The spirit of 1968? Revisiting Lindsay Anderson's *If….*

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A couple of weeks before Christmas 1968, the queues snaked down London's Lower Regent Street outside the Plaza cinema. Roger Vadim's soft-core science fiction fantasy *Barbarella*, starring Jane Fonda, had been taken off after attracting poor audiences, and been replaced at short notice by a new British film, Lindsay Anderson's *If….* The film was funded by Paramount, an American studio, yet it was set in an elite English public school. It didn't feature any well-known stars, there was no rock music on the soundtrack, and the film had little advance publicity. Nevertheless, its reputation had spread largely by word of mouth. *If….* was the unexpected box office hit of the year: it took £40,000 in its first few weeks, and was quickly given a national release.

1968 had been a turbulent year. In May, a series of demonstrations among university students in Paris had led on to a nationwide general strike: the occupations and street fighting lasted for almost two months, and the French government was effectively paralyzed. In the USA, protests against the Vietnam War were intensifying, and the assassination of Martin Luther King led to large-scale rioting in major cities. The Prague Spring, a brief moment of liberalization behind the Iron Curtain, was brought to an abrupt end when the Soviet tanks rolled in. Unrest also reached the UK, although it was more muted. There were mass demonstrations against the Vietnam War in London's Grosvenor Square in March and again in October, as well as large civil rights marches in Northern Ireland. Talk of revolution was in the air. The Rolling Stones song 'Street Fighting Man' – 'summer's here and the time is right for fighting in the streets, boy' – became the soundtrack of the protests: it was famously banned by radio stations in Chicago during the demonstrations at the Democratic National Convention in August.

To many critics at the time and since, *If….* has seemed to embody the spirit of its age. However, the film was first conceived many years previously. It began life as a script called *Crusaders*, written between 1958 and 1960 by David Sherwin and John Howlett when they were still undergraduates at Oxford. Implausibly, Sherwin and Howlett attempted to interest their favourite American director Nicholas Ray (of *Rebel Without a Cause*) and then went to the Hammer Horror director Seth Holt. It was not until 1966 that the script was passed to Lindsay Anderson, who then spent many difficult months working with Sherwin on a revised version that eventually became *If….* The title is drawn from a famous paean to masculine self-discipline written in the late 1890s by the English poet Rudyard Kipling. Anderson had been attempting to persuade the headmaster of his own former school, Cheltenham College, to grant permission for the film to be shot there, and he needed to make the script more palatable to him. Apparently, it was re-titled on the suggestion of the producer's secretary. Using Kipling's title seemed (in Anderson's words)

appropriately 'old-fashioned, corny and patriotic'; although he also added four dots to indicate a degree of uncertainty about whether the film was merely a fantasy.

Whether or not they actually liked the film, the reviewers of the time were fairly unanimous about its message. According to *Life*, the film was 'angry, tough and full of sting'; while the London *Evening Standard* saw it as 'a hand-grenade of a film'. They were also fairly unambiguous about who the film was aimed at. 'If you're young, you'll really dig *If…*', wrote *Cosmopolitan*. 'If you're not so young, it's more reason than ever to go see what it's all about.' Even the film's critics seemed to share this view of its revolutionary political message. According to BBC critics, the film was 'one sided' and 'very close to the borders of fascism'; while *The Listener* called it 'the most hating film I know of'. Meanwhile, the right-wing journal *The Spectator* argued that 'Anderson is still lashing out at nanny'.

This view of the film has also been actively promulgated by its star, Malcolm MacDowell. The film, he said in his one-man tribute to Anderson, *Never Apologise* (2008), 'stuck a knife at the heart of the establishment'; while in an Open University broadcast a few years earlier, he went further – 'it was like an H-bomb had gone off under the British establishment'. Subsequent reviewers have echoed such assessments. Online commentators routinely describe *If….* as 'incendiary', 'a subversive, anti-authoritarian masterpiece' and a 'counter-culture classic'. The publicity blurb for its video release describes it as 'one of cinema's most unforgettable rebel yells'. And in his breathless catalogue of 'the 100 best teen movies', *Stranded at the Drive-In*, Garry Mulholland praises its 'images of English revolution', and asserts that 'no teen movie has ever come close to emulating its fervour'.

Thirty five years later, as a new print of the film was released, Anderson's lifelong friend Gavin Lambert wrote in the *Guardian* newspaper that *If….* 'encapsulated the radical spirit of 1968'. It was, he said, 'an astonishingly youthful film', despite the fact that its director was 45 years old when it was first released. Albeit some years after the Sex Pistols, Lambert's article was entitled 'Anarchy in the UK'; and the posters for the film's re-release described it as 'an anarchist punk dream' and as 'deliciously subversive'. For its advocates, the film seems to have retained all its youthful allure and relevance: it is, according to MacDowell, 'as fresh as it ever was'. Yet the film's enduring reputation goes further. It is regularly described as a 'masterpiece' and a 'modern classic', and as proof of Anderson's status as a 'major artist' in the cinema. It was number 12 in the British Film Institute's list of the greatest British films of all time, compiled in 1999; and ninth in a *Time Out* list in 2011. Following its re-release in 2002, the film was the focus of two short books, in both the BFI Film Classics and the Turner Film Classics series (written by Mark Sinker and Paul Sutton respectively).

Despite all this, Anderson himself was always somewhat ambivalent about the film's revolutionary reputation. He was obviously pleased and excited about its success: at the time it was made, his career as a film director had stalled somewhat after his first feature film, *This Sporting Life* (1963), although he had continued to work in the theatre. Seeing his opportunity, he oversaw a publicity campaign that was clearly designed to inflame the controversy. The main poster featured the London *Evening News* 'hand grenade' line alongside a collage of shots framed in a large grenade, with

MacDowell toting a machine gun standing in front. Other posters set positive and negative reviews on either side, and bore the legend 'which side will you be on'? In May 1969, a year after the *evenements* of Paris, *If….* went on to win the Palme d'Or for best film at the Cannes Festival (although it may have been something of a compromise choice for the jury). It was the first British film with a British setting and a British cast and director ever to do so; and (no doubt to Anderson's pleasure), the British Ambassador attracted further publicity by describing it as 'an insult to the nation'.

However, in developing the script, Anderson was very wary of the idea that the film should directly reflect – or even echo – the events of the time: he did not wish to be seen as 'journalistic' or 'trendy', as he put it. He was also keen to refute the idea that the film had a straightforward political message, and cautioned against those who seemed to be taking it at face value. MacDowell's character, Mick Travis, is a kind of revolutionary, and the film famously climaxes in him leading an armed massacre. Yet Anderson himself was less certain about whether he wanted audiences to regard Mick as a kind of revolutionary hero, or to identify with him. He seems to have regarded the film's success as fortuitous or coincidental: it was, he wrote, 'providential' that it appeared when it did, but he was not actually setting out to encapsulate the spirit of the age.

Fifty years since *If….* was first released, it seems a timely moment to re-examine the film, and to question its revolutionary reputation. In this essay, I will be focusing primarily on the film itself, looking at its representation of the school system, its innovative style, and its political messages. I will also look briefly at the two subsequent films that featured its main character Mick Travis, *O Lucky Man!* (1973) and *Britannia Hospital* (1982). Hindsight is indeed a wonderful thing; but these two later films draw attention to issues that have been somewhat obscured in the celebration of Anderson's most successful film.

The story of *If….*

If…. was produced by a small independent company called Memorial Films. The company had been set up by the actor Albert Finney, using earnings from his successful role in Tony Richardson's *Tom Jones* (1963). It was headed by Michael Medwin, who eventually became the producer of *If….* It was largely down to Finney that the film managed to get funding. By 1967, Sherwin and Anderson's script had been turned down by every major production and distribution company in the UK, but when Finney contacted an executive at Paramount in the US (who happened to be a fan), he obtained a budget of £250,000 without the script even having been read. Most of the shooting at Cheltenham College took place between March and May 1968, and some scenes were later shot at two other schools. Famously, some of the film was shot in black-and-white, not because of any artistic intention, but because it proved too expensive to provide adequate lighting.

Briefly, the plot is as follows. The film is set in a traditional English public school in the late 1960s (in the UK, the term 'public school' refers – paradoxically – to selective, fee-paying *private* schools). It begins as the boys return for a new term. Mick Travis, Wallace, and Johnny Knightley are three non-conformist boys in the

lower sixth form, their penultimate year. Their housemaster is somewhat ineffectual, and allows the prefects (a group of upper sixth formers who are known as 'whips') a free hand in enforcing discipline. The junior boys are made to act as 'fags' or 'scum' – that is, personal servants – for the whips, who discuss them as sex objects. The headmaster is a more 'modern' and liberal figure, and some of the other teachers are quite eccentric; while the school chaplain is a disciplinarian, who has a sadistic erotic interest in some of the boys.

One day, Mick and Johnny sneak off into town and steal a motorbike from a showroom. They ride to a transport café, where Mick engages in a mock fight and then appears to have sex with the waitress. Meanwhile, back at school, Wallace flirts with a younger boy, Bobby Phillips, and the two are eventually seen in bed together. The three boys lounge about drinking vodka in their study, talking about death and the possibility of violent revolution. Following a series of clashes with the whips, they are given a brutal flogging by the chief whip, Rowntree, who singles out Mick for extra punishment. The rebels then take an oath of revenge, vowing 'death to the oppressor': 'one man can change the world with a bullet in the right place', Mick tells them.

During a military drill of the school's Combined Cadet Force, Mick appears to get hold of live ammunition, which the boys use to open fire on a group of pupils and teachers. When the chaplain orders the boys to drop their weapons, Mick knocks him to the ground and appears to attack him with a bayonet. Later, the headmaster orders the group into his study and asks them to apologise to the chaplain, whom he appears to be keeping in a large drawer in his bookcase (and who seems to have survived unscathed). As punishment, and as an opportunity for the boys to give 'service', the headmaster requires them to clean out a large storeroom beneath the main school hall, where they discover a cache of firearms.

Amid the pageantry of Founders' Day, when parents are visiting the school, the group (the three boys, along with Phillips and the café waitress), starts a fire under the stage, smoking everyone out of the building onto the lawn, where they open fire on them from the rooftop. Led by a visiting army general, the staff, students and parents break open the school armoury and begin firing back. The headmaster tries to stop the fight, imploring the group to listen to reason, but is shot dead by the café waitress. The final shot is of Mick's determined face as he keeps firing. The screen abruptly cuts to black and the word 'if….' is seen in red letters.

Before agreeing the final cut of the film, Anderson had to undergo some negotiations both with the studio and with the film censors. Paramount apparently wanted some of the scenes to be more clearly marked as fantasy (the sex scene in the café, the attack on the chaplain, and his subsequent appearance in the bookcase drawer). Anderson seems to have successfully resisted this, although he did make some small cuts for the censors: some shots of male genitalia were removed from a shower scene, apparently in exchange for the censor approving a full-frontal long shot of the housemaster's wife wandering naked in the school corridor.

The personal and the political

Lindsay Anderson was very familiar with the social world represented in *If….* He had been born into a military family in colonial India in 1923: his father was an army captain stationed with the Royal Engineers, and his mother was also British, but had been born in South Africa. He attended a private preparatory school in England, and then Cheltenham College, the elite public school in which *If….* was later filmed. He won a scholarship to study Classics at Oxford, and after several years of army service returned there to complete his degree in English Literature. During the 1950s, supported by a small private income, he worked as a film critic, making several short documentary films and becoming a key player in the short-lived 'Free Cinema' movement. It was not until 1963 that he had the opportunity to make his first feature film, *This Sporting Life*. Throughout his life, he enjoyed considerable success as a theatre director, working at the Royal Court, the Old Vic and eventually the National Theatre in London, as well as in off-Broadway theatres in New York.

Anderson was very much a child of the British 'establishment', but he also saw himself as an outsider – 'at odds with the tradition of my class and my country', as he put it in his diaries. He seems to have enjoyed (and indeed cultivated) a reputation as a dissident and a non-conformist. In his critical writing and in interviews, he comes across as combative, prickly and opinionated. He rails vehemently against what he sees as mediocrity, triviality and sentimentality. Understatement and subtlety are not his strongest points. On a personal level, he was very supportive of those who submitted to become his disciples, but he was often dismissive and caustic in his criticism of others. Appropriately, 'Never Apologise' was his chosen title for a collection of his writing, after a line spoken by John Wayne in *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, one of his favourite films: 'never apologise, it's a sign of weakness'. Anderson appears to have been a celibate (not to say repressed) homosexual, who had fiery relations with some of his male stars – most notably Richard Harris, who won several awards as the lead in *This Sporting Life*.

Anderson saw himself not only as a 'fighter' against all and sundry, but also as a lone, heroic *artist*. In his film work, he constantly presented himself as an auteur, in the tradition of European art cinema – although for a man who at various times in his career resorted to making episodes of *Robin Hood* for television and commercials for breakfast cereal and kitchen foil – and who later directed the documentary *Wham! In China* (1985) about the eponymous pop group – this was not always an easy stance to sustain. Yet among those whom he did not offend, Anderson seems to have inspired wide-eyed adulation and loyalty.

While some of the reviews of *If….* might imply that he was some kind of radical left-wing revolutionary, the tone of Anderson's writing more often resembles that of an irascible aristocrat. In the words of Ian Rakoff, one of the editors of *If….*, he was essentially a 'bourgeois non-conformist'. He challenged some traditional values, but also what he saw as fashionable liberal orthodoxies. He apparently read the right-wing *Daily Telegraph*, and believed in capital punishment. As we shall see, this curmudgeonly stance became more marked in his later work, culminating in the misanthropic *Britannia Hospital*.

School days

If…. was Anderson's second feature film. As I've noted, the original script was written by David Sherwin and John Howlett, and it was partly based on their own experiences as pupils at Tonbridge – a minor public school that Sherwin later referred to as a 'Nazi camp'. Anderson's views of Cheltenham seem to have been much more positive, however. Although he had to bamboozle the headmaster in order to gain access to film there, he was excited at the prospect of revisiting his *alma mater*. There is little evidence that Anderson himself had been a rebel while at school: in fact, he was a prefect. Several elements of the revised script seem to derive from his experiences at Cheltenham, including the characters of the headmaster, the housemaster's wife, and the chaplain. While some critics complained that the film was anachronistic or exaggerated, the ethos and atmosphere of the school seems to have been captured in remarkable detail. As Anderson said in 1969, 'I put a lot of myself into *If….* It is largely autobiographical.' *If….* may appear to be a political film, but it was also a highly personal one.

Indeed, despite its ending, the film's presentation of the school is remarkably ambivalent. Anderson clearly felt a degree of nostalgia about his own school days, and a continuing affiliation to the elite public school system. In an *Observer* article published for the film's release, he wrote: 'For me, as I suppose for most of the public school educated, the world of school remains one of extraordinary, significant vividness; a world of reality and symbol; of mingled affection and reserve.' Perhaps in contrast to Sherwin, Anderson did not conceive of *If….* as an act of revenge: as they worked together on the script, he urged Sherwin to adopt 'a more poetic, less axe-grinding and I think less sentimental attitude to the subject'. In a 'self-interview' at the time (in which he asked himself the questions), he was keen to distinguish between his film and 'the public school novel of the thirties, when sensitive young middle-class writers who had suffered at school, wrote novels to tell everyone how awful it was – it's not that kind of picture at all. I think there's quite a lot of affection in this film.' As Malcolm MacDowell later put it, 'only a man who loved his school could have made that film'.

If…. observes the school system with an almost anthropological eye: as Anderson wrote in a letter to Sherwin, he wanted to create 'the image of a world: a strange sub-world with its own peculiar laws, distortions, brutalities, loves… with its special relationship to a perhaps outdated conception of British society… its subjection of young minds to disciplines hardly related to the contemporary world; and to the domination of often freakish or deformed or simply inadequate "masters"'. The opening scenes of the film use the characteristic device of following the new boy as a means of introducing us to some of these customs and rituals – dormitory inspections, 'fagging', the house system, medical examinations – as well as inducting us into the school's specialized terminology and arcane rules. As Mark Sinker suggests, *If….* stands in a long tradition of British school stories, dating back to Thomas Hughes's 1857 novel *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. The film says a great deal, not just about the eccentric rituals and personalities, but also about the operation of power in schools. It observes how control and freedom are afforded in different spaces – not only classrooms, but also corridors and dormitories, and pupils' private spaces; and it also shows the nuances of relationships among the boys of different ages and levels of authority, and between them and the teachers.

The film also reflects the partial modernization of the system, especially through the figure of the headmaster, who represents a more commercialized, 'bourgeois' perspective. At one point, the headmaster mentions that he will be teaching 'business management' to the lower sixth, and in another scene (with the army cadets marching past) he delivers a lengthy speech about how the school is responding to the opportunities of modern consumer culture. 'Britain today,' he argues, is a power-house of ideas, experiments, imagination, on everything from pop music to pig breeding, from atom power stations to mini-skirts, and that's the challenge we've got to meet'. According to him, the large part of the population is in the process of 'becoming middle-class', and it has much to learn from the middle-class moral values and customs of the public schools. (These quotations were apparently taken directly from a book by a former Eton headmaster, although they would not seem out of place in a speech by Tony Blair…)

The head is also liberal in his attitudes towards rule-breaking and punishment: 'I take this very seriously', he says in beginning to admonish the three rebels for their attack on the chaplain, 'but you mustn't think I don't understand. It is a natural characteristic of adolescents to want to proclaim individuality.' Bizarrely, he then opens the bookcase drawer, the chaplain sits up, and the head requires the boys to apologise and shake hands with their victim. There is clearly a contrast between the headmaster's seemingly modern approach and the ancient, aristocratic settings in which such lines are delivered; and the man himself is shown to be unctuous, complacent and somewhat ludicrous. Indeed, there are some indications in his writings that Anderson himself regretted this apparent modernization of the system; and it's possible to read the headmaster's ultimate demise – the café waitress shoots him in the forehead as he pleads for them to listen to reason – as a manifestation of this.

Of course, alongside the absurdity and surrealism, there is also brutality, hypocrisy and repression. The school is undoubtedly hierarchical and authoritarian: while the teachers may appear eccentric or ineffectual, or even vaguely liberal, they depend upon the absolute – and often apparently arbitrary – power of the whips. On one level, the school operates a regime of total regulation, in which power is delegated throughout the system. Nevertheless, the film takes an almost affectionate view of the kinds of freedom that it can afford. The boys have their own common rooms and private spaces, which they enthusiastically decorate with collages of images (including pin-ups of naked women, and posters of Che Guevara and Chairman Mao). In one small but indicative instance, we see one of the boys, Markland, lovingly unwrapping a couple of peaches that he carefully stores in his desk.

The film's view of sexuality is particularly interesting in this context. Mick and his friends' fantasies about the world beyond the school are partly to do with sexuality: at one point, Mick responds to an image of a semi-naked model in a magazine by imagining how they will 'make love' once and then wander into the sea and die, while Wallace then proceeds to lick the picture. When Mick and Johnny escape from the school, and Mick apparently has sex with the café waitress (who is routinely described simply as 'The Girl' in published accounts), it appears that this fantasy has been broadly fulfilled. While the use of black-and-white film was partly a matter of

convenience, as I've described, it is notable that this scene – like others on this theme – is partly shot in black-and-white.

Sexual repression is apparent, not just among the boys, but also among the women in the school (the matron and the masters' wives). Little remains of a scene in which the matron was apparently shown drifting into a sexual reverie, fantasizing about the boys. However, the housemaster's wife, Mrs. Kemp, is the target of some suggestive comments on the part of the three rebels, and is later shown in a bizarre scene, sitting up in bed accompanying her husband's reading of a poem on a recorder. Most notably, she is also shown wandering entirely naked (and in black-and-white) in the school corridor and the dormitory, while the boys and their teachers are outside engaging in ferocious military exercises.

Meanwhile, homosexual desire is shown in quite ambivalent terms. On the one hand, we see the whips casually discussing the appeal of their younger servants: one of them, Denson, protests against what he sees as immature 'homosexual flirtatiousness', yet in response the lead whip Rowntree tempts him by assigning him the pretty boy Bobby Phillips to be his 'scum'. The chaplain is even more predatory, viciously tweaking the nipple of the new boy in his maths class, and is later shown listening with lubricious desire as one of the boys confesses to impure thoughts. Sinker even identifies elements of sado-masochistic eroticism in the flogging scene, which is perhaps a step too far. Nevertheless, there is a definite eroticism in the relationship between Wallace, one of the rebels, and the younger Phillips. In one notable scene, Phillips is shown admiring Wallace's acrobatic skills on the parallel bars, while in a later shot, they are shown peacefully asleep in bed together (again, both scenes are in black-and-white). The contrast between this almost romantic view and the perversity of the chaplain and the whips may well reflect Anderson's own ambivalence – although it's notable that Mick himself has to be identified as entirely heterosexual.

In interviews and writings both at the time and subsequently, Anderson rejected the view that the film was 'a hatchet job on the public school system', as the film journal *Sight and Sound* had proposed. Rather, he insisted that the school was a *metaphor* for wider issues – for addressing tensions, as he put it, 'between hierarchy and anarchy, independence and tradition, liberty and law'. Elsewhere he argued that the school should be regarded as a 'microcosm' of the wider society – an approach that he felt was particularly relevant in England, 'where the educational system is such an exact image of the social system'. The film persistently makes connections between the school itself and the power of the wider British establishment, and indeed of British imperialism. This is perhaps most strongly embodied not in the figure of the headmaster, but in the chaplain, whose sermons rail against sin and corruption, and who leads the Combined Cadet Force on their military exercises mounted on horseback. 'Jesus Christ,' he tells the boys, 'is our commanding officer'. (It's worth noting that, even today, these remain key elements of the English public school system: the Combined Cadet Forces, for example, are represented in more than 300 schools.)

The 'soft', seemingly liberal power of the headmaster is supported not just by the brutality of the whips, but also, in the climactic Founder's Day scenes, by the military might of the army. General Denson, the old boy who addresses the congregation,

offers a much more traditional view of the role of the school, based on privilege, tradition, discipline, obedience and national pride. While the world may be changing, he insists, these things – and England more broadly – have not. There may be some – 'modern psychiatrists, priests, pundits of all sorts' – who scorn the old order, and there may be a good deal of talk about freedom. But freedom, the General argues, is part of 'the heritage of every Englishman': 'we won't stay free,' he tells the congregation, 'unless we are ready to fight'. By this point, the school has clearly come to stand for something much broader: the armed rebellion of Mick and his cohorts represents one potential outcome of the broader social changes that are afoot – although, as I will suggest, their actions are not necessarily ones that the film is seeking to celebrate.

The politics of style

The politics of *If….* are to some extent a matter of its style. One of Anderson's constant reference points in the making of the film was the theatrical work of Bertolt Brecht. He had seen a considerable amount of the German author's work at first hand in 1965, when Brecht's Berliner Ensemble company has staged a season at London's Old Vic (Anderson befriended the directors and actors, and apparently organized the closing night party). As a committed Marxist, who chose to work in East Germany, Brecht wanted to use theatre for didactic political purposes. In doing so, he sought to challenge 'bourgeois' approaches that were based on naturalistic observation. Realism, as Brecht defined it, was not about surface appearances but underlying essences. As Anderson put it in his self-interview: 'Brecht said that realism didn't show what things really "look like", but how they really are.' A further element of Brecht's approach was what he termed the 'Verfremdungseffