The ‘Bunk’ collages of Eduardo Paolozzi

by JOHN-PAUL STONARD

Eduardo Paolozzi’s series of forty-five Bunk collages, made by the artist in Paris and London from around 1947 to 1952, are often considered as prototypical works of Pop art. Evadne in green dimension (Fig. 22), from which the series derives its title, is typical in its presentation of consumer goods, sex symbols and richly toned food advertisements, all cut from American magazines and combined in a dynamic composition. In contrast to other collages made by Paolozzi around the same time, which refer back to a pre-War Surrealist aesthetic, particularly that of Kurt Schwitters or of Max Ernst, the Bunk collages form a different category, using up-to-date colour magazine and advertising imagery, and presenting this material in a direct, non-pictorial format. However, many of the works in the series are characterised by the crudeness with which the source material has been cut and pasted down, incorporating yellowing strips of Sellotape and affixed to sheets of card that appear recycled from previous collages (Figs. 23 and 24). This makeshift quality raises the question of whether the collages were intended as works of art for display or whether they were private working material, along the lines of those collages found in the numerous scrapbooks kept by Paolozzi during the same period. Several of the series are not really collages, but single 'tearsheets' pasted down (Figs. 25 and 26). The various locations in which the Bunk collages can be found further enhance the ambiguity of their material status. Where some are kept as works of art in a museum store (Tate, London), others are held in Prints and Drawings collections (Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh) and still others are stored as archival material (Art and Design Archive, Victoria and Albert Museum). Aside from several works held in private collections, the location of about fifteen of the collages remains so far unidentified (it must be assumed) within Paolozzi’s personal archive. It is at least in part due to this fugitive status that a certain amount of myth has gathered around the Bunk series, not least concerning their prophetic stature. New research, presented in this article, examines the construction of this myth, particularly in the light of Paolozzi’s retrospective at the Tate Gallery in 1971, and the print series that was made from the collages shortly thereafter. It is through this print series that the Bunk collages are now commonly known, and most often displayed and illustrated. In addition, some of the source material used in the collages is examined, revealing a broader field of reference than the American magazines that became so attractive to Pop artists around the mid-1950s.

Paolozzi’s interest in collaging popular material stretched back to his childhood in Scotland, and has been well summarised by Robin Spencer. The preservation of a childhood habit into his mid- to late twenties—a number of the pages of the surviving scrapbooks contain drawings that may be classified as juvenilia—and as a student at the Slade School of Fine Art when it was evacuated to Oxford during the War


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1 Following Paolozzi’s death in 2005, the contents of his studio in Dovehouse Street, Chelsea, including his archives, were placed in storage and remain to be catalogued.


3 An exhibition two years after Paolozzi’s death of hitherto unpublished erotic collages is some indication of the only gradually emerging knowledge of these ‘private’ works; see exh. cat. Eduardo Paolozzi: For Adults Only. A pornucopia of previously unknown erotic drawings/collages, London (Mayor Gallery) 2007.

4 Paolozzi’s dating of his collages is not always accurate, particularly in the case of the Bunk collages; see more on this question below.


6 It is collaged into S.P. Munsing, ed.: exh. cat. Kunstschaffen in Deutschland, held
(1944–45) and afterwards in London (1945–47), may have been one reason for Paolozzi’s sense of his collages as private working material.3 The collision of his scrapbook collage aesthetic and his exposure to Surrealism, in part through the agency of Nigel Henderson, whose mother, Wyn Henderson, ran the Guggenheim Jeune Gallery, London, resulted in such collages as *Butterfly*, dated by Paolozzi ‘1946’ (Fig.27).4 This work comprises a page cut from a book (in this case Albert Toft’s *Modelling and Sculpture*, first published in 1911),5 which has been disrupted with the collaged addition of a picture of a combustion engine in a manner reminiscent of Max Ernst. One of Paolozzi’s most impressive and coherent scrapbooks, the *Psychological Atlas*, dated 1949, carries the subtitle ‘Histoire Naturelle’, referring directly to Ernst’s print series of 1925, and comprises a series of ethnographically oriented images that recall earlier Surrealist collage.6

What we know of Paolozzi’s subsequent stay in Paris for two years from June 1947 is, largely by tradition, a story recounting the vagaries of affinity and influence. He was in contact with Giacometti and Dubuffet, and was also on familiar terms with both Tristan Tzara and Mary Reynolds, whose Duchamp collection he saw (in particular a large collage of magazine images that Duchamp had apparently made on a wall of Reynolds’s apartment which, unusually for Duchamp, has not been listed as part of the artist’s *œuvre*).7 He read Raymond Roussel and was influenced by Roussel’s method of writing with ‘found’ phrases, as described in his book *Comment j’ai écrit certains de mes livres* (1935). The degree to which he benefited from contact with those such as Tzara remains unclear. Nigel Henderson’s letters to his wife, Judith, written during a stay in Paris in 1948, reveal Paolozzi’s friendships with artists to be a series of more or less surly conquests.8 Henderson also describes both Paolozzi’s love of Paris and violent reaction ‘against anything “English”’.9 He recalls the material deprivations of the time, describing how he managed to procure drawing paper for Paolozzi and suggesting to Judith that it was better to bring art materials from England. Although there are no records of the details of what he saw, there is little doubt that the principal influence on Paolozzi at this time was what he later termed ‘the Surrealist investigation I engaged myself in...’.10 Frank Whitford has recorded the importance of Duchamp and of an exhibition of works by Max Ernst at Raymond Duncan’s gallery in Paris.11 But there was a clear distinction between the private results of these ‘Surrealist investigations’ and the ‘official’ work that Paolozzi was making at that moment. His status was emphatically that of a sculptor (at least this is how Brancusi introduced him to Braque),12 and those works on paper that he did produce were distinct in appearance from the *Bunk* collages (Fig.28). They have been described as having ‘nothing whatever to do with Surrealism and hark back to decorative Cubism and to the *papiers découpés* of Matisse’.13


