculptural work, however, did not effectively appear reflective of this change until the early 1960s, after he had been teaching in Hamburg, Germany, for two years.

²³² Robin Spencer. *Eduardo Paolozzi: Writings and Interviews*. 10.

²³³ Ibid. 9.

²³⁴ Eduardo Paolozzi. 'Speculative Illustrations'.

²³⁵ Michael Middleton. *Eduardo Paolozzi*. London: Methuen. 1963. np.

A comparison between two sculptural works like *The Frog* (1958, figure 4.3) and *Wittgenstein at Casino* (1963, figure 4.4) deepens the understanding of the metamorphosis which Paolozzi's work underwent during these transformative years, for example.

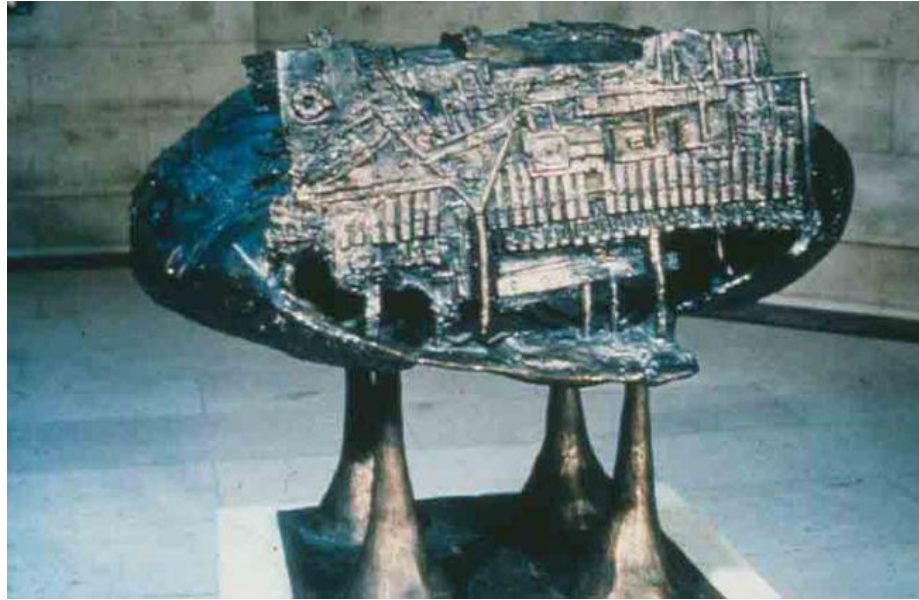


Figure 4.3. Eduardo Paolozzi. *The Frog*. 1958. Raven Row Gallery.



Figure 4.4. Eduardo Paolozzi. *Wittgenstein at Casino*. 1963. Bridgeman Art Library.

After Paolozzi's engagement with the Independent Group, which had by then become defunct, Paolozzi began to create bronze sculptures which resembled humanized robots constructed of jaggedly-shaped odds and ends. He used detritus to form the figures initially, then cast them in bronze. Accordingly, Paolozzi's works of art changed drastically when Paolozzi began to work in a welder's workshop. He collected metal scraps from wreckyards, which he then joined together to create geometric totem-like sculptures, such as *Wittgenstein at Casino*. In contrast, the earlier sculpture *The Frog* recognises the structure of mechanical form in a different manner. *The Frog* consists of impressions of circuit systems as opposed to having a smooth, untextured surface.

Paolozzi's distinction between his own use of found objects in his artwork and the use of found objects in Dada and Surrealism mark a key innovation which Paolozzi considered himself to be undertaking in his works. Inherent in the process of screenprinting photographs and images, Paolozzi retained the original impression or 'ghost' of the found artifact by reproducing an exact replica of it. This process mirrors the lost wax method which Paolozzi used to create his bronze sculptures during the 1950s. He started with found objects and detritus to build up the initial shape of the object to be cast in bronze. By creating a mould of the organic arrangement which he created, Paolozzi then dismissed the initial found objects by creating a mirror image of them. As consequence, the image of the found object remained, but was not actually present in the finished artwork. Similar to the screenprinting process, the image which had been reproduced does not appear in the final production. For Paolozzi, this marks an innovation upon the techniques used by the avant-garde.

However, considering Paolozzi's adaptation to avant-gardist techniques, his resulting works of art still retain neo-avant-gardist qualities. Bürger wrote that:

the neo-avant-garde institutionalizes the avant-garde as art and thus negates genuinely avant-gardiste intentions. This is true independently of the consciousness artists have of their activity, a consciousness that may perfectly well be avant-gardiste... Neo-avant-gardiste art is autonomous art in the full

sense of the term, which means that it negates the avant-gardiste intention of returning art to the praxis of life.²³⁶

Accordingly, by altering the use of found objects in both sculptures and screenprints, Paolozzi demonstrated Bürger's definition of autonomous art. In line with Bürger's statement, Paolozzi's practice of sourcing used objects and using them for only their impressions departed from the avant-garde notion of drawing parallels between actual or real life and art. In other words, Paolozzi removed the immediacy which his final works of art could have had by not including the original *objet trouvé* in the final product which he created. As such, the resulting works of art consist of a removal of the attachment to the real world which the avant-garde artist sought to produce, according to Bürger's definition of autonomy as expressed in the above definition. Consequently, the intentions which were possessed by avant-gardists were distorted by this new methodology which Paolozzi and other artists such as Richard Hamilton and Andy Warhol employed in their screenprints. By reproducing found objects and found images, Paolozzi demonstrated a symbolic detachment from society or the 'praxis of life' by also representing remnants of society as they actually appear.

Furthermore, on a different note, Paolozzi's artworks which represent conglomerations of humans and machines appropriate the avant-garde tradition of Dada artists such as Francis Picabia and Raoul Hausmann. These artists used images of machinery in combination with representations of humans in order to produce a chaotic meditation on the relationship between humankind and technology. For instance, Picabia incorporated machine parts into his portraits. In the painting *Girl Born Without a Mother* (1916-1917, figure 4.5), Picabia depicted a steam engine as a metaphor for the Christian story of God's creation of Eve, the first woman, from Adam's rib, as referenced in the title.

²³⁶ Peter Bürger. *Theory of the Avant-garde*. Trans. Michael Shaw. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984. 58.



Figure 4.5. Francis Picabia. *Girl Born Without a Mother*. 1916-1917. National Galleries of Scotland.

This whimsical correlation between machine and the creation of human life directly relates to Paolozzi's motivation for frequently depicting images of different types of machines. Paolozzi used images of machines not only to suggest the progress of humanity but also to portray an actual documentation of modern reality itself, marking another innovation which Paolozzi contributed to the neo-avant-garde. Whereas his predecessors Picabia and Hausmann incorporated images of machines into their artwork, they did not use the machine to display contemporary society, but rather to critique it. Paolozzi's reproduced images of mechanical devices and objects associated with technology both to critique the society in which they exist as well as to represent modern society itself, developed through his involvement with Pop art and the Independent Group during the 1950s.

Although the version of *Moonstrips/General Dynamic F.U.N.* which was printed in *Ambit* in 1967 does not depict many images of mechanical devices, surely the reader would understand the significance for Paolozzi which the few images of machines held.

Moonstrips/General Dynamic F.U.N. illustrates automobile traffic crossing a busy bridge in New York City as well as a picture of a minotaur riding a motorbike. The jovial representation of a minotaur chasing after a scantily dressed woman mocks the way in which motorcycles are traditionally associated with masculinity and male virility. In this way, Paolozzi used an

image of an advanced technological product in order to produce a comment on how everyday technology affects our lives, even with regards to gender roles. It is not an image which reflects a doomed present, as many of Paolozzi's images of machines do, such as the ominous bird's-eye photograph of a New York bridge. The latter photograph depicts a scene of overpopulation and environmental pollution caused by modernisation. Here Paolozzi relays an impression of contemporary reality itself, as noted by Ballard in his introduction to *General Dynamic F.U.N.* This photograph is more representative of the tone which was set by Paolozzi's typical images of modern technology when compared to the photo-collage of the minotaur and woman.

Techniques

Alongside the innovations which Paolozzi used for his work in *Ambit*, the techniques used by Paolozzi and Ballard for the magazine also reflect an avantgardist heritage. These techniques used by Paolozzi and Ballard indicate a repetition of early twentieth-century avant-garde practices. The Dada use of collage, the Surrealist mechanics of arbitrariness, the Futurist sense of self-promotion all contributed to the pair's neo-avant-garde strategies.

In an interview from 1983, Martin Bax described the way Paolozzi worked with collage. Bax spoke of what was the closest instance of an artistic collaboration between Paolozzi and Ballard (and Bax, for that matter), describing the method in which Paolozzi created collages for his screenprint series of the late 1960s.

Eduardo has a huge image archive of material - which I think fascinated Jim (Ballard) very much. I suppose what Jim was interested in was Eduardo's style of collecting images of the 20th century ... I've been in his studio when we were doing some images, and he said, 'What about a playing card, Martin?' I said, 'A playing card?' And he opened a drawer which was totally full of packs of playing cards which he'd bought all over the world - some extremely sexy ones of ladies with nothing on ... Eduardo's used that type of material in his

silkscreen work, and Ballard saw this as a way in which you could use this material in texts. There was a piece by Eduardo called *Moonstrips* and *General Dynamic F.U.N.* that was published in *Ambit*. He had collected 300 or 400 pages of texts, and Ballard and I went through this huge pile of texts together and we cut and arranged it so it has some sort of curious logic. It starts off with a piece about internists locking up wealthy women in Long Island mental hospitals, and goes through a curious range of material.²³⁷

Bax's description of the techniques which were used in creating the *Moonstrips/General Dynamic F.U.N.* piece for *Ambit* demonstrate the collaborative spirit of the Surrealist avant-gardists. The continental Surrealists would sometimes co-author a single work of art in order to create a work demonstrating the chance and randomness which could only be produced by a number of different hands. However, rather than seeking to achieve randomness, Ballard, Bax and Paolozzi constructed *Ambit's* excerpt in order to give the work a more literary impression. From the start, Bax had wanted *Ambit* to be a poetry magazine. For example, of the fifty screenprints and photolithographs which culminate to create the original *General Dynamic F.U.N.*, the majority of them are without text. By contrast, the piece which was published in *Ambit* consists largely of different combined texts. This likely reflects Paolozzi's keen interest in publishing his writing, as he had done with Richard Hamilton in the book *Kex* (1966, figure 4.6). A result of a collaborative effort between Hamilton and Paolozzi, *Kex* consisted of collaged text and images of Paolozzi's artworks and was edited and arranged by Hamilton.

²³⁷ Martin Bax. *Interview in 'RE/Search 8/9: J. G. Ballard'*, recorded in 1983.

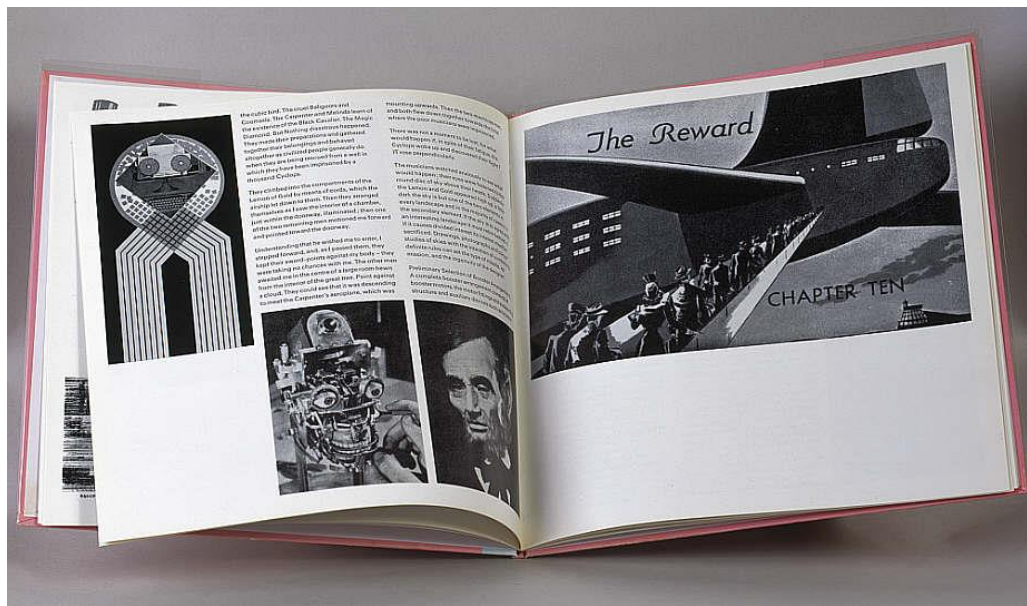


Figure 4.6. Eduardo Paolozzi. *Kex*. 1966.

This type of collaboration which Paolozzi engaged in with Ballard, Bax, and Hamilton among others in the 1960s demonstrated that the artist was willing to share his own findings and collection of ephemera and photographs. In André Breton's 1935 manifesto, the 'Surrealist Situation of the Object', he described the manifestation of an artist's desire through the chance mingling of photographs and objects in collage, he referred to the nineteenth-century poet Comte de Lautréamont's famous quotation regarding the 'fortuitous meeting of a sewing machine and an umbrella on an operating table'.²³⁸ To the contrary, Paolozzi sought to give the impression of randomness, rather than producing actual randomness itself.

Despite Paolozzi's prolific output of new material during the 1960s, Paolozzi teamed together with others who practiced in a similar style and reproduced similar themes and motifs in their own works of art and writing. Sometimes this resulted in a mixture of images used in different contexts and consequently produced different meanings based on these conflicting contexts. An instance of overlapping works which shared the same image occurred in *Ambit* during the late 1960s. A photograph used in Paolozzi's *Moonstrips/General Dynamic F.U.N.* provides a case in point as it was also used by Ballard in one of his advertiser's announcements which appeared in *Ambit* in 1968.

²³⁸ André Breton. *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 275.

This example provides insight into the creative process which Ballard used to create his advertiser's announcements. The second version of 'The Madhouse Racket' in *Moonstrips/General Dynamic F.U.N.* contains a photograph of six female models posing in lingerie (figure 4.7).²³⁹ This image from *Moonstrips/General Dynamic F.U.N.* was used outside of its original context in another issue of *Ambit* in the following year. Ballard borrowed this photograph from Paolozzi for his advertisement collage 'Court Circular', which contained the concrete poem, 'Love: A Print-Out for Claire Churchill' (figure 4.8).²⁴⁰ In this adaptation of the photograph, it appears in print much smaller than in the excerpt from *Moonstrips/General Dynamic F.U.N.* In the editorial of *Ambit* 36, Bax wrote in preparation for Ballard's advert, 'Do not miss number 37, a big blown-up *Ambit* (to newspaper size). All usual newspaper features but no journalists. J.G. Ballard reserved a whole court page for an advertisement.'²⁴¹

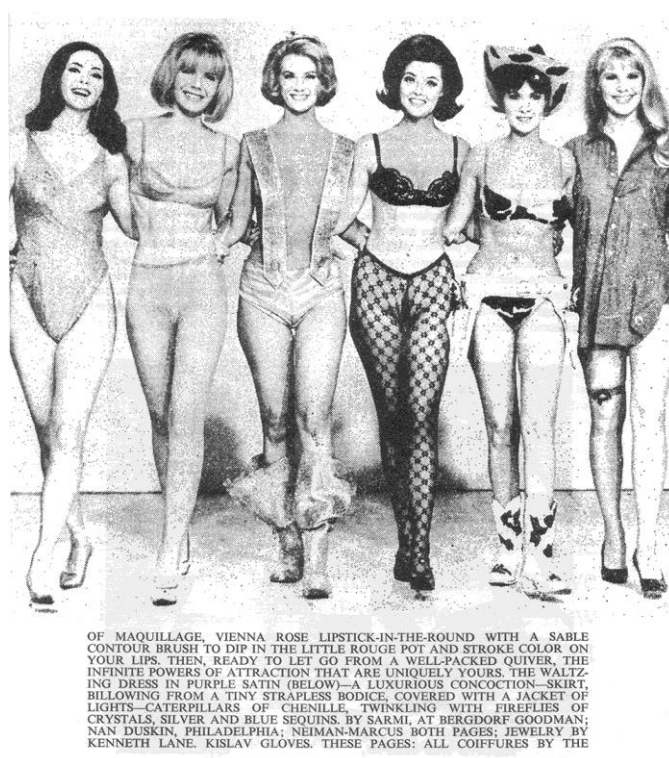


Figure 4.7. Eduardo Paolozzi. *Moonstrips/General Dynamic F.U.N. Ambit*. Number 33. 1967.

²³⁹ *Ambit* 33. 1967. 23.

²⁴⁰ *Ambit* 37. Autumn 1968.

²⁴¹ Martin Bax. Quoted in: Mike Holliday. 'Three Levels of Reality: J.G. Ballard's Court Circular'. <http://www.ballardian.com/three-levels-of-reality-jg-ballards-court-circular>.

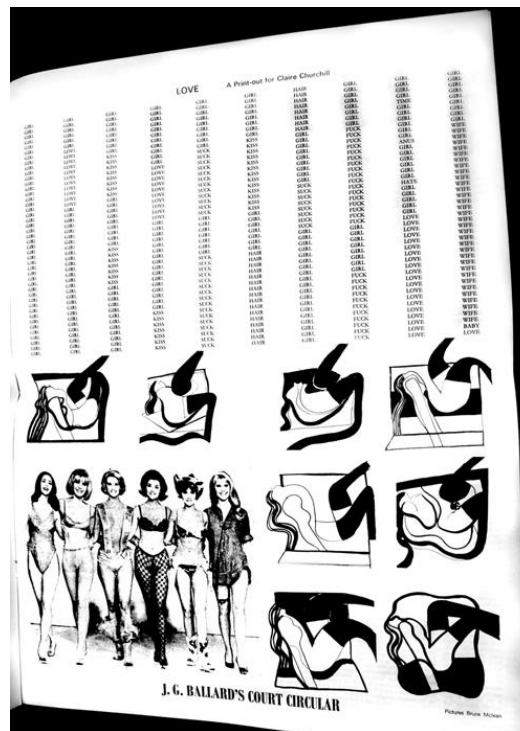


Figure 4.8. J.G. Ballard. 'Court Circular'. *Ambit*. Number 37.1968.

Although this advertiser's announcement was not exactly a collaborative effort between Ballard and Paolozzi, it demonstrates Ballard's interest in Paolozzi's work, as well as Paolozzi's openness to collaborating with other artistic practitioners. Furthermore, it demonstrates Ballard's ability to adapt images from contemporary works of art into his own practice.

Paolozzi's *Moonstrips Empire News* was printed by Kelpra Studios the year before this advertiser's announcement appeared in *Ambit*. By publishing an issue which resembled a newspaper, Bax may have been influenced by the layout of some aspects of *Moonstrips Empire News*, which followed a mock-newspaper format. One of the prints literally follows a newspaper layout, three columns of text, with each section of text or photograph separated by a black line.²⁴² While not all of the text is actually from a newspaper, some appears to be bits of poetry. This combination of seemingly random poetry mixed with newspaper articles, including an obituary from the *Daily Telegraph*, echoes the fantastical environment which characterizes *Moonstrips Empire News* as a whole. An instance of the whimsical content

²⁴² See catalogue number P.2006.1.65 of *Moonstrips Empire News* at the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester.

comes from another article which recounts the extraordinary tale of a set of Chinese triplets being carried by an impossibly impregnated baby boy.

In *Theory of the Avant-garde*, Bürger wrote, 'the Neo-avant-garde, which stages for a second time the avant-gardiste break with tradition, becomes a manifestation that is void of sense and that permits the positing of any meaning whatever.'²⁴³ This quotation is significant for this mock-newspaper format which Bax and Paolozzi adopted in both *Ambit* and *Moonstrips Empire News*. By taking an established visual layout form, such as the newspaper, and reconstructing it with absurd found texts, Paolozzi created a commentary on the legitimacy of the articles which appear in everyday media to the point where they lose meaning, as Bürger noted. With Ballard's 'Court Circular' advertiser's announcement, he took this notion one step further to include both found images and concrete poetry of his own authorship. The erasure of all journalistic content and its replacement with artistic works deconstructs the notion of a traditional newspaper. Ballard's advertiser's announcements usually appeared at the back cover of the magazine and were paid for by the author himself, following a Marinettian pattern of self-promotion which had become typical for avant-garde practitioners.

Subjects

The subjects which Ballard and Paolozzi covered in *Ambit* magazine were reflective of their works in general. The mass media as well as war and technology were all contemplated in these contributions to *Ambit*. These topics were covered by the avant-garde as well, whose artistic practitioners were also affected by war. As a reminder, both Ballard and Paolozzi had experienced the impact of the Second World War firsthand, although in different ways. Ballard, who was born in Shanghai in 1930 to British parents, spent two and a half years in Lunghua Camp as one of about 2,000 prisoners of war who were moved there by force after the Japanese invasion of China.²⁴⁴ Interned at the age of 13, Ballard recalls that the camp was situated next to a military airfield with Zero fighter jets occupying

²⁴³ Peter Bürger. *Theory of the Avant-garde*. Trans. Michael Shaw. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984. 61.

²⁴⁴ J.G. Ballard. *Miracles of Life*. 72, 102.

the nearby landscape and was continuously patrolled by Japanese soldiers.²⁴⁵ By 1944, malaria had begun to spread throughout the camp, although Ballard, as a healthy teenage boy, did not contract the disease. At the camp he spent long, hungry days in which he and the other internees relied on shipments from the Red Cross for meagre food supplies and entertainment such as copies of *LIFE* and *Popular Mechanics* magazines.²⁴⁶ Despite the apparent hardship of living in a small cement block cell with his parents, sister and an orphaned boy they were required to take in, Ballard wrote that he 'thrived in Lunghua, and made the most of [his] years there'.²⁴⁷ A sociable boy, he even made acquaintance with some of the Japanese guards.

After the fall of the Japanese in August 1945, Ballard tried to escape from Lunghua camp. He snuck through the wire fence – no longer occupied by armed guards – and just walked away. He recalls, 'Around me was a silent terrain of abandoned paddy fields and burial mounds, derelict canals and bridges, ghost villages that had been deserted for years. I skirted the perimeter of the airfield, where I could see Japanese soldiers patrolling the burnt-out planes and hangars...'²⁴⁸ Even after the war's end, Ballard continued for several months to visit Lunghua camp and its airfield, newly occupied by American forces.²⁴⁹ Ballard claims he was saved by the atom bomb, which, in effect, he was. Finally, in 1945, he and his family woke up to a guard-less prison. At the end of the year, Ballard, along with his mother and sister, made his first journey to England which would become his new adopted home.

Ballard and Paolozzi's pessimistic view of the human use of technology coincided with their political position against war. For example, *Ambit* ran an issue protesting against the Anglo-American involvement in Vietnam. For this issue, Paolozzi published a short novel titled, *Why We are in Vietnam*. Newspaper articles and photographs were reproduced in such a way as to portray the horrors that war brings. While typically *Ambit* published material which came from a wide political spectrum (like *Rhythm*), for this particular issue, it declared a definitive stance on politics. As such, I argue that it could be considered to be a manifesto in light of its counter position to the Vietnam War, setting the tone for future issues.

²⁴⁵ Ibid. 64.

²⁴⁶ Ibid. 89.

²⁴⁷ Ibid. 77.

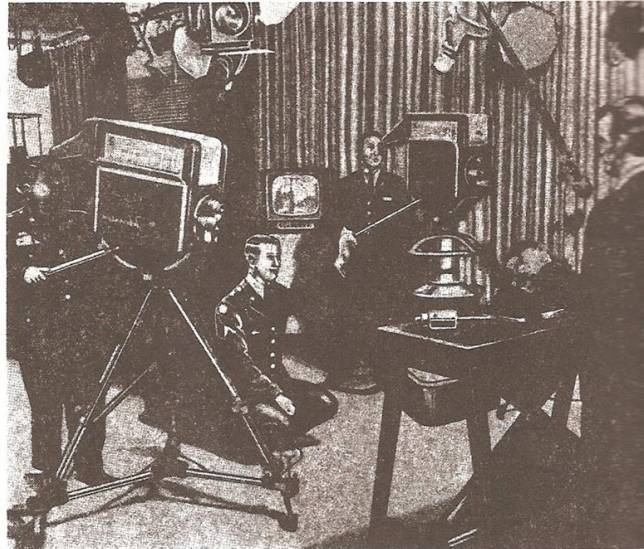
²⁴⁸ J.G. Ballard. *Miracles of Life*. 105.

²⁴⁹ Ibid. 114.

Ambit never had a definitive manifesto. Although not as politically radical as avant-garde predecessors such as *BLAST*, the short-lived publication which coincided with Vorticism, Bax was still willing to publish politically-charged content. As such, I argue that it could be considered a manifesto in light of its oppositional position to the Vietnam War, setting the tone for future issues. Paolozzi and Ballard published anti-war material which used the machine as a metaphor for industrialisation leading to violence, as they had done during the Vietnam War in magazines such as *Ambit*. A key example of this is Paolozzi's 'Images for J.G.B.' (1980), a set of images he created to accompany Ballard's written texts (figure 4.9).²⁵⁰

²⁵⁰ *Ambit* 83, 1980.

Eduardo Paolozzi



Apocalypse. A disquieting feature of this annual exhibition—to which the patients themselves were not invited—was the marked preoccupation of the paintings with the theme of world cataclysm, as if these long-incarcerated patients had sensed some seismic upheaval within the minds of their doctors and nurses. Rape and napalm burns remained constant preoccupations, and a wound profile of maximum arousal was constructed. Despite the revulsion expressed by the panels, follow-up surveys of work-proficiency and health patterns indicate substantial benefits. The effects of atrocity films on disturbed children were found to have positive results that indicate similar benefits for the TV public at large.

J.G.B.

Figure 4.9. Eduardo Paolozzi. Page from 'Images for J.G.B.' *Ambit*. Number 83. 1980.

In 'Images for J.G.B.', Paolozzi contributed a series of eight etchings to illustrate three extracts from Ballard's *The Atrocity Exhibition*, printed ten years earlier. This was published in *Ambit* 83, 1980. 'Images for J.G.B.' represents a revival of the machine aesthetic that Futurists and Vorticists employed in the early twentieth century leading up to the First World War. This collection of Paolozzi's illustrations reflects a Vorticist nightmare, as if imagining an *aeropitturist* disaster caused by the destruction of aircraft. These artworks complement Ballard's texts from *The Atrocity Exhibition* by emphasising the relationship between the scattered mental state of the novel's protagonist and the dystopian world created within the

psychiatric institution where he works. Drawing upon early twentieth century models of mechanised violence, both Ballard and Paolozzi demonstrate influences as varied as F.T. Marinetti, Wyndham Lewis, T.E. Hulme, Jacob Epstein, Amédée Ozenfant and Max Ernst. I propose that Ballard and Paolozzi incorporated the works of these artists and writers into their own works as a catharsis for their wartime experiences, illuminating an alternate landscape of a collective consciousness which mirrors our contemporary relationship with war and the media's representation of it.

Paolozzi begins the series 'Images for J.G.B.' with an etching of a television recording studio setting. A seated soldier occupies the focal point of the image. He is sitting down while raising his left hand in order to guide the camera. Another man in army attire, to the left of the image, is manning the second camera. The man being filmed, who resembles Abraham Lincoln, is standing behind a small, waist-level podium and presumably is speaking into the microphone which hangs in front of his face. The artist may be indicating that the military controls the media and uses it to distribute its propaganda.

In 'The Impact Zone', Ballard duplicates the title of an earlier paragraph from 'The University of Death', the second chapter of *The Atrocity Exhibition*. The title refers to a collision course at a research laboratory test track and the incumbent pile of crashed cars.²⁵¹ The version of 'The Impact Zone' is taken from the first paragraph of the fifth chapter entitled 'Notes Towards a Mental Breakdown.' In Ballard's commentary for this paragraph, he speaks of the lack of psychological tests done on astronauts.²⁵² He relates space travel to Trabert's, the protagonist's, isolation tests on patients at the psychiatric institute.

The paragraph recounts the continuing story of Trabert, a clinical psychiatrist who had devised isolation tests for the patients who lived at the institution. Although not indicated in 'Images for J.G.B.', Trabert's name is not consistent throughout the narrative. Since this issue of *Ambit* was published in 1980, readers familiar with Ballard's work would have been privy to this detail. So, Ballard's readers would have known when reading 'Images for J.G.B.' that Trabert was suffering a mental breakdown. One of Ballard's methods of indicating this transition of the protagonist's psyche is by changing his name throughout the chapters of

²⁵¹ J.G. Ballard. *The Atrocity Exhibition*. San Francisco: RE/Search, 1990. 26.

²⁵² *Ibid.* 43.

The Atrocity Exhibition. In looking at the image used for the text 'The Impact Zone', it can clearly be deduced as a Vorticist nightmare (figure 4.10).²⁵³

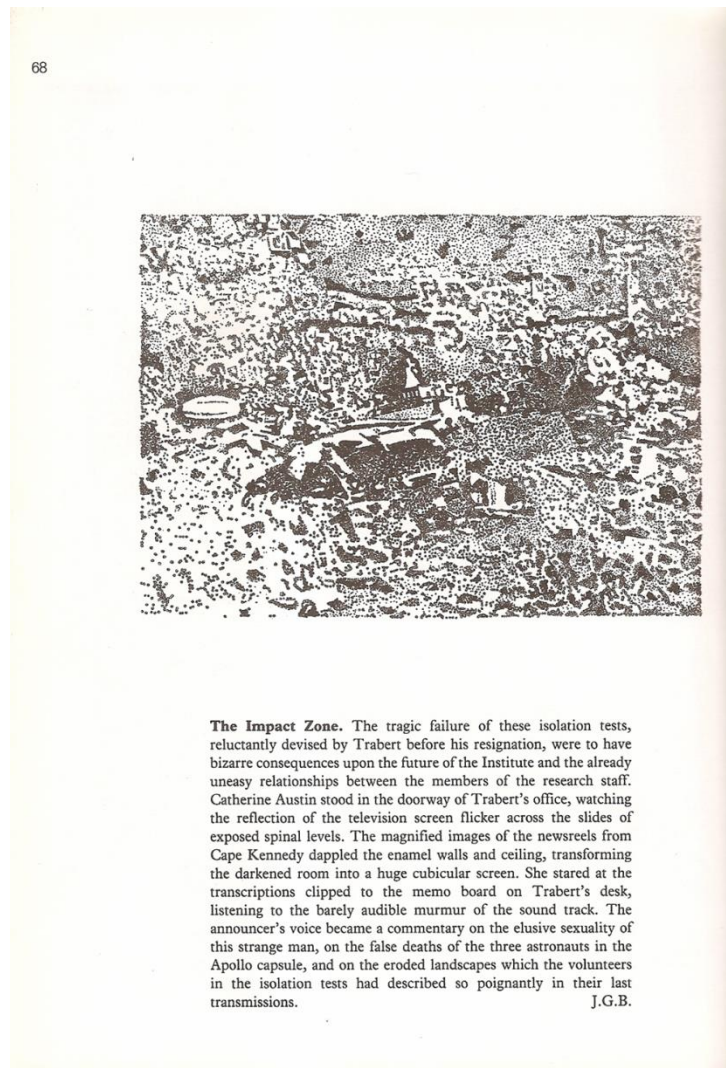


Figure 4.10. Eduardo Paolozzi. Page from 'Images for J.G.B.' *Ambit*. Number 83. 1980.

The winged machine that was glorified by Vorticists and *aeropitturists* depicts a grounded airplane which has crashed into rocky terrain. Smoke rises from the aftermath of the crash. Paolozzi's sparse description of the airplane and its surroundings creates a mysterious atmosphere which invites the viewer to look more closely at the image. At first blending in with its surrounding landscape, the airplane is only recognisable from its tip, as the rest has nearly turned to rubble. Survivors of the plane crash cannot be seen, suggesting that the passengers have certainly been killed upon impact with the ground. Just as Paolozzi

²⁵³ *Ambit* 83. 1980. 68.

subjected his sculptures to a destructive process through the manipulation of objects in collage format, he also rendered images which relay the theme of destruction.

A derivative of Ballard and Paolozzi's sustained interest in mechanical systems, the plane functions as a multifaceted symbol in their work. Paolozzi, who had read Ozenfant's *Foundations of Modern Art* (1928), demonstrates Ozenfant's 'engineer's aesthetic' in this series of demolished airplanes.²⁵⁴ Paolozzi recalled that discovering the book was a revelatory experience. He wrote, 'I found that a lot of things which interested me were also put together in that book, things like cars, machines, old airplanes. The ideas in it came from the late 1920s, I suppose, when there was a glory, an optimism about the machine.'²⁵⁵ Ozenfant claims that engineering design can never be 'truly' aesthetic due to the restraint given by the necessity of functionality and efficiency.²⁵⁶ Nevertheless, artists have the capability of tweaking this constraint of purposefulness.²⁵⁷

Alex Potts' recent interpretation of post-1945 modernism 'complicates clear-cut distinctions between an earlier high modernism, with its supposed cult of autonomy, and a later neo-avant-garde or proto-postmodernism that was predisposed to a radical heteronomy and embraced contemporary consumerism and mass culture'.²⁵⁸ Potts' essay attempts to strongly place New Brutalism as an artistic movement, rather than its previously 'purely architectural' one, as defined by Reyner Banham in 1955.²⁵⁹ Potts notably remarked that in Banham's 1955 essay 'The New Brutalism' 'the qualities of New Brutalism as Banham characterized them were possibly even more resonant for the visual arts than for architecture'.²⁶⁰ Potts is of course referring to Banham's mention of the work of Dubuffet, Jackson Pollock, Paolozzi, Magda Cordell and Nigel Henderson.²⁶¹ Key characteristics which Banham described to support his argument that 'New Brutalism' was distinctively a British phenomenon were displayed in the defining exhibition *Parallel of Life and Art* held at

²⁵⁴ Amadeé Ozenfant. *Foundations of Modern Art*. Trans. John Rodker. New York: Dover, 1952. 151.

²⁵⁵ Eduardo Paolozzi. 'Primitive Art, Paris and London, 1985.'

²⁵⁶ Ozenfant. *Foundations of Modern Art*. 151.

²⁵⁷ Ibid. 152.

²⁵⁸ Alex Potts. 'New Brutalism and Pop'. Chapter in Mark Crinson and Claire Zimmerman, eds. *Neo-avant-garde and Postmodern Postwar Architecture in Britain and Beyond*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010. 29.

²⁵⁹ Ibid. 29.

²⁶⁰ Ibid. 34.

²⁶¹ Reyner Banham. 'The New Brutalism'. *Architectural Review*. December 1955. 356.

the ICA in late 1953.²⁶² The organisers of the exhibition were Alison and Peter Smithson, Paolozzi and Henderson, who treated the exhibition as an extension of the IG's practice.²⁶³ As Potts described it, the concept 'as found' 'puts one in mind of, while moving beyond, the very particular, psychically charged associations of the Surrealist concept of the found object'.²⁶⁴

Both of Paolozzi's methods of collage and using found objects to imprint the surface of his sculptures reflect British austerity culture during the years following the collapse of Nazi Germany. These techniques of recycling objects to create something new and beautiful were certainly in the spirit of social equality as propagated by Labour's rationing policies, which included controls on food consumption as well as consumer goods.²⁶⁵ Furthermore as we have seen, unlike Ballard whose father was a successful chemist, Paolozzi came from a working class Italian background which was thrifty and conservative of possessions. In an interview from 1984, Paolozzi recalled that as an adult he treasured his childhood collectables in spite of the fact that his contemporaries would have considered them junk.²⁶⁶

A comparison of one of Ballard's texts with an avant-garde text, written by F.T. Marinetti, will illustrate the way in which the avant-garde's fascination with the relationship between man and machine had turned from admiration to fear. The scenario which Ballard describes at the beginning of *Concrete Island* harks back to the catapulting event for the birth of Futurism, in which Marinetti recounts an anecdote of a car crashing into a ditch off the side of a road. This fascination with the machine was carried over to Vorticism, particularly evident in the example of Epstein's sculpture *The Rock Drill* (c. 1913, figure 4.11).

Led by Marinetti, Italian Futurism, which began in January 1909, embraced the phenomena of mass mechanisation of the early twentieth-century by glorifying the speed, force, and dynamism of the machine and modern urban life. Three main tenets of Futurism were: to find inspiration in contemporary life, rather than looking to the past for artistic and

²⁶² Ibid. 356.

²⁶³ Anne Massey. *The Independent Group: Modernism and mass culture in Britain, 1945-59*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995. 57.

²⁶⁴ Alex Potts. 'New Brutalism and Pop'. 34.

²⁶⁵ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska. *Austerity in Britain: Rationing, Controls, and Consumption, 1939-1955*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. For a summary and more detailed information, see pages 9-59.

²⁶⁶ Eduardo Paolozzi. 'Great Lives: Series 25'. Eduardo Paolozzi. Host Matthew Parris interviewing Antonio Carluccio and Christopher Frayling. BBC Radio4. Broadcast 23 Aug 2011.

moral values; the eradication of historic tradition because it restrains the growth of modern culture; and the rejection of all prevailing bourgeois social morals as well as artistic ideals. Marinetti further explored his fantasy of the mechanised male body in *Mafarka the Futurist*, the first Futurist novel, which was published the same year as the *Founding Manifesto* in 1909. Marinetti used the machine as a model for the Futurist aesthetics of aggression, violence and socio-political protest. He also positioned the machine as a tool for the integration of art into everyday life.²⁶⁷ Following Nietzsche's notion of the *Übermensch* (Superman), Marinetti imagined a mechanical prosthesis which enables a male human, Mafarka, to transcend his corporeality by developing new body parts and functions, such as flight and male ovaries.²⁶⁸ Marinetti's proposed 'Superhuman' would act as a courageous hybrid of man and machine whose purpose would be the eradication of sentimental bourgeois values and morals, as well as the dependency on women for reproduction.

In a typical glorification of modern mechanisation, Marinetti wrote that 'a roaring motor car, hurtling like a machine gun, is more beautiful than the Winged Victory of Samothrace.'²⁶⁹ This example of Marinetti's writing was mirrored by Ballard in his novel *Concrete Island*. Ballard wrote, 'The car veered from side to side across the empty traffic lanes, jerking his hands like a puppet's... Once inside a car some rogue gene, a strain of rashness, overran the rest of his usually cautious and clear-minded character.'²⁷⁰ Moments before crashing into a ditch below the motorway, Maitland, the protagonist of *Concrete Island*, lost control over not only the car which he was driving, but also himself as a driver. Ballard insinuated that the car itself had gained control of Maitland, leaving him as a passive rider taken up by the speed and destruction of which the automobile is capable. In this sense, the car became a prosthetic extension of its human passenger. An interest in the way in which humans interact with their automobiles was shared with Paolozzi. In his series *General Dynamic F.U.N.*, Paolozzi depicted car crash test dummies as well as a crashed car

²⁶⁷ Maurizia Boscagli. *Eye on the Flesh: Fashions of Masculinity in the Early Twentieth Century*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, Inc., 1996. 138.

²⁶⁸ Alice Yaeger Kaplan. *Reproductions of Banality: Fascism, Literature and French Intellectual Life*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1986. 81.

²⁶⁹ Robert Rosenblum. *Cubism and Twentieth-Century Art*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1976. 204.

²⁷⁰ J.G. Ballard. *Concrete Island*. New York: Picador, 2001. 7, 9.

itself. This may likely have been inspired by his trip to Berkeley, California in 1968 where he visited a General Motors assembly plant and witnessed crash tests in person.²⁷¹

Furthermore, a parallel of Ballard and Paolozzi's interest in the mechanical can be made to Epstein's *The Rock Drill*, which demonstrated an early twentieth century interest in technology and mechanical objects. In 1913, Epstein was one of the few artists (as an early Vorticist) who believed that a machine could play an integral role in a work of art.²⁷²



Figure 4.11. Jacob Epstein. *The Rock Drill*. c. 1913. Tate.

He had incorporated a drill into a large sculpture of an abstract man using a drill as though it was an extension of his own body, similar to the way in which Ballard use the car as an extension of his characters' bodies in *Concrete Island*. Wyndham Lewis had written positively about *The Rock Drill* in the second issue of *BLAST*. However, Epstein decided to remove the drill section from his sculpture after the onset of the First World War and the consequent loss of a number of Vorticist artists such as Henri Gaudier-Brzeska who was killed in France in 1915. The drill in Epstein's work of art served as such a strong symbol related to war that it became unfashionable for inclusion.

²⁷⁴ Rosemary Miles. *The Complete Prints of Eduardo Paolozzi: prints, drawings, collages 1944-77*. London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1977. 27.

²⁷⁵ Richard Cork. *Jacob Epstein*. London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1999. 37-38.

Conclusion

The innovations, techniques, and subjects used and selected by Ballard and Paolozzi during their years as contributors to *Ambit* magazine represent a shift from the neo-avantgarde to the postmodern. Even by 1980, their works still were indicative of early twentieth century artistic practices. By continuing to practice in a modern tradition during a postmodern era, Paolozzi and Ballard became representative of the failure of the avant-garde in the Fifties and Sixties. The once biting tone of the avant-garde now seemed silly and its supposed edginess no longer was attention-grabbing. This was actively echoed by the neo-avant-garde of the 1950s and 1960s.

In effect, this sent Ballard and Paolozzi's works in *Ambit* to the backwaters of the art world. Not considered as major works by the author and artist, the contributions they made to *Ambit* served as supplementary material to each of their career's trajectories. They would have been considered to be an ephemeral form of art as printed material in opposition to that of physically tangible works which could be displayed in a museum. The content selected by Ballard and Paolozzi that was used in *Ambit* represent the multiple intersections of the modern, postmodern and neo-avant-garde. Even if these works could not be held up against the standards presented by Greenberg, for instance, they still demonstrate an inextricable link to the representation of their time as well as the anticipation of the future. This, of course, would not have been possible had Ballard and Paolozzi not looked back retrospectively to avant-garde art movements as models for their contemporary works.

Chapter 5

Crash! Ballard and Paolozzi's Mechanical Body in Ruins

'*Crash* would be a head-on charge into the arena, an open attack on all the conventional assumptions about our dislike of violence in general and sexual violence in particular. Human beings, I was sure, had far darker imaginations than we like to believe. We were ruled by reason and self-interest, but only when it suited us to be rational, and much of the time we chose to be entertained by films, novels and comic strips that deployed horrific levels of cruelty and violence'.²⁷³

As an extension of the discussion in the final section of the previous chapter, this chapter aims to further analyse the significance of the automobile crash in Ballard and Paolozzi's works. Using primarily Ballard's 1973 novel titled *Crash* as the focal point for analysis, the chapter will also draw upon other minor references made to the theme of the crash as it appeared periodically in the artworks and writings of Paolozzi and Ballard. In addition to these, it will be relevant also to provide an interpretation of examples from the historical avant-garde as well as artworks and films from Ballard and Paolozzi's contemporaries.

This chapter opens with a background history to the writing process of Ballard's novel *Crash* and provides a brief summary of the novel itself. Several events surrounding the publication of the novel will be discussed, including a theatrical play involving Paolozzi which, in the end, was never performed. Secondly, this chapter will address how Ballard's concept for his novel *Crash* shares deep connections with the photography work of Hans Bellmer, the German Surrealist. This progression or recycling of ideas demonstrates, as the previous chapter did, the ways in which the neo-avant-garde reinterpreted the historical avant-garde. Next, I will compare several artworks by Richard Hamilton from the late 1950s and early 1960s to Ballard's novel. It is likely that Ballard would have encountered these artworks prior to writing his novel and possibly would have been inspired by the ways in which Hamilton used the exterior structure of automobiles to draw a parallel with the female body.

The following section will consider possible sources of inspiration from outside of Britain, namely France and America. In particular, I will examine *Crash* as it relates to Andy Warhol's *Death and Disaster* screenprint series of the early 1960s as well as several films by

²⁷³ J.G. Ballard. *Miracles of Life*. 238.

director Jean Luc Godard, all of which provide contemporary meditations on the car crash. While these examples may not have directly inspired Ballard's work in question, they demonstrate that this topic was relevant and popularly considered by other major artists during this time period as well as in a wider geographical context.

The ambivalence raised by the artists in terms of technological development and American mass culture bring into question how the two phenomena intermingle. With an increased American cultural presence in Britain provoking the clash between old and new lifestyles, Paolozzi and Ballard cast a critical eye upon the new media landscape. Paolozzi and Ballard's collection and manipulation of mass-produced information in the late Sixties and early Seventies serves as an art historical account of how Britain adapted to the increasing consumerist atmosphere which boomed after the early 1950s.

Within extant literature it remains unclear how much Ballard and Paolozzi's works inspired each other. For example, this question particularly arises with their interest in visiting car-breaker's yards and road-research laboratories for inspiration during the late Sixties and early Seventies. The fixation with automobile crashes spawned Paolozzi's screenprint series *Conditional Probability Machine* (1970) and sculpture *Crash Head* (1971) and Ballard's *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1970) and subsequent novels *Crash* (1973) and *Concrete Island* (1974).²⁷⁴

Moments before the 'crash': a history

Ballard's 1973 novel *Crash* developed as the result of his ongoing interest in the everyday use of technology. It especially evolved, however, from his fascination with a common technological apparatus, the car. More specifically, Ballard was interested most in American-manufactured vehicles. Stemming from this interest, themes such as individual freedom, consumer culture, and death as caused by the automobile frequently appeared in Ballard's writings of the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the years immediately preceding Ballard's publication of *Crash*, he experimented with various correlated projects which assisted with the conceptual build-up to this novel.

²⁷⁴ I have decided not to include a discussion of Jean Baudrillard's 1981 essay 'Crash' as it centres upon the science fictional notions of hyperreality and simulacra, which are not pertinent in this chapter. See Jean Baudrillard. *Simulacra and Simulation*. Trans. Sheila Faria Glaser. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1994 [1981].

For instance, in a 1991 interview, Ballard remembered how he used to explore car junkyards during the late 1960s and early 1970s as did Paolozzi, who liked to collect used automobile parts as the basis for modeling sculptures. Ballard recalled,

About the time I was writing *Crash*, I used to wander around car-breaker's yards and photograph crashed cars there. Nobody gives a damn if you wander around, certainly not 20 years ago, in car-breakers' yards. But the moment they see you with a camera, they suspect you're up to no good. At first I thought they thought I was an insurance company snooper, but no, it's just the idea. A friend of mine, Eduardo Paolozzi, who's been making sculptures for years out of machine parts, said he's found exactly the same problem. Going to the big engineering waste tip he thought, "All this rusting junk... nobody gives a damn." But the moment you start taking an interest, they feel there's something afoot and this unsettles them. Because all these crashed cars have an immense amount of latent significance.²⁷⁵

This quotation makes two relevant points for this discussion. Firstly, Ballard mentioned that he would take photographs of the wrecked cars which were discarded in the yard. This suggests that Ballard used his own photographs for inspiration when he wrote descriptions of the photographs which his character Vaughan snapped in the novel. Secondly, Ballard recognised that despite their differing objectives in visiting junkyards, Paolozzi too shared a keen interest in the sight of a destroyed car. This is not necessarily evident through Paolozzi's own practice of collecting metal scraps from junkyards, but more clearly so through his drawings, prints and sculptures which also reflected these interests.

This shared fixation on crashed cars manifested itself as a proposed stage production in which the two collaborated. In 1968, Ballard planned to produce a play titled 'Crash' at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts for which Paolozzi was to sculpt

²⁷⁵ J.G. Ballard. 'Interview with J.G. Ballard and Lynne Fox'. January 20, 1991. V. Vale, ed. *J.G. Ballard: Conversations*. San Francisco: RE/Search Publications, 2005. 172. For Paolozzi's own reference to car-wrecker's yards see: Eduardo Paolozzi. 'Notes from a Lecture at the Institute of Contemporary Arts' (1958), in Robin Spencer, ed. *Eduardo Paolozzi: Writings and Interviews*. 81–83.

mannequins. The intention was to stage an actual car crash in front of a live audience. In the *Sunday Mirror*, an article appeared describing the details of the play. June Rose wrote,

There, all the horror and realism of an actual road smash will be played out in front of the audience. The young driver, in a blood-covered track suit, will lie beside the mangled car. His girlfriend will kneel beside him, caressing him. Dummies will mouth words about the beautiful and desirable features of the motor car. Behind them, film of cars crashing will make up the stark and terrible accompaniment.²⁷⁶

According to the same article by Rose, Dr Christopher Evans was to act as narrator for the play. Not coincidentally, Ballard based the character Vaughan loosely on the life and interests of Evans, who during the 1960s contributed science fiction to *New Worlds* magazine. Despite the fact that this play 'Crash' never came to fruition, its production plans demonstrated a potential collaboration with Paolozzi,²⁷⁷ whose work had reflected an interest in the notion of experiments on human dummies since the early 1950s.

Ballard's novel ostensibly began as a chapter in *The Atrocity Exhibition* titled 'Crash!' In preparation for the book, Ballard, in 1970, curated an exhibition of three crashed cars at the New Arts Laboratory in London which he intended to be a psychological test of the visitors.²⁷⁸ The displayed cars were an American-manufactured Pontiac, as well as an Austin Cambridge A60 and a Mini.²⁷⁹ He wanted to understand the public's unconscious interest in car crashes as well as the latent sexual connotations which the exhibition of crashes possessed. The audience's drunken reactions to the cars intrigued him, and from this he became convinced that he could write a successful novel based on the idea of the crashed automobile. At the exhibition, Ballard distributed a leaflet which contained his words, 'The 20th century has given birth to a vast range of machines – computers, pilotless planes,

²⁷⁶ June Rose. 'If Christ came again he would be killed in a car crash- a startling thought behind the year's most disturbing drama.' *Sunday Mirror* 19 May 1968.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ J.G. Ballard. Quoted in: 'Perverse Technology: Dan Mitchell and Simon Ford interview J.G. Ballard.' <<http://www.ballardian.com/perverse-technology-jgballard-hardmag-interview>>. 1 April 2009.

²⁷⁹ Simon Ford. 'A Psychopathic Hymn: J.G. Ballard's 'Crashed Cars' Exhibition of 1970.' http://www.slashseconds.org/issues/001/001/articles/13_sford/index.php.

thermonuclear weapons – where the latent identity of the machine is ambiguous. An understanding of this identity can be found in the automobile.²⁸⁰ This quotation exemplifies the way in which Ballard believed that the automobile could be used as an all-encompassing metaphor for modern technology in general. He furthers this notion in *Crash*, which used the car as a symbol for human autonomy, revitalization and destruction.

The same year, in February, Ballard published a four-page short story titled 'Journey Across a Crater' in *New Worlds* magazine, issue 198 (figure 5.1).²⁸¹



²⁸⁰ J.G. Ballard. Quoted in: Pippa Tandy, 'The "DNA of the Present" in the Fossil Record of the Cold War Through the Imagery of J.G. Ballard, Related Sources and Documents in Various Media.' <<http://www.ballardian.com/the-dna-of-the-present-jg-ballards-cold-war>>. 25 March 2009.

²⁸¹ J.G. Ballard. 'Journey Across a Crater'. *New Worlds* 198. Feb 1970. 2-5.

Figure 5.1. J.G. Ballard. Page from 'Journey Across a Crater'. *New Worlds*. Number 198. 1970.

For this story, Ballard used a similar format to the 'condensed novel' style which he used when writing *The Atrocity Exhibition*. As such, the story was composed of brief paragraphs which are loosely, but not directly related to each other, thus constructing a text which reads more like a non-linear collage than a fluid narrative. In 'Journey Across a Crater', Ballard interpreted similar themes that he later incorporated into the 1973 novel *Crash*. Along these lines, the characters of the story also resembled the main characters which Ballard used in the novel, including James Ballard, Vaughan and Catherine (James Ballard's wife). The cover of this issue of *New Worlds* by artist Roy Cornwall was devoted to loosely illustrating Ballard's story, as it depicted a 1966 Cadillac Sedan DeVille running over the lower half of a topless woman's body (figure 5.2).

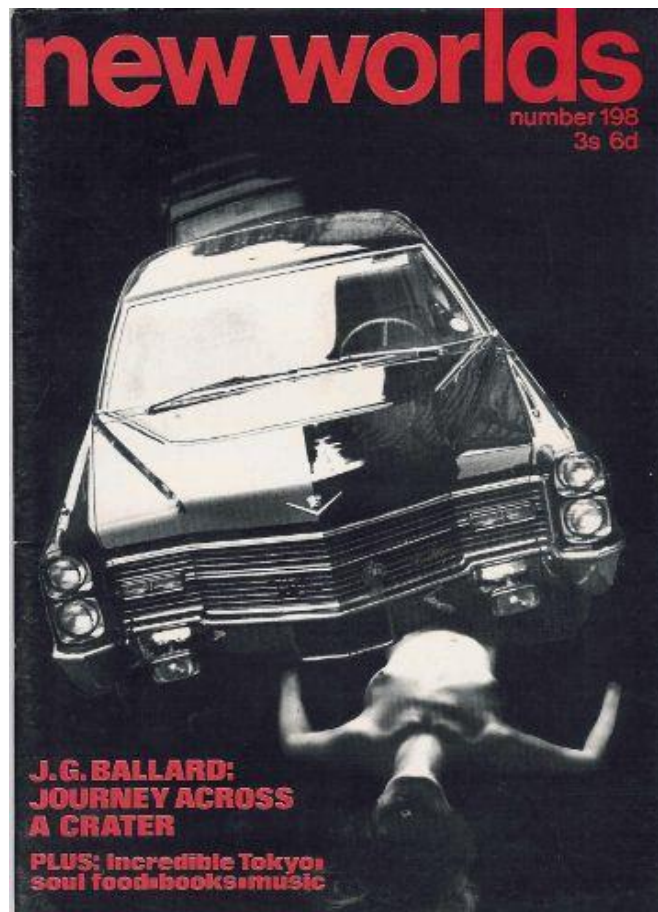


Figure 5.2. Cover of *New Worlds*. Number 198. 1970.

The next year, in 1971, Ballard's article 'The Car, The Future' was featured in *Drive* magazine.²⁸² In this essay, Ballard discussed his fascination with the culture of the automobile, which inflected the majority of his fictional output during the years of the early 1970s. Ballard was interested in the way which the car was capable of simultaneously providing freedom for the driver and passengers as well as its ability to take life away. He described the vast sprawl of highway networks which had overtaken the landscape in and around Los Angeles. He compared this apparently uncontrollable development to that in Britain. In the article 'The Car, The Future' he wrote,

In Britain the first motorways are already reaching across our cities. Many of them are motion-sculptures of considerable grace and beauty, but they totally overpower the urban areas around and -- all too often -- below them. It may well be that these vast concrete intersections are the most important monuments of our urban civilisation, the 20th century's equivalent of the pyramids, but do we want to be remembered in the same way as the slave-armies who constructed what, after all, were monuments to the dead?²⁸³

As such, Ballard created a contrast between the ideas of the sprawling American 'open road' to that of the untouched beauty that had been associated with the British landscape as expressed by the early nineteenth century Romantics. Here, Ballard admitted a fascination with the arrival of motorways in Britain, even comparing their magnitude to that of the great Egyptian pyramids. Consequently, Ballard warned of the perils of their construction by anticipating how future generations may interpret them. Reyner Banham wrote about the how technology and sex can be found in the automobile in 1955, thereby anticipating Ballard's *Crash*:

The means at their disposal are symbolic iconographies, whose ultimate power lies in their firm grounding in popular taste and the innate traditions of the

²⁸² J.G. Ballard. 'The Car, The Future'. *Drive*. Autumn 1971. See also J.G. Ballard. *Users' Guide to the Millennium*. London: Flamingo, 1996. 262.

²⁸³ *Ibid.* 262.

product, while the actual symbols are drawn from science fiction, movies, earth-moving equipment, supersonic aircraft, racing cars, heraldry, and certain deep-seated mental dispositions about the great outdoors and the kinship between technology and sex.²⁸⁴

In 1970, Paolozzi constructed a cast bronze sculpture of the head of a crash test dummy, *Crash Head* (1970, figure 5.3), thereby converting his collection of crash test images into three-dimensional form.²⁸⁵ This polished bronze sculpture consists of a human head and neck resting on a rectangular base. On either side of the neck, bolts and screws have been inserted. Paolozzi also designed a steel chain which he attached to the crown of the sculpture's head. *Crash Head's* facial features are more clearly defined than those of Paolozzi's earlier sculpture head, *Mr Cruikshank* (1950, 1959, figure 5.4). Although both depict the heads of human test dummies, they represent experimental testing for different purposes.



Figure 5.3. Eduardo Paolozzi. *Crash Head*. 1970. National Galleries of Scotland.

²⁸⁴ Reyner Banham. 'Vehicles of Desire' (1955). Chapter in: *Modern Dreams: The Rise and Fall and Rise of Pop*. London: MIT, 1988. 65 – 69.

²⁸⁵ Paolozzi kept a collection of photographs of crash test dummies, which he had shown to Ballard. See Simon Ford. 'A Psychopathic Hymn: J.G. Ballard's 'Crashed Cars' Exhibition of 1970'.



Figure 5.4. Eduardo Paolozzi. *Mr Cruikshank*. 1950,1959. National Galleries of Scotland.

The original *Mr Cruikshank* was intended for radiation experiments, while *Crash Head* portrays a head which would have been used for testing the impact of a car crash on the human body. An unusual addition Paolozzi made to *Crash Head* was the chain and eye atop the sculpture's head. In particular, the bronze sculpture *Mr Cruikshank* depicts the first time that Paolozzi used the head of a test dummy as inspiration for the design of a sculpture. The fact that Paolozzi produced a human semblance during this time frame, however, is not unusual considering his multiple drawings and sculptures of abstracted human heads dating from as early as the beginning of the 1950s. What is in fact unique about *Mr Cruikshank* is that it is an early example from Paolozzi's work which demonstrates his interest in scientific experiments. As shown in two photographs from a 1949 issue of *Popular Mechanics*, the original wooden 'Mr Cruikshank' dummy head was used by scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to test the effects of radiation on the human skull (figure 5.5).²⁸⁶ Paolozzi's *Mr Cruikshank* serves as the foundation for Paolozzi's later works which represent testing on humans.

²⁸⁶ Robin Spencer. *Eduardo Paolozzi: Recurring Themes*. London: Trefoil Books, 1984. 20.



Figure 5.5. Photograph from 'Wooden Head is Target For X-Ray Research'. *Popular Mechanics*. September 1949.

Robin Spencer noted that Paolozzi's original 'machine head' *Mr Cruikshank* bears a resemblance to the robot heroine of Fritz Lang's German expressionist film *Metropolis* (1927), particularly with reference to the shared blank stare of robot Maria and *Mr Cruikshank*.²⁸⁷ Paolozzi's nod to 1920s Dada objects transpired in *Conditional Probability Machine*, which coincidentally contains a print of Maria in *Metropolis*.²⁸⁸

Along similar lines, Paolozzi also created a screenprint series of 25 images in 1970 titled *Conditional Probability Machine* in which he explored the theme of human simulation.²⁸⁹ The photographs used in this series were most likely taken during the artist's stay in California as a visiting professor at UC Berkeley in 1968.²⁹⁰ As Rosemary Miles noted, it is around this time when Paolozzi shifted from creating human outlines filled with mechanical innards to that of humans composed of machine parts.²⁹¹ The previously

²⁸⁷ Robin Spencer. *Eduardo Paolozzi: Recurring Themes*. 20.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 20.

²⁸⁹ Paolozzi's first photolithographs were completed in Germany in 1961. Back in England, Paolozzi began developing screenprints with the help of Christopher Prater at Kelpra Studios in London in 1962. See Diane Kirkpatrick. *Eduardo Paolozzi*. London: Studio Vista, 1970. 92.

²⁹⁰ Paolozzi visited Aerospace and Road Safety Research centres in California. See Rosemary Miles. *The complete prints of Eduardo Paolozzi: prints, drawings, collages 1944-77*. London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 1977. 39.

²⁹¹ Rosemary Miles. *The complete prints of Eduardo Paolozzi*. 36.

discussed group of prints from the series, titled 'Manikins for Destruction', embodies this shared fascination with Ballard for crash test dummies.

In the novel *Crash*, Ballard wrote of a visit to the Road Research Laboratory, now Transport Research Laboratory, a place which provided much inspiration for the novelist. Here Ballard could witness the jolting impact of the crash onto a human mannequin which would then be described in the pages of his novel. He wrote in the novel, 'Two lines of damaged cars had been drawn up on the concrete. The bodies of plastic mannequins sat in the crumpled hulls, their faces and chests splintered by the collisions, wound areas marked in coloured panels on their skulls and abdomens.'²⁹² This scene which Ballard described recalls the prints by Paolozzi that depicted the life-size human dolls used in crash tests.

Ballard finally produced an amalgamation of his ideas regarding automobile culture in Britain, the crash and its relationship to sex appeal in his 1973 novel. Ballard explored the ambiguity of the identity of the machine in both of his novels *Crash* and *Concrete Island* (1974). He questioned whether the automobile was a curse or a blessing to mankind. For example, Ballard's novel *Crash* (1973) perverted technology by the creation of a new type of sexuality in a world where people use cars and car crashes to achieve sexual titillation. In an interview with Jeremy Lewis in 1991, Ballard said that he liked 'to think of *Crash* as the first pornographic novel based on technology.'²⁹³ He interpreted the term 'technology' to be defined broadly as science as applied to typical, everyday life.²⁹⁴ Not dissimilarly, the protagonist of Ballard's *Concrete Island* (1974) gradually lost his perception of reality while trapped below a highway after his car crashed into the artificial crevice, a veritable no-place. Although both of these fictions could be read as a social warning, Ballard remained ambiguous as to whether he intended *Crash* to function as such. He did, however, vindicate the abnormal psychology present in *Crash* by arguing that violence is a necessary reaction to the stifling conventions that govern people's lives.²⁹⁵

Ballard explored this abnormal psychology thoroughly in his novel *Crash*. Set in the area surrounding London's Heathrow airport, the story recounted the character James

²⁹² J.G. Ballard. *Crash*. New York: Picador, 1973. 121.

²⁹³ J.G. Ballard and Jeremy Lewis. 'An Interview with J.G. Ballard.' *Mississippi Review* 20, 1/2. 1991. 28.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 28.

²⁹⁵ Hans-Ulrich Obrist. 'Hans-Ulrich Obrist Interviews J.G. Ballard.' Originally published in the Beck's Futures 2003 catalogue at the ICA. <rickmcgrath.com/jgballard/jgb_obrist_interview.html>.

Ballard's – a name choice interestingly creating autobiographical overtones - precarious relationship with Vaughan, a sexual psychopath obsessed with photographing car accidents as well as staging his own accidents. After meeting Vaughan when James Ballard was injured in an automobile accident, James quickly became entranced with Vaughan's eccentric activities and began joining him on his motorway escapades in search of freeway accidents. Along with photographing and manipulating car crashes, Vaughan also engaged in sexual activity in cars in order to experience what he considered to be the best way to achieve sexual climax. As Ballard wrote, 'For Vaughan the motor-car was the sexual act's greatest and only true locus,' thereby making this claim evident.²⁹⁶ For two of the characters in the novel, Vaughan and his associate Seagrave, this obsession with photographing car crashes ultimately resulted in their own deaths by the same cause.

An aspect which made the novel *Crash* unique was not necessarily the sexualisation of the car crash, but rather the way in which Ballard described the dense, concentrated landscape surrounding Heathrow. This setting is a particularly British phenomenon and one which Ballard specialises in to the extent of making it seem as though the landscape itself were one of the characters in the novel. Ballard wrote, 'Along the elegant motion sculpture of the concrete highway the coloured carapaces of the thousands of cars moved like the welcoming centaurs of some Arcadian land.'²⁹⁷ In contrast to the vast and sprawling freeways prevalent in the American countryside, Ballard reproduced the English motor landscape as a densely populated environment with a nightmarish quality of both self-imposed containment and sexual exploration.

Eroticism and human disfiguration

As discussed, Ballard's interest in the combination of the human body and its disfiguration due to technological impact developed greatly during the late 1960s and early 1970s through his various projects. As a devotee of Surrealism, Ballard drew from early twentieth century models not only to create a tangible reference for his readers, but also to establish a tangible connection between his own work and that of his predecessors.

²⁹⁶ J.G. Ballard. *Crash*. New York: Picador, 1973. 171.

²⁹⁷ J.G. Ballard. *Crash*. 166.

Jeannette Baxter has written about Ballard's reference to Hans Bellmer, the German Surrealist who notably created a series of photographs of disfigured female dolls in the mid-1930s.²⁹⁸ She noted that the bodies of Bellmer's doll series were 'sites of violent dismemberment and compulsive reconfiguration' similar to the violence which Ballard frequently induced upon his female victims.²⁹⁹ The novel *Crash* in particular demonstrated this violence through both the description of car crash wounds inflicted upon his fictional victims as well as through the photographs of crash victims in the collection of Vaughan, the novel's 'mad scientist'.

The descriptions of these photographs often bear a great resemblance to the aforementioned work of Bellmer. Ballard described Vaughan's collection of photographs as containing disturbingly graphic images of maimed crash victims, the violence mostly (but not exclusively) enacted upon females. In *Crash*, Ballard wrote,

As Vaughan turned the car into a filling station courtyard the scarlet light from the neon sign over the portico flared across these grainy photographs of appalling injuries: the breasts of teenage girls deformed by instrument binnacles, the partial mammoplasties of elderly housewives carried out by the chromium louvers of windshield assemblies, nipples sectioned by manufacturers' dashboard medallions; injuries to male and female genitalia caused by steering wheel shrouds', etc...³⁰⁰

These mutilations of the body included wounds afflicting predominantly the sexual organs of the victims, as though to infer that it was this type of injury which interested Vaughan the most.

Bellmer's *poupées* were created during the Nazi militarization leading up to the Second World War and were created in response to the brutality of Nazism, as Hal Foster

²⁹⁸ Jeannette Baxter. *J.G. Ballard's Surrealist Imagination*. Surrey: Ashgate, 2009. 74-75.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 75-76.

³⁰⁰ Ballard. *Crash*. 134.

has noted.³⁰¹ Bellmer's first dolls were published in the Surrealist magazine *Minotaure* for the winter issue of 1934 (figure 5.6).



Figure 5.6. Excerpt from *Minotaure*. 1934.

According to Foster, these are reflective of the fascist interest in the 'body as armor, and to see this armor as a prosthesis that served to shore up a disrupted body image or to support a ruined ego construction.'³⁰² Ballard took this notion a step further by repeatedly drawing parallels between the metallic body of the automobile and the human body, male and/or female. Just as the car's body served as a mechanical prosthesis for its occupants, it also mirrored the human body according to what Foster referred to as 'armor' for the human interior. In December 1969, Ballard wrote about Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (1924) for *New Worlds*. Ballard commented, 'Certainly, Nazi society seems strangely prophetic of our own – the same maximising of violence and sensation, the same alphabets of unreason and the fictionalising of experience. Goebbels in his diaries remarks that he and the Nazi leaders had merely done in the realm of reality what Dostoevski (sic) had done in fiction.'³⁰³

Like Ballard, some of Paolozzi's work demonstrated an interest in the latent sexuality within the violence of a crash. Paolozzi's *Yours til the Boys Come Home* exemplifies this interest. However, within Ballard's works, dystopia arguably takes an alternate direction to

³⁰¹ Hal Foster. *Compulsive Beauty*. London: MIT Press, 1993, 115.

³⁰² Hal Foster. 'Armor Fou.' *October* 56. 1991. 67-68.

³⁰³ J.G. Ballard. 'JG Ballard: Alphabets of Unreason'. *New Worlds* 196. 26.

the norm. While the majority of Ballard's fiction can easily be pegged as 'dystopian,' it often does not leave his readers without a glimpse of hope for future existence. This can especially be seen in his four catastrophe novels of the early 1960s in which he essentially destroys the planet, only to reveal the hope that a better future lies ahead for mankind. As Simon Sellars has recently argued, Ballard's brand of dystopia elicits an 'affirmative' tone, particularly one which does not deny utopian undertones.³⁰⁴ Sellars refers to Fredric Jameson's *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* as a noteworthy text which reaches the conclusion that it is possible to 'revive the spirit of utopia' through the undertaking of dystopian-related topics.³⁰⁵ This sense of alienation is symbolised through the often bleak existences which Ballard creates for his characters and is expounded by the looming presence of contemporary mechanisation found in the aesthetics of urbanity such as motorways, car parks, and airfields.

As Darko Suvin suggests, 'utopia and satire are really two sides of the same coin'.³⁰⁶ This point leads utopian literature into the twentieth century in which the dystopian often overrides the utopian with a sense of anti-humanist internal destruction. Upon the first reading, the Station in *Thirteen to Centaurus*, on which live fourteen crew members, follows the tradition of stereotypical utopian communities. Like an island, it is an isolated location which exists according to its own order which approaches perfection. And yet, in the usual Ballardian style, it is not without fault. Even within its own inclusive atmosphere, the Station contains an outlet to the external world via Dr Francis who makes trips outside the Station on a daily basis. If, as Suvin proposes, all utopias exist counter to the 'bad organisation,' then the Station fulfills the role of a standard dystopia: a community which epitomises the negative principle of an establishment.³⁰⁷

The automobile and the female body

The early works of Bellmer are, of course, not the only set of artworks which could easily be compared with Ballard's descriptions of sexualised wounds and his comparison

³⁰⁴ Simon Sellars. 'Extreme Possibilities: Mapping the sea of time and space in J.G. Ballard's Pacific fictions,' *COLLOQUY text theory critique* 17, 2009. 45.

³⁰⁵ Ibid. 45.

³⁰⁶ Darko Suvin. *Positions and Presuppositions in Science Fiction*. London: MacMillan Press, 1988. 34.

³⁰⁷ Ibid. 36.

between the human body and the exterior of the car. The artist Richard Hamilton, a former member of the Independent Group along with Paolozzi, created a series of tabular paintings during the late 1950s and early 1960s which related depictions of the exterior of the automobile to the nude female body. These artworks, a combination of oil painting and collage on wooden panels, emphasised the curved fuselage of the automobile's body while simultaneously suggesting the presence of the female form. Furthermore, the series provided a critical commentary on the consumer culture which arose from the post-World War II American influence in the 1950s, which was typical of British Pop art during this period. As part of Britain's breaking away from the austerity years, the presence of automobiles became more prevalent as car sales increased by 250% between the years 1951 and 1961 in Britain.³⁰⁸

Several of Hamilton's artworks from this series are particularly relevant for a comparison with Ballard's novel, which itself was a product of Pop influences as it is replete with cultural references including both advertising and product design. Pop art could not have existed without the mass production and consumption by western society during the 1950s and 1960s. *Homage à Chrysler Corp* (1957, figure 5.7) and *Hers is a Lush Situation* (1958, figure 5.8)³⁰⁹ both exemplified a possible way in which Ballard could have interpreted the female body. Because Ballard was a fan of the exhibitions held by the Independent Group – especially 'This Is Tomorrow' at the Whitechapel Gallery in 1956 – it is more than likely that he continued to follow the work of Hamilton during the subsequent years.³¹⁰ Several years after 'This Is Tomorrow', Ballard met Hamilton.³¹¹

³⁰⁸ Nigel Whiteley. 'Pop, Consumerism, and the Design Shift.' *Design Issues*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Autumn, 1985), 33.

³⁰⁹ *Hers is a Lush Situation* was included in Gagosian Gallery's 'Crash: Homage to J.G. Ballard' exhibition in 2010.

³¹⁰ Hamilton had been a close colleague of Paolozzi's and together they later collaborated on the book *Kex* in 1966.

³¹¹ Hans-Ulrich Obrist. 'Hans-Ulrich Obrist Interviews J.G. Ballard.'



Figure 5.7. Richard Hamilton. *Homage à Chrysler Corp.* 1957. Tate.



Figure 5.8. Richard Hamilton. *Hers is a Lush Situation*. 1958. Tate.

For *Homage à Chrysler Corp*, Hamilton depicts a soft, outlined figure of a woman, as indicated by her curvaceous figure and tiny waist, leaning against the hood of a Chrysler. Akin to *\$he* (1958-1961, figure 5.9), *Homage à Chrysler Corp* fashions a slick, stylised painted collage of a woman's body paired with popular consumer good(s).



Figure 5.9. Richard Hamilton. *\$he*. 1958-1961. Tate.

Both these paintings, including the others in the series, refer strongly to the typical advertisements which inundated magazines and television commercials of the Fifties. These advertisements depicted a smiling housewife using or presenting the latest development in household products, such as colour televisions, telephones, vacuum cleaners, or refrigerators. All of these represent a satisfied consumer proud of her latest electrical gadget. Of this sort of advertisement, from which Hamilton drew inspiration, he stated, 'The relationship of woman and appliance is a fundamental theme of our culture; as obsessive and archetypal as the western movie gun duel.'³¹² He noted several common characteristics of these advertisements which he then adapted into his paintings, such as *Homage à Chrysler Corp* and later, *AAH!* (1962, figure 5.10), including what he called 'the caress' and

³¹² Richard Hamilton. *Collected Words 1953-1982*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1982. 36.

'empire builder'.³¹³ For this artist, the archetypal posture of a woman caressing the product alongside the demonstrative amassing of a collection of similar goods (i.e. 'building an empire') signified the way in which advertising used the warm sensuality of a housewife or mother to make the objects appealing to both male and female consumers alike.



Figure 5.10. Richard Hamilton. *AAH!* 1962. Tate.

In the instance of *Homage à Chrysler Corp*, Hamilton had integrated the Bride figure of Marcel Duchamp into an updated consumer context, fit for the modern day. By pictorially emphasising the elements of high design which fellow Independent Group member Reyner Banham discussed in *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (1960), Hamilton transported Duchamp's Bride into what Banham described as the 'Second Machine Age'.³¹⁴ Just as Paolozzi had pioneered this type of Pop collage showcasing new domestic products alongside striking female beauties in his 'Bunk' collage series (c. 1952), so too did Hamilton by transforming the canvas into a car showroom, complete with a model caressing her latest purchase in the mode of contemporary advertising techniques. As Roland Barthes wrote in the contemporaneous *Mythologies* (1957), the inherent qualities of plastic refer to its capability of transformation, so much so to the extent that 'the whole world can be plasticized, even life itself.'³¹⁵ This reference points to the false, artificial, or 'plastic' qualities of advertising which Hamilton and Paolozzi exploited. Furthermore, both Hamilton and

³¹³ Ibid. 36.

³¹⁴ Reyner Banham. *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*. London: Architectural Press, 1960. 11.

³¹⁵ Roland Barthes. *Mythologies*. Trans. Annette Lavers. New York: Hill and Wang, 1972 [1957]. 99.

Ballard adapted this concept of the transmutability of artificial surfaces to the body of both automobiles and humans, making the two interchangeable.

An example of this is found in the painting *Hers is a Lush Situation*. Here Hamilton used the curvature of a Buick's body to parallel the curves of the implied female driver or passenger of the car itself, represented by a hovering pair of woman's lips, as Hal Foster has also noted.³¹⁶ Foster described *Hers is a Lush Situation* as an updated version of Bellmer's wood and metal sculpture *Machine Gunneress in a State of Grace* (1937, figure 5.11), which similarly portrays a weapon as a woman's body and vice versa.³¹⁷



Figure 5.11. Hans Bellmer. *Machine Gunneress in a State of Grace*. 1937. Museum of Modern Art.

While Foster failed to clarify exactly which weapon Bellmer's sculpture resembles, it does appear to depict an abstracted female figure using a mounted gun with a long body, such as a rifle. Alternatively, Rosalind Krauss wrote that the form of Bellmer's *Machine Gunneress* is reminiscent of a praying mantis, the notorious sexual cannibal, as well as being a significant

³¹⁶ Hal Foster. 'Notes on the First Pop Age.' in Hal Foster and Alex Bacon, eds. *Richard Hamilton*. London and Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010. 54.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.* 55.

symbol for the Surrealists of the 1930s.³¹⁸ From reading Ballard's *Crash*, it can be certain that the car too could be viewed as a weapon or omen of death within the context of the novel, as characters Vaughan and even Ballard attempted, and sometimes succeeded, to manipulate car accidents leading to injury or death.

Another in this series by Hamilton, the painting *AAH!* additionally defines the sexualisation of the automobile. The painting depicts a finger stretching towards the gear lever of a vaguely described car dashboard. A large voice bubble occupies the upper right quadrant of the painting, containing the exclamation 'AAH!' This could simply be taken as a reference to the sexual act, or, possibly be expressing a scream of fear as the car collides into another object. About the painting, Hamilton wrote, 'When I began work on the panel, the subject became plainly erotic. Much of the hedonism comes from the lush visual pleasure that only photographic lenses can provide.'³¹⁹ He of course referred to the original photograph of an advertisement depicting a dashboard, one of many in a collection of automobile photographs, which served as the basis for *AAH!*.

In a typical instance from the novel *Crash*, Ballard repeatedly makes comparisons between the body of the car and the female human body, not dissimilar from Hamilton. Ballard wrote, 'The deformed body of the crippled young woman, like the deformed bodies of the crashed automobiles, revealed the possibilities of an entirely new sexuality.'³²⁰ Accordingly, for the novel's character James Ballard, both the deformation of a woman and the deformation of a car mutually held the potential for a new form of sexuality. The character Vaughan functioned as a sort of sexual prophet for James by showing him new possible meanings of the sexual act and female beauty as it related to the car crash. For instance, in the scene in *Crash* at the Road Research Laboratory the destroyed body of the car is compared to the act of sex itself. Ballard wrote, 'The destruction of this motor-car and its occupants seemed, in turn, to sanction the sexual penetration of Vaughan's body; both were conceptualized acts abstracted from all feeling, carrying any ideas or emotion with which we cared to freight them.'³²¹ In this case, the body of Vaughan and the car were

³¹⁸ Rosalind E. Krauss. *The Optical Unconscious*. Cambridge: MIT, 1993. 171.

³¹⁹ Hamilton. *Collected Words*. 44.

³²⁰ Ballard. *Crash*. 102.

³²¹ *Ibid.* 129.

indeed interchangeable and both were interpreted as empty canvases, replete with the capability for transformation.

Although it is easy to make these comparisons between Hamilton and Ballard's works, an alternative analysis would suggest that this series of tabular paintings were perhaps more informed by Hamilton's beginnings as a fashion illustrator as opposed to his interest in the representation of sexualised commodities in advertising. Before attending the Slade School of Art, Hamilton had taken fashion drawing lessons and had attempted unsuccessfully a career in fashion drawing.³²² Consequently, Hamilton carried with him an interest in women's advertising from an early stage in his career as an artist.

By the 1960s, the car had become as commonplace as everyday household objects like refrigerators and washing machines, at least in America, as Kristin Ross noted in the book *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*.³²³ Accordingly, it seems only natural that for an author interested in Pop art and popular culture, Ballard would choose the car as a central theme for his works. Thus, as owning a car increasingly became considered the norm for the middle and upper classes in the west, so too did car accidents become more ubiquitous. This fact has also been illustrated by Ballard's American contemporary and social critic, Andy Warhol.

The relationship between the accident and technology is one which both Ballard and Warhol have examined in their works. One less obvious aspect of this relationship is the way Ballard and Warhol both touched upon the ties between the celebrity and technology – both factors of mass consumer culture. Furthermore, a major facet of Warhol's work which intrinsically connects him to Ballard's work has been written about by Thomas Crow.³²⁴ Although Crow did not state a link to Ballard, it is evident that this connection can be made. According to Crow, Warhol 'dramatised the breakdown of the commodity exchange', which certainly is not uncommonly attributed to Warhol – or Ballard, for that matter.³²⁵ As a key link between the pair, Crow argued that the images produced the 'reality of suffering and

³²² Anne Seymour. *Richard Hamilton: Drawings, prints and paintings 1941-55*. London: Anthony d'Offay, 1980. np.

³²³ Kristin Ross. *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture*. Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1995. 29.

³²⁴ Thomas Crow. 'Saturday Disasters: Trace and Reference in Early Warhol (1996)'. Annette Michelson, ed. *Andy Warhol*. London and Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001. 51.

³²⁵ *Ibid.* 51.

death'.³²⁶ For instance, shortly after pop icon Marilyn Monroe's suicide in 1962, Warhol began a series of Marilyn portraits dedicated to her memory and mass cultural influence. Warhol later began to make prints of Elizabeth Taylor's face, who coincidentally was a key element in Ballard's *Crash*. The character Vaughan was obsessed with Taylor and elaborately envisaged her death in a car crash. Crow wrote that this stage of Warhol's career demonstrates how he 'took up the condition of the celebrity as trace and sign' – a common factor shared between Pop artists and certainly evident in Ballard's novel.³²⁷

Whereas Warhol's portraits of Monroe and Taylor (among other major American female figures, such as Jackie Kennedy) attest to an attraction to the representation of the cult of celebrity, Ballard's use of Taylor in *Crash* draws also upon the role of celebrity as a stimulus for desire. Crow marks Warhol's interest in disasters as an offshoot of his interest in mass consumer culture.³²⁸ This connection can be made through analysis of Warhol's prints of car accidents which symbolise the downfall of what may be the utmost 'symbol of consumer affluence'.³²⁹ In *Crash*, however, Ballard did not share only this grim facet of the invention of the automobile. He also embraced the image of the car as a symbol of freedom, and, above all, pleasure. By contrast, Warhol's disaster prints focus predominantly on the car as bearer of injury, or worse, death.

Outside Britain, the concept of the automobile crash during the 1960s appeared as a running thread through some of the works of major cultural movers and shakers, namely Andy Warhol and Jean-Luc Godard. Warhol's *Death and Disaster* screenprint series from 1962-1963 (figure 5.12) alongside Godard's film *Le Week-end* (1967, figure 5.13) both provide examples of the appearance of the crash in a wider geographical context, which would certainly have been in Ballard's cultural consciousness.

³²⁶ Ibid. 51.

³²⁷ Ibid. 53.

³²⁸ Thomas Crow. 'Saturday Disasters: Trace and Reference in Early Warhol (1996)'. 57.

³²⁹ Ibid. 57.

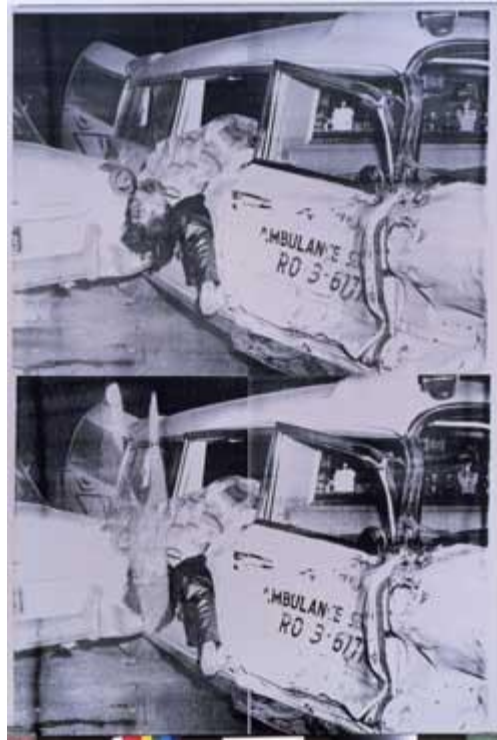


Figure 5.12. Andy Warhol. 'Ambulance Disaster' from *Death and Disaster*. 1962-1963. Guggenheim.



Figure 5.13. Still from Jean-Luc Godard's *Le Week-end*. 1967.

As such, these examples served as predecessors to Ballard's novel according to how they may have aided in the construction of the work. Certain themes can be isolated as they are depicted throughout all the mentioned examples. These include the global proliferation of American consumerism, the sexualisation of the violence of the car crash as well as the anthropomorphic qualities of the automobile.

This cinematic dimension is reflected in Godard's Sixties films, of which Ballard was an avid fan. Karen Beckman has noted that Godard's films from the 1950s shared similar topics as Ballard in the novel *Crash*. She wrote, 'We see this not only in Godard's exploration of the (im)possibility of emotion in late capitalism through metaphors of driving, traffic congestion, and combustion, so visible in films like *Breathless* (1960), *Pierrot le fou* (1965), and *Week-end*, but also in his fascination with the way these metaphors allow him to explore the shifting relation between writing and film.'³³⁰ For instance, in *Breathless*, the protagonist, Michel Poicard, is a car thief who demonstrates his taste for American-manufactured cars by stealing exclusively Cadillacs and T-Birds. In *Pierrot le fou*, Godard staged a dramatic car accident and *Weekend* featured a massive traffic jam as well as a scene of a field filled with crashed cars.

Naturally, as a fellow European nation along with Britain, French consumer culture during the 1960s had more in common with that of Britain than to America. Like Britain, France too was influenced by the boom of postwar American consumerism as well as by its by-product of increased global trade. Regarding the relationship between Europe and America at this time, Richard Hamilton wrote, 'The element in the American attitude to production which worries the European most is the cheerful acceptance of obsolescence; American society is committed to a rapid quest for mass mechanized luxury because this way of life satisfies the needs of American industrial economy.'³³¹ This may be in part because American industrialists understood the eventual obsolescence of once-new products as essential for producing wealth, as explained, to Hamilton's dissatisfaction, by George Nelson in *Problems of Design*.³³² As Godard demonstrated in his film, *Week-end*, the visual image of a traffic jam allows the viewer to reflect upon the heightened state of mass consumerism which spread from America during the years after the Second World War. The traffic congestion served as an image of the intense anxiety which accompanied the growth of mass consumerism.

³³⁰ Karen Beckman. 'Film Falls Apart: *Crash*, Semen, and Pop'. *Grey Room* 12. Summer 2003. 114.

³³¹ Hamilton. *Collected Words*. 137-138.

³³² Hamilton. *Collected Words*. 138.

Iain Sinclair wrote of these influences upon Ballard in his 1999 book about David Cronenberg's film *Crash* based upon Ballard's novel.³³³ Sinclair noted, 'Ballard, in the 60s, seems to be providing the text for a graphic novel by Andy Warhol.'³³⁴ Accordingly, he described Warhol's *Death and Disaster* series (1962-1963) and *Five Deaths* (1963, figure 5.14) as representing the Ballardian fixation with death and injuries caused by automobiles. The screenprint *Five Deaths* graphically depicts an overturned car crushing the bodies of its passengers.



Figure 5.14. Andy Warhol. *Five Deaths*. 1963. Hermitage Museum.

Notably, Foster has declared Ballard as 'the best complement of Warhol in fiction'.³³⁵ Like Sinclair, Foster also noted the links between Warhol's screenprint series and Ballard's novel. However, both Foster and Sinclair appear to have oversimplified the relationship between Ballard's *Crash* and Warhol's *Death and Disaster* series. Neither of these authors described, for instance, the contrast between the cultural landscapes in which these two separate works evolved. The graphic violence of car crashes may be similar in both Ballard and Warhol's works, but the contexts in which these crashes are displayed could not be more different.

³³³ Iain Sinclair. *Crash: David Cronenberg's Post-mortem on J.G. Ballard's 'Trajectory of Fate'*. London: British Film Institute, 1999.

³³⁴ Ibid. 113.

³³⁵ Hal Foster. 'Death in America.' *October* 75. Winter 1996. 48.

For example, Warhol actively sought after the photographs he replicated in his screenprints. He had access to photographs from press agencies which were usually only viewable to journalists. Accordingly, the images of crashes which he used were not police photographs, but instead photographs taken by photojournalists which were too disturbing for the public eye.³³⁶ Warhol's approach to finding material for his artwork therefore contrasted greatly with Ballard (or even Paolozzi), who depended on the chance finding of material in a newspaper, magazine or even at the sight of the incident itself.

Paolozzi, who had been interested in reproducing machines and mechanical parts since art school, drew *Automobile Head* in 1954 and later made the drawing into a screenprint in 1962 (figure 5.15).



Figure 5.15. Eduardo Paolozzi. *Automobile Head*. Drawing 1954, screenprint 1962. Tate.

The drawing consists of a basic outline of a human head and neck filled with small black and white line drawings of various car and engine parts. At first glance, the organisation of the machine parts which compose the innards of the skull and neck appear to be chaotic and

³³⁶ Thomas Crow. 'Saturday Disasters: Trace and Reference in Early Warhol'. 57-58. See also interview with Gerard Malanga in Patrick S. Smith. *Warhol: Conversations about the Artist*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988. 163.

positioned at random. However, as Rosemary Miles observed, Paolozzi used engines to construct the brain as a symbol of active mental energy.³³⁷ Likewise, Paolozzi used a crankshaft at a vertical angle to create the illusion of a spinal cord running the length of the nape of the neck. This image again reflects the semblance between the human body and the body of the automobile.

Paolozzi too made reference to the concept of the crash in his artwork during the 1960s. As well as his prints *Automobile Head* and images from the *Conditional Probability Machine* series, in 1964, he completed a metal sculpture titled *Crash* which appears to be haphazardly constructed of miscellaneous bits and pieces of pipes and wheels (figure 2.13). Simon Ford has described the sculpture as parallel to the collage of texts which Ballard composed between the years 1964 and 1970 to form *The Atrocity Exhibition*.³³⁸ A chaotic assembling of imaginary engine parts, the sculpture's smooth chrome surface contrasts with the disjointed appearance of the work itself. The focal point of the sculpture is the large rupture in the middle, in which the pipes no longer join together but have been split apart. Although the presence of the two wheels lying at the base make reference to an automobile, the pipes resemble the curving and winding roads which compose a complex motorway system. Frank Whitford noted that the similar sculptures that Paolozzi made during 1964 are 'like the earlier towers they are made up of casts of partly standard engineering parts welded together. They are more open in form than the towers, more linear in their effect and they play less obviously with figurative allusions.'³³⁹

Like Ballard but to a greater extent, Paolozzi was interested in expressing his fear about the impending destruction of the planet as caused by excessively wasteful lifestyles in western cultures. Robin Spencer noted, 'Paolozzi sees the acknowledgment of this state of affairs, its causes and effects, as being inextricably linked to the machine's ubiquitous role and the effect it has on all our lives. It is a theme which is central to his art.'³⁴⁰ In this sense,

³³⁷ Rosemary Miles. *The complete prints of Eduardo Paolozzi: prints, drawings, collages 1944-77*. London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 1977. 36.

³³⁸ Simon Ford. 'A psychopathic hymn: J.G. Ballard's 'Crashed Cars' Exhibition of 1970'. <http://www.slashseconds.org/issues/001/001/articles/13_sford/index.php>

³³⁹ Frank Whitford. 'Inside the Outsider.' In Joanna Drew, ed. *Eduardo Paolozzi: Sculpture, Drawings, Collages and Graphics*. J.E.C. Potter & Son Ltd: Stamford, 1976. 12.

³⁴⁰ Robin Spencer. *Eduardo Paolozzi: Recurring Themes*. New York: Rizzoli, 1984. 7.

Paolozzi's sculptures and screenprints, such as *Automobile Head* and the 'Manikins' series demonstrate these broader concerns by isolating one of the contributing factors to his fears.

Conclusion

The topic of the automobile crash and its encompassing themes occupied Ballard's imagination for much of the late 1960s and early 1970s. This chapter argued that this was likely the result of artistic influences appearing both locally as well as from overseas. The broad theme of sex and violence has been interpreted throughout artistic history, but of particular relevance to Ballard's interpretation are the dolls created by Hans Bellmer during the mid 1930s. Paolozzi too was interested in the representation of the crash as well as its effect on the human body, but not to the same extent as Ballard.

Using examples drawn from the early twentieth century, this chapter has examined the historical predecessors for Ballard and Paolozzi's mechanical fetish as well as more contemporary theories surrounding the relationship between technology and eroticism. Furthermore, the correlation between Ballard's writing of the early Seventies and the artworks of his contemporaries were examined through their shared interest in the representation of car crashes and popular culture.

The themes surrounding the topics of Ballard's novel *Crash* have been widely written about. Collectively, these writings reflect the complexities and idiosyncrasies of his cult novel. As such, the cultural impact of Ballard's novel *Crash* continues today. For instance, a copy of the book appeared conspicuously in the 2007 film *Control*, a biopic of Joy Division singer Ian Curtis. More notably, the Gagosian Gallery in London held an exhibition in 2010 following the extent to which Ballard's novel inspired the output of several decades of artists. The works included in the exhibition covered topics including sex, death, as well as popular cultural references such as the late Princess Diana's death in a car crash. For both the artist Paolozzi and writer Ballard, the machine served as a familiar sign of technological advancement in societies with an advanced state of industrialisation. By cleverly manipulating the mechanical body in its myriad forms as a ready-made object, Paolozzi and Ballard questioned the effects that technology produces within our commodity culture.

Conclusion

‘Jimmy wanted E’s (sic) source of porn images. I used this imagery but, because of my pro-feminism was uncomfortable with all that stuff. I suppose I have to admit I didn’t really like him much, though he could be kind and was often generous. My best memory of him was of him discovering he had an American Express bill for around ten thousand pounds and while I was with him telling his factory in, I think, Ipswich to turn out another Number Six and ship it to “that woman in America”. He was proud of his modernity in never once seeing the sculptures he sold. His interest by then was much more to do with notions of that sort and this chimed somewhat with Ballard. I didn’t disagree but he and Ballard were in the end some ten years older than me and I found such ideas a bit passé (in my arrogance — I’m not saying I was right)’.³⁴¹

In the end, Paolozzi and Ballard’s friendship proved to be more historically significant than just a series of meetings with each other at the pub and conniving inconceivable ideas together. Although they did have their disputes from time to time, they also intervened on literary magazines as editors, creating unique collaborations in *Ambit* and *New Worlds* and critiquing British modernism along the way. By making a close analysis of artefacts, writings and contexts related to the connection shared between Paolozzi and Ballard, the objective of this thesis has been to determine what contributions they made to post-1945 British modernisms. To answer this question, I analysed the major themes which the pair addressed in their works roughly during the years 1966 until 1979 in relation to the shift between modernism and postmodernism. My approach brought to the forefront underlying late postwar art historical and literary thematic preoccupations such as science fiction, Surrealism, a military aesthetic, the neo-avant-garde and car culture. This exploration launched initially from Ballard and Paolozzi’s social and cultural upbringings and then delved into the development of their work from the Fifties to the late Seventies.

Over the course of this thesis, I have discussed several key questions related to Paolozzi and Ballard’s works in postwar Britain. Accordingly, some aspects of the chapters overlapped. A predominant thread linking the chapters together was Paolozzi and Ballard’s use of collage, indebted to early twentieth century avant-gardists including Surrealists. Through different themes, I have charted the progression of the way they interpreted arbitrary text and images in their work. Ballard used a literary cut-up technique in *The Atrocity Exhibition* just as he literally cut up science magazines for *Project for a New Novel*. Paolozzi frequently used collage as a technique, notably in a lecture at the ICA during the

³⁴¹ Michael Moorcock. Interview with the author. 31 January 2010.

first meeting of the Independent Group. He carried on this tradition and later began collaging texts in a Surrealist vein for works such as *Kex*, *Moonstrips Empire News* and *Why We Are in Vietnam*, as mentioned in relation to Ballard's own writing.

Their relationship with image and text is related to another major thread running throughout the thesis, that of the neo-avant-garde and postmodern. The thesis accorded with Jameson's explanation of postmodernism as a new phenomenon in literature and art related to postwar British society's reaction to America becoming a superpower and the invention of nuclear weapons. I discussed the transitional phases from modernism to postmodernism, and how Ballard and Paolozzi's work often bridged this gap, as analysed in the first chapter. Postmodern literature in Britain was largely introduced by New Wave science fiction, which had adopted early twentieth century techniques as well as taking a more psychological approach. Ballard's *Crash* proved to be a complex pairing of both postmodernist and neo-avant-garde elements, pointing to the change in the literature toward postmodernism. This thesis suggested that perhaps by retaining modernist elements, Ballard maintained a level of 'subversiveness'. As the borders blurred between the neo-avant-garde and postmodern, so too did science fiction branch into the New Wave during the Sixties. The New Wave departed from linear plots and turned intrinsically on personal experience, while pulp continued to thrive.

I also considered throughout the chapters how Ballard and Paolozzi's work expressed a concern about a technology-driven society. This so-called fear of technological advancement was rooted in their interest in popular culture from a young age. I differentiated between their machine idolatry and that of the early part of the century. Their mutual interest in science fiction was described as a catalyst for their relationship along with Surrealism, beginning at *New Worlds* in 1966. A radical shift in one of Britain's most significant genre publications of the twentieth century was described. This assessment brings me to the final question of whether or not postwar Britain encountered its own car culture, deriving from this interest in science fiction.

In particular, I suggested this possibility through a social fascination with car crashes, as later seen in Warhol's screenprints. The prominence of the car in Ballard's work was considered in relationship to Paolozzi's own fascinations with machines and machine

parts. During this period, a recurring trope in Ballard's work was the metaphor of crashing. This was not only represented by the novel *Crash*, but in a series of short stories leading up to the novel's publication. Even Ballard's subsequent novel *Concrete Island* published the year after *Crash* centred on a man who crashed his car into a ditch, referencing Vorticist and Futurist metaphors of the machine's virility. On a more personal level, Ballard's sense of self-promotion was described as being founded upon Marinetti and Lewis's practices.

In summary, this thesis has addressed the pivotal and often misunderstood shift from modernism to postmodernism in light of the works of key British artists and writers during a politically tumultuous period. Paolozzi addressed society in a Ballardian way, as he critiqued man-made landscapes and modern dystopia. As Roger Luckhurst noted, 'Histories of Britain in the 1970s see the confusions of the era as a result of the lengthy death throes of the post-war Welfare State in a tangle of strikes, minority governments, racial violence and terrorist bombings'.³⁴² Throughout the thesis, I departed from this politically-based notion that Luckhurst has presented through an analysis of the predominant threads running through Britain's postwar cultural economy as interpreted by Paolozzi and Ballard, opening up the arena for future scholarship on literary-artistic relationships during the late postwar period.

³⁴² Roger Luckhurst. *Science Fiction*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005. 161.

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