It is often written that Paolozzi made collages from American magazines that he was given by ex-GIs stationed in Paris. Although it is plausible — Paolozzi and his English compatriots were very poor in comparison with American visitors — it seems unlikely that this was a regular arrangement. Paolozzi recalls that the ex-GI and painter Charlie Marks gave him a number of copies of the New York-based journal *View*, from which he ‘reaped images to make collages’. However, it is not apparent that any image from *View* was used in a collage made at this time or later, and certainly none was used in the *Bunk* series. It is more likely that *View* would have been passed to him by Mary Reynolds who was the Paris representative of the magazine. In fact, the range of publications used for the collages — individual cases are detailed below — suggests a much broader pool of source material than American magazines. Indeed, the majority of the collages were made in London after his return in 1949, where such magazines were readily available and enthusiastically collected by others associated with the Independent Group.

Even less is known about the first public presentation of the *Bunk* collages at the inaugural meeting of the ‘Young Group’, the precursor of the Independent Group, at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in April 1952. This had been instigated by Richard Lannoy and Dorothy Morland, with the help of Toni del Renzo, to cater for the more avant-garde and intellectual members of the Institute. Paolozzi projected collaged images and details from these images using an epidiascope for a fairly large and select audience who had turned up for the inaugural meeting. Although there are no contemporary records, in particular of the lecture being titled ‘Bunk’, a number of published eyewitness accounts evoke the poignant atmosphere of the evening: ‘I remember the prints steaming and peeling, and the heavy sighs of Eduardo, and the fairly sarcastic attacks of Reyner Banham’, Nigel Henderson told Dorothy Morland during an interview about the ICA. In contrast to the intellectual approach of Banham and others, including John McHale and Richard Hamilton, Paolozzi’s approach was for Henderson refreshingly instinctive: ‘What I thought uniquely valuable in Eduardo’s contribution (though he was no mean articulator, but used, I thought, to get a bit muddled in his terms) was sheer drive and virility, the gut reaction, which was missing in the English scene’. This was the first presentation of such material in an intellectual context, and was met with ‘disbelief and some hilarity’, as Paolozzi later recorded – although this may have been due solely to Banham, whose ‘chuckles’ became ‘open laughing’, to the annoyance of many attendees. According to Paolozzi, the *Bunk* images were ‘among’ the material that was projected, and there is little del Renzo, to cater for the more avant-garde and intellectual members of the Institute. Paolozzi projected collaged images and details from these images using an epidiascope for a fairly large and select audience who had turned up for the inaugural meeting. Although there are no contemporary records, in particular of the lecture being titled ‘Bunk’, a number of published eyewitness accounts evoke the poignant atmosphere of the evening: ‘I remember the prints steaming and peeling, and the heavy sighs of Eduardo, and the fairly sarcastic attacks of Reyner Banham’, Nigel Henderson told Dorothy Morland during an interview about the ICA. In contrast to the intellectual approach of Banham and others, including John McHale and Richard Hamilton, Paolozzi’s approach was for Henderson refreshingly instinctive: ‘What I thought uniquely valuable in Eduardo’s contribution (though he was no mean articulator, but used, I thought, to get a bit muddled in his terms) was sheer drive and virility, the gut reaction, which was missing in the English scene’. This was the first presentation of such material in an intellectual context, and was met with ‘disbelief and some hilarity’, as Paolozzi later recorded – although this may have been due solely to Banham, whose ‘chuckles’ became ‘open laughing’, to the annoyance of many attendees. According to Paolozzi, the *Bunk* images were ‘among’ the material that was projected, and there is little

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reason to assume that the series as it is now known was projected as a coherent whole at the 1952 lecture. At least two of the collages (see Appendix, nos.2 and 38) had not yet been made, as the source material indicates. It is more plausible that Paolozzi took a selection of his collages and scrapbooks, choosing some of the more striking images, and that some of these later became enshrined in the Bunk series.

What can be stated with some certainty is that Paolozzi's presentation, although controversial, had little immediate effect. Virtually all accounts of Paolozzi's work published before 1971 omit any reference to the Bunk collages. Michael Middleton's short monograph of 1962 identifies the importance of the collage technique, and of Paolozzi's meetings with Tzara, Giacometti and Brancusi in Paris, and his exposure to Mary Reynolds's Surrealist collection as well as his reading of Roussel — but these experiences are seen as informing his sculpture. Middleton writes that Paolozzi's 'collage conception' culminated in the film History of Nothing completed the same year. Those collages reproduced in The Metallization of a Dream (1963), an examination of Paolozzi's working material with a commentary by Lawrence Alloway, were of the 'abstract' type (Fig. 28). Alloway's text places Paolozzi squarely in a humanistic tradition of expressive meaning: 'Let us consider Paolozzi as an example of the anthropomorphic imagination'. Here there is clearly no place for Paolozzi as the critic or enthusiast of consumer culture and America. Alloway illustrates and describes a collage sheet from 1954 including images of Michelangelo's David and a Churchman's cigarette card of Jack Johnson, a heavyweight boxer. Rather than a collapsing of 'high' and 'low' categories, Alloway recommends Paolozzi's interest in 'patterns of connectivity': 'It is the thickness of the world and of man's artefacts in relation to man that nourishes Paolozzi's imagination.' The literalism of Pop imagery is irrelevant — 'the objects are turned into symbols', Alloway concludes. In his account of The Development of British Pop, published in 1966, Alloway describes Paolozzi as an 'important progenitor' of Pop, but there is no mention either of the Bunk collages or the 1952 lecture.

It was not until 1970 that the Bunk collages resurfaced into the consciousness both of the artist and his supporters. Yet still the story emerged gradually; although Diane Kirkpatrick made what may be one of the first published references to the ICA projection in her monograph on Paolozzi published that year, none of the collages was reproduced and the word 'Bunk' does not appear. Her description accords only in part with the series: 'The images ranging from a Swank man's jewellery advertisement from a 1938 magazine, through sheets of US Army aircraft insignia and a Disney cartoon page entitled “Mother Goose Goes to Hollywood”, to a scene of New York Skyscrapers with a liner streaming up a background river, a gorilla holding a swooning damsel, and a bumpy robot pouring coffee for a scantily clad example of feminine pulchritude'. The year 1970 was important for the reception of Pop art in Britain. As Ben Highmore has recently noted with reference to Richard Hamilton, it was in that year that the 'teleological story' of Pop art was established: 'the story of how Richard Hamilton and other members of the Independent Group produced a prescient variety of pop art that would go on to become a fully fledged movement, paralleling its US variant'. If Hamilton, as Highmore suggests, was established as the progenitor of Pop by his 1970 Tate Gallery retrospective, then it was at least in part as a response to this that the Tate retrospective of Paolozzi's work just over one year later similarly established his reputation. This was the first time the collages had been shown in public since the 1952 projection. It is clear from Paolozzi's printed annotations in the exhibition catalogue — dates and comments written next to reproductions of the Bunk collages — that he was concerned to establish their precedent in the swiftly emerging story of Pop. This point was not lost on close observers: Nigel Henderson, in a letter to his mother, described the process in rather caustic terms: 'There is a big attempt, both in the exhibition and in the catalogue to give him [Paolozzi] primogeniture in the “Pop” idiom and, without doubt, here my testimony is being solicited.' For Henderson this was...

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'Parish Pump Politics', an ironic after-the-fact bestowal of status. Noting that Stuart Davis and Fernand Léger may equally be considered as forerunners of Pop, Henderson continues:

...I would give Hamilton priority over EP, probably on the grounds that the former traded under the sign of Pop long before the latter who was so busy trying to satisfy, flatter and please all & sundry (including himself) and, lacking (at that time, anyway) any revolutionary identification, failed to see the possibilities of Pop as a graphic weapon of social change. I think he now sees it and regrets it and would like to falsify the record: for at the Tate he showed lots of things torn from notebooks or portfolios (some of which I can remember) of early date and which, though diminutive, look authentic Pop by virtue of the idiom which others have pioneered & some taken risks for. But the point is that Paolozzi didn’t show these naughty, mocking irreverent documents, didn’t take the risk of offending those in high places which part of his Italian heritage makes him flatter and seek – for reasons of personal prestige and gain. 32

Henderson’s comments are in some respects unfair – Paolozzi did show his collages (in 1952, and also his scrapbooks two years later at the ICA exhibition Collages and Objects), and his reluctance to develop the highly original use of popular advertising material was due at least in part to the negative response to his bold ICA epidiascope projection. But it is also indisputable that Paolozzi wanted to establish his ‘primogeniture’ in a manner that placed a heavy burden on hindsight. One of the more well-known collages from the series, I was a rich man’s plaything (Fig.29), was annotated by Paolozzi in the Tate catalogue with ‘The First Use of Pop? Collage, 1947’. 33 There is no guarantee that the collage was indeed made at this early date, and even so, the use of the word ‘Pop’ (taken, as Paolozzi later recalled, from the packet of a toy gun) was fortuitous, and was by no means understood at this time as it was from the mid-1950s by those associated with the Independent Group.

Paolozzi may nevertheless have considered the Tate retrospective as something of a missed opportunity. In the introductory text to the print portfolio Cloud Atomic Laboratory (1971), also shown in the Tate exhibition of that year, Paolozzi complains that the ‘radical nature of this lecture [the 1952 projection] has never properly been assessed but is nevertheless homogeneous with the current paintings and sculptures’. 34 Although the Tate retrospective catalogue mentions the epidiascope projection as part of a history of the Independent Group, and the complete series of forty-five collages was illustrated, the word ‘bunk’ was not mentioned in relation to either, and it was clear that the story of Bunk had yet to be properly formulated. Further, the collages had still at this point not been given titles – Evadne in green dimension is annotated ‘Collage, 1952’. It seems highly likely that the Bunk series was consolidated, in terms of selecting which images were to be included and also finalising individual titles.

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29. I was a rich man’s plaything, by Eduardo Paolozzi. 1947. Collage, 35.9 by 23.8 cm. (Tate, London).


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32 Nigel Henderson to Wyn Henderson, 24th November 1971, TGA, 9211/1/2/4.
33 Most of the published handwritten annotations were made by Frank Whitford, to Paolozzi’s dictations. This particular note was included by Paolozzi in Whitford’s absence. The catalogue was paid for to a large extent by Paolozzi. Thanks to Frank Whitford for this information.
34 E. Paolozzi: introductory text to the print portfolio Cloud Atomic Laboratory, repr. in Spencer, op. cit. (note 2), p.198.
and the name of the group as a whole, on the basis of those
collages chosen for reproduction in this catalogue. During an
interview the following year Paolozzi responded evasively to
the question as to whether the forty-five collages formed a
complete unit before the Tate exhibition, stating only that
'some were chopped up, as I said, and used, and thrown
away', but then confirming that all of the *Bunk* collages were
used in the 1952 ICA lecture. The later dates of a selection
of the collages indicates that this cannot be entirely true.
That even the title *Bunk* was chosen at this time (there is no
documentary record of it referring to the 1952 epidiascope
projection) and had not previously been associated with this
particular set of collages can be inferred from Paolozzi’s
description of the screenprint *B.A.S.H.*, which was produced
at the time of the Tate retrospective. In his account of
*B.A.S.H.*, published in the *Observer Magazine* three
days before the opening of the Tate exhibition, Paolozzi states
that he had originally wanted to call the work ‘Bunk!’ as a way
of distinguishing it from *Pop*. The Tate retrospective
included, as the press release revealed, a ‘continuous slide
show of images from popular sources, similar to those which
Paolozzi projected at the now historic first meeting of the
Independent Group in 1952’. Again, there was no mention
of the word ‘bunk’ in relation to the projection.

Paolozzi had begun planning the creation of a print port-
folio of the *Bunk* collages at the time of the Tate exhibition.
Given the availability of the collaged material that he had
amassed and his concern to publicise his pioneering interest
and display of such material, it was a natural choice to return
to the early collages. The degree to which the *Bunk* series was
in fact created at this point has rarely been observed: Marco
Livingstone is one of the few writers to have acknowledged
their retrospective evaluation. Alongside the publication of
the collages as prints, it was at this moment that the original
collages were accorded full artistic status and began to enter
museum collections. Following his retrospective Paolozzi
donated ten of the *Bunk* collages to the Tate Gallery (see
Appendix for details). As a letter from Richard Morphet
to Paolozzi of the following year makes clear, Paolozzi had
offered clarification on the titles of the individual collages
by providing the Tate with the information sheets that were
to accompany the print series.

A description of the creation of the print portfolio is beyond
the scope of this article. It is important however to note that
the first full and complete catalogue list of the series, with titles,
was created for the boxed set of prints (produced in an edition
of fifty deluxe sets and one hundred standard sets, with an
introductory essay by Frank Whitford). The life of *Bunk* from
that moment forward is the life of the print series, rather than
the collages themselves, some of which, Paolozzi later claimed,
were at that point thrown away. A touring exhibition
the next year titled *Bunk. A box-file of images in print*, organised
by the Victoria and Albert Museum, consolidated public
knowledge of the series. The story was further galvanised by
Wieland Schmied’s essay ‘Bunk, Bash and Pop’, first published
in the catalogue of Paolozzi’s exhibition at the Nationalgalerie,

31. *Will man outgrow the earth?*, by Eduardo Paolozzi.
1972. Lithograph, 24 by 32 cm. (After 1952 collage,
36.3 by 25.7 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London).

32. *Was this metal monster master or slave?*, by
Eduardo Paolozzi. 1952. Collage, 36.2 by 24.8
cm. (Tate, London).

33. *Vogue gorilla with Miss Harper*, by Eduardo
Paolozzi. 1950. Collage, 19.3 by 32.5 cm. (Krazy

34. *Vogue gorilla with Miss Harper*, by Eduardo
Paolozzi. 1950. Collage, 19.3 by 32.5 cm. (Krazy
Berlin, in 1975, and reprinted for the catalogue accompanying the Arts Council touring exhibition the following year. This contains all the elements of the Bunk myth – the sensational epiphanic presentation, the prophetic engagement with popular material from American publications, the excitement and pure improvisatory zeal of Paolozzi’s engagement with his source material. But if the effects of this presentation, as Schmied continues, were first felt only four years later at the exhibition This is Tomorrow, there is little indication that Paolozzi was acknowledged or that anyone realised the importance of the Bunk collages as prototypes of a new movement for at least another twenty years. From then, publications dispensed with Paolozzi the Brutalist sculptor and grounded his ‘collage conception’ in the early collages, the visit to Paris, the contact with Surrealism and the famous lecture at the ICA on his return. The catalogue for his 1976 exhibition at the Kestner Gesellschaft in Hanover contains a small selection of the Bunk collages interspersed with spreads from the Psychological Atlas scrapbook. Most of the catalogue texts dealt with the Bunk collages and the questions raised by them.

Against this background of reception and reassessment, a more detailed analysis of individual works may be offered. The sheer number of images complicates such an analysis, as does the lack of narrative progression through the series and the apparently random order in which they are presented. For the sake of clarity, comment on the themes and sources by which the collages are related may be set out by dividing the series into three main types. First, the ‘ready-made’ type, or single unaltered tear sheet; second, the ‘layout proposition’ type, which sees Paolozzi apparently experimenting with page layout schemes; and last the ‘composite’ type, more pictorial collages that relate to a tradition that may be traced back to the Dada photomontage of Hannah Höch and Raoul Hausmann.

Paolozzi retrospectively referred to the source material for his collages as ‘ready made metaphors’, but the category can be further refined to refer to those Bunk works that are not in fact collages but simply tear sheets re-presented as works of art. Of these, Vogue gorilla with Miss Harper (Fig. 33) is the most direct presentation of an image cut from a magazine (in this case the source is indicated in the title) and presented whole. Comparison of several works of this ‘readymade’ type shows that Paolozzi’s principle of selection was often determined by the ‘collaged’ nature of the source – unexpected juxtapositions that often take on a trompe-l’œil quality. This

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36. Yours till the boys come home, by Eduardo Paolozzi. 1951. Collage, 36.2 by 24.8 cm. (Tate, London).
principle is clear in *Fun helped them fight* (Fig.30), a single unaltered sheet from *National Geographic* (January 1948) showing a B-17 bomber plane at an English base being attended by a ground crew. The cartoon character painted onto the fuselage of the aircraft appears at first sight to have been collaged onto it by Paolozzi himself, but is in fact part of the source photograph. It is taken from an article illustrating the informal customising of American aircraft by their crews – a type of vernacular proto-Pop art, it may be suggested. 46

Other ‘readymade’ collages are presented in the form of magazine covers, such as *Was this metal monster master or slave?* (Fig.32), which shows the cover of a science fiction magazine dated February 1952. The cover of *Time* magazine used for *Will man outgrow the earth?* (Fig.31) is dated 8th December 1952, but the wear and tear on the cover suggests that at least a few months, if not more, had passed before Paolozzi affixed it to a backing sheet and preserved it as a collage – an important point to bear in mind. 47

Equally intriguing ‘readymade’ tearsheets are those taken directly from magazine articles. *Fantastic weapons contrived* (taken from *Life International* of 24th September 1951; Fig.26) presents a single unaltered page from an article about the ‘fantastic’ atomic weapons announced in Congress by President Truman earlier that year. 48 A strange collage of two pages, one from *Time* magazine of March 1952, is presented in *Electric arms and hands also showing love is better than ever*, the title taken from a collaged sentence constructed from the two sheets. 49

That the front page of a newspaper or a single sheet from a magazine could be considered a work of art was suggested in 1951 by Marshall McLuhan in his book *The Mechanical Bride*. 50

By creating connections between disparate elements, he argues, the pages of modern newspapers provide an equivalent for the universalism found in modern art and science: ‘the French Symbolists, followed by James Joyce in *Ulysses*, saw that there was a new art form of universal scope present in the technical layout of the modern newspaper’. 50

The second group of *Bunk* collages extends the principle of selection into experimentation with page layout. *Improved beans*, for example, shows two advertisements collaged side by side in what seems like a mock-up double-page spread from a magazine such as the *Ladies’ Home Journal*. The image of Van Camps beans on the right was indeed taken from the

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46 ‘Fantastic Weapons. What some of the talk is about’, *Life International* 160 (24th September 1951), pp.121–24 and 129. The page excised by Paolozzi opposes a science fiction-style illustration of jet planes mounting a ‘stratospheric attack [. . .] armed with atomic warheads’. Photographs from *Life* were the subject of an exhibition staged at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in March 1952, shortly before the epidiascope projection.

47 The column on the right is taken from *Time* (24th March 1952), reporting on the film *Retreat, Hell!* inspired by the Korean War.

December 1946 issue of that magazine, cut in half to omit a diagonal strip of text. Such layout propositions are also used in two other related collages: No one’s sure how good it is, a horizontal juxtaposition of a laboratory interior above a city-street scene showing a lorry advertising Alfalfa. As with Fun helped them fight, Paolozzi has selected a deceptive image of collage in the real world – here the two female figures that appear to be standing on the lorry are cardboard cut-outs.

Four further collages of the ‘layout’ type are related by a single source. Wind tunnel test shows six images of a man’s face at progressive stages of distortion with exposure to a high-velocity air current. The collage itself has been inscribed with its source: US Camera from 1950. This was an annual compendium of the work of well-known professional photographers, including both reportage and ‘art’ photography. The sequence of the photographs in Windtunnel test has been switched to disrupt a chronological reading, and the sheets have been affixed to a sheet of blue paper which itself appears to be attached to the detached front or back boards of a book. Trigger assembly removal (Fig.34) is a similar rearrangement of sequential images taken from the same edition of US Camera, ‘strobe-strip’ photographs of the well-known striptease artist Winnie Garret taken by the photographer Philippe Halsman (Fig.35). Halsman’s photographs were also used in Yours till the boys come home (Fig.36), which combines the two larger images of Winnie Garret with three of an aircraft after an accident, taken from the same edition of US Camera. These crash photographs were taken by Naval photographers in the Pacific during the War, and were chosen by ‘Capt. Edward Steichen, in command of Navy Combat photography’ as a tribute to war photographers. Winnie Garret’s pose in the top photograph is dramatised by its combination with the flight deck crash, while the naval photographs take their place within the erotic sequence. Again, McLuhan’s analysis of American advertising in The Mechanical Bride provides illuminating contemporary background to Paolozzi’s preoccupations, particularly his description of advertising as a revelation of the ‘interfusion of sex and technology’. In effect, Yours till the boys come home shows Paolozzi taking raw photographic material and creating juxtapositions that adopt the language of advertising without referring to a particular product. For sale, it may be said, is the language of advertising itself. Paolozzi repeated this combination in a further collage made with material from US Camera of 1950, the collage Take-off (Fig.39), showing a leaping ice skater whose pose provides a dynamic response to the image above of a plane preparing for take-off. Both these images derive from a double-page spread in the advertising section of US Camera of 1950 (Fig.37).

A further common source for collage material was the Ladies’ Home Journal, a leading American magazine and one of the most frequently cited sources of advertising imagery for English artists in the post-War period. Advertisements

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55 The format is used elsewhere to create front- and back-cover spreads. The ultimate planet combines the cover of Thrilling Wonder Stories, a collection of pulp science fiction published in April 1949, and Science Fantasy (Spring 1952), published just in time for the ICA projection. Similarly, Headlines from Horrorsville shows the cover of the first issue of Unknown Worlds (1948) and that of Popular Mechanics from January 1951.

56 A similar combination of serious and popular science is provided by Merry Xmas with T-1 space suits, which shows an image of ‘T-1 Space Suits’, constructed from a double-page spread over a similarly patched-together image of toy ‘rocket guns and interplanetary ships’ which will ‘whoosh down U.S. chimneys for 1952’s space-suit ed kids’.


58 Two further ‘layout’ collages may be connected by source material: both Folks always invite me for the holidays and What a treat for a nickel? use Planters Peanuts advertisements taken from the Ladies’ Home Journal.

for Johnson’s Baby Powder, featuring a giant baby and diminutive mother appeared in the magazine around 1946 to 1947, four of which were brought together by Paolozzi to form See them? A baby’s life is not all sunshine! (Fig. 38). Paolozzi also mined the Ladies’ Home Journal for source material to create It’s a psychological fact pleasure helps your disposition, the title of which was a slogan used for a number of years to advertise Camel cigarettes, here taken as a general mantra of the meeting of psychology, consumption and the new concept of market research. Both interiors depicted in the collage were taken from the same issue of the Ladies’ Home Journal (April 1947), the top from an advertisement for gasoline (p. 86), the bottom from an advertisement for Johnson’s Glo-Coat floor polish (p. 110). It is clear that Paolozzi’s intention in pasting in figures from other advertisements was not to create collage-like discrepancies of scale or Surreal juxtapositions of foreign bodies, but rather to create a new, seamless image. This effect may be seen in a number of the Bunk works. Whereas photographic images, or at least magazine spreads, were selected on the basis that they were already collage, a sort of pre-collage perhaps, Paolozzi’s manipulation of the material often ‘de-collages’ the material, in the sense of creating new naturalistic scenarios (for similar seamless collages, see Appendix, nos. 13, 30 and 35). Henderson was right to suggest that the Bunk collages were by no means ‘graphic weapons of social change’. 62

The third group within the Bunk series can be identified from their composite, pictorial nature. Although these too are hardly ‘graphic weapons’, and may even be described in terms of a consumerist pastoral, they still more readily evoke the traditional photomontage of John Heartfield or Max Ernst. Paolozzi is at his most critical when he is effacing works of art – or at least reproductions. Sack-o-sauce affixes a variety of popular imagery, including a hand proffering a tin of Wiener hot dogs containing its own ‘sack of sauce’, over a work by Joan Miró – in this case a photolithograph called Summer taken from Verre of October 1938. The new landscape Paolozzi creates seems at least partially sympathetic to the original. His treatment of another source is far more dismissive. Although Evasdne in green dimension (Fig. 22) gives the series its name by the inclusion of the word ‘Bunk!’, 63 the strange title of the work is derived from a painting by the German émigré impresario Jack Bilbo. A one-time bodyguard of Al Capone and career conman, Bilbo turned to art and opened a gallery of modern painting, improbably, in London during the Blitz. 64 In 1948 he published his vastly egotistical autobiography, complete with extensive text and numerous images, reproduced as stuck-down plates. 65 His painting Evasdne in green dimension, from 1945, is typical of his amateur efforts, and Paolozzi clearly had no reservations about dispensing with the pasted-down illustration and using both the page and (when he came to naming the collage in 1972) the title of Bilbo’s painting. The title sheds little light on the subject of the collage, which shows a bodybuilder and pin-up figure in a relation that looks forward to the Adam and Eve characters that were to appear in Richard Hamilton’s Just what is it that makes today’s homes so different, so appealing? (1956). As with Hamilton’s collage, most of Paolozzi’s titles are derived from advertising copy, and often

60 The title, first given in the 1972 print portfolio, is a misreading of the slightly unusual typeface, partly missing from the original advertisement, which appeared in April 1946, that reads ‘See Mom? A Baby’s Life isn’t all Sunshine!’. 61 The bottom figure is found in an advertisement for Simoniz floor polish, included in the Ladies’ Home Journal (June 1949). 62 Other images of the ‘layout’ type are: Man holds the key; Has jazz a future? Hazards include dust, hailstones and bullets, which was paired with Survival in the 1972 portfolio; Poor Eleanor knows them by heart, Shots from peep show, which appears at first as a ‘ready-made’ tear sheet, but a closer look reveals that the figure on the right is collaged; and Never leave well enough alone, the only image listed in the 1971 Tate catalogue as a ‘Scrapbook page’, and which may still exist as such. Its title is that of the autobiography of Raymond Loewy, the designer of the Studebaker illustrated on the left side.

63 The source for the Charles Atlas figure is often given as the December 1936 issue of Mechanics and Handicraft (e.g., M. Francis: Pop, London 2005, p. 51). This is visibly not the case as a comparison of the lettering for the word ‘Bunk!’ shows. An example of the advertisement for the Charles Atlas ’dynamic tension’ method can be found in the October 1932 issue of GI Joe comic.

appear within the collage itself. You’ll soon be congratulating yourself! (Fig.40) is a precursor of Hamilton’s collage, using an earlier advertisement for Armstrong Floors (Hamilton had used one published in 1955) and similarly taking the title from a line in the advertising copy, visible just above the image.66

One further source may be used to group the works. The backing sheet for You’ll soon be congratulating yourself! was taken from an unidentified book on interior decoration, which was also used as the basis for two other ‘composite’ collages from the Bunk series. Paolozzi often used printed books as scrapbooks, and it is likely that these collages were taken from such a source. Meet the people is made from five elements affixed to a page from this spiral-bound book, including a large photograph of the Hollywood actress Lucille Ball. As Mark Francis has noted, Paolozzi dated the collage to the same year that Ball became a household name, owing to her success in the CBS radio programme My Favourite Husband. She was a ‘commonly recognised icon in magazines and on the airwaves, like the food and drink products, the serving suggestions and the mouse cartoon character, which all seem to be vying for equal billing in the artist’s composition’.67

The point is important – within the composite type images, but also with the series as a whole, Paolozzi appears intent on creating some sort of natural space where heterogeneous elements can co-exist: collage is used as a way of creating links and associations, rather than forcing dissonance.

A sheet from the spiral-bound decoration book was also used as a backing for a further collage of the composite type, Real gold (Fig.41). The title derives from the tin of Real Gold lemon juice, displaying two ripe fruit that Paolozzi has cheerily juxtaposed with the bosom of the cover girl of Breezy Stories. This is the 1948 British edition of the magazine (Paolozzi has obscured these cover details with the orange star bearing the numeral ‘6’).68 Many advertising sources similar to those used in Meet the people and Real gold can be found in Paolozzi’s Yale Iron scrapbook (so called because of the advertisement for Yale domestic irons pasted on the cover; Fig.43).69 Yale Iron is distinct from the nine other scrapbooks held in this archive (in particular from the Psychological Atlas, mentioned above) in that it comprises glossy colour advertisements taken exclusively from Ladies’ Home Journal-type publications. None of the Bunk collages was taken from the Yale Iron scrapbook, which remains intact, and is more of an archival accumulation of material. Refreshing and delicious (Fig.42) is also of the ‘Yale Iron’ type, showing on the left side an advertisement for Ivory Flakes washing powder, taken from the Ladies’ Home Journal (April 1947), and on the right side an advertisement for Kool-Aid, taken from the July 1949 issue of the same magazine (the facing page of which provided the Planter’s advertisement used in What a treat for a nickel!).

Only a selection of source material and contextual information can be presented here. Themes identified, including the collaged nature of source material, ‘collage in the real world’, perhaps; the combination of female figures and technology, particularly military; the overwriting of fine art with popular imagery, as well as the repeated use of particular source books and magazines, may be extended to other collages in the series, and also to the numerous images in contemporaneous scrapbooks.

A further question that can be dealt with only briefly here is that of dating. It is widely held that the dating of many of the collages is spurious and, as examples cited above show, these suspicions are entirely justified. In some cases Paolozzi’s backdating of the collages is obvious, and naïve. The dynamics of biology is given in the 1971 Tate catalogue as 1950, but shows clearly the source image as the cover of Life magazine of 22nd September 1952. But this should not always be taken as evidence of a breathless effort to establish ‘primogeniture’; two decades had elapsed, and the exact sequence was most probably beyond accurate recall. It seems clear from their physical condition that certain tearsheets, in particular comic and magazine covers, were affixed in their current form much later than the 1952 projection. Hi-Ho (Fig.44), for example, features the cover of the second issue of Hi-Ho Comics, published in 1946 (showing the character ‘Lil Chief Hot Shot’ attacking a character who may be identified with a Japanese soldier), above which are pasted a fantasy mechanical skeleton of a man and an unappetising plate of food. The elements are

66 The female figure collaged naturalistically into the interior is the actress Paulette Goddard, taken from an advertisement for Lipton Tea from the Ladies’ Home Journal (April 1947).
67 Francis, op. cit. (note 63), p.31.
68 The striking cover is by the illustrator Enoch Bolles, often credited with creating the pin-up genre. His female figures have been described as the ‘embodiment of several styles and eras; from the Edwardian, to the flapper to the vamp’; see J. Raglin: ‘Beauty by Design: The Art of Enoch Bolles’, Illustration Magazine 9 (2004), pp.4–30.
in poor condition, the magazine frayed at the edges, with a strip of Sellotape that once held the spine together still in place. The date given in the 1971 Tate catalogue is 1947, although the state of the cover of the comic book indicates more than a year’s wear. A similar point may be made for You can’t beat the real thing (Fig. 24), which comprises a cover for Cover Girls Models magazine of October 1951 placed over the cover of another magazine dated January 1950, which can be identified as Scientific American. An advertisement for Firestone Tyres has been placed beneath the model, identified as Lila Leeds (the ‘Bad Girl’ Hollywood actress who was notorious for having been arrested in 1948 with Robert Mitchum and charged with possession of marijuana). In both cases it seems that Paolozzi dated the collage to the year of publication of the source material, which may suggest that as ‘readymades’ this date was more important than the year the collage was assembled.

Beyond the question of dating, the poor physical quality of the collages is of interest for other, more interpretative, reasons. It was only once used-up, out-of-date, creased, stained and torn that the sources became viable as collage material. Paolozzi appears to have been strongly aware of this, once recording that ‘the word collage is inadequate because the concept should include damage, erase, destroy, deface and transform – all parts of a metaphor for the creative act itself.’ A new brand of brilliance (Fig. 23) uses the cover of Picture Post from 13th March 1943, showing Fred Astaire and Rita Hayworth dancing, below which the banner from a later issue of the same publication (2nd October 1943) has been affixed. The importance of the damage to the cover, which is held together with sections of brown gum strip, is signified by its accurate reproduction in the 1972 lithograph of the collage (although the original collage has not been located, it is reasonable to assume that it is the source of these signs of wear). Winfried Konertz compares Paolozzi’s efforts to reproduce these signs of damage and rudimentary repair with Duchamp’s creation of his Bolte-en-valise, although the comparison may be better made with the Green box, for which Duchamp recreated the many irregular scraps of paper that contained notes relating to the Large glass. The comparison may also be extended to Duchamp’s readymades themselves, which suffered neglect for a number of years, and in a number of cases were thrown away, before being revived through replicas made at a much later date. It may seem as integral to the fate of ‘readymade’ art that it sustains a burden of anonymity before achieving full artistic value, but only as a result of nostalgia for lost origins. It is in this sense that the notion of the readymade converges with that of reception in the historiography of art. In a different context, Boris Groys has described the conservative, even reactionary affinity between art and ‘garbage’ as an ‘aestheticisation of poverty’ that reflects on the ‘electness’ of art – ‘the miracle of value produced by a single touch of the artist or saint’. In either case, behind both the original creation of the Bank series and their replication as a print series in 1972 is an impulse towards preservation of the forgotten and the devalued, or perhaps an ecological principle of recycling and revaluation, which was to become one of the most salient, yet unexamined, aspects of Pop art.

Appendix

Complete list of collages in Eduardo Paolozzi’s ‘Bunk’ series.

All dates are those given in the 1971 Tate Gallery retrospective catalogue. Terminus post quem dates based on the research presented here are given in square brackets. Many of those collages marked ‘untraced’ may be assumed to remain in Paolozzi’s personal archive, unavailable to the present writer.

4. The ultimate planet. 1952. 25.1 by 38.1 cm. Tate, London.
5. See them? A baby’s life is not all sunshine!. 1948. 28 by 38 cm. Krazy Kat Arkive, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
6. Sack-o-sauce. 1948. 35.6 by 26.6 cm. Tate, London.
8a. Hazards include dust, hailstones and bullets. 1950. 24.8 by 18.6 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, Prints and Drawings collection, London.
9. Was this a metal monster master or slave?. 1952. 36.2 by 24.8 cm. Tate, London.
10. Meet the people. 1948. 35.4 by 22.1 cm. Tate, London.
15. Real gold. 1950. 35.6 by 23.3 cm. Tate, London.
19. Electric arms and hands also showing love is better than ever. 1952. Untraced.
22. Windtunnel test. 1950. 24.8 by 36.5 cm. Tate, London.
25. I was a rich man’s plaything. 1947 [1951]. 35.9 by 23.8 cm. Tate, London.
27. No one’s sure how good it is. 1952. 30.5 by 16.1 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, Prints and Drawings collection, London.
29. Merry Xmas with T-1 space suit. 1952. 38.2 by 28.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, Prints and Drawings collection, London.
32. You can’t beat the real thing. 1951. 35.7 by 24 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, Prints and Drawings collection, London.
33. It’s a psychological fact pleasure helps your disposition. 1950. 36.2 by 24.4 cm. Tate, London.
36. Lessons of last time. 1947. 22.9 by 31.1 cm. Tate, London.
37. A funny thing happened on the way to the airport. 1952. Untraced.
41. Folks always invite me for the holidays. 1949. Untraced.
42. What a treat for a nickel! 1950. Untraced.
43. You’re till the boys come home. 1951. 36.2 by 24.8 cm. Tate, London.
44. Headlines from horrorsville. 1951. 25.3 by 39 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, Prints and Drawings collection, London.

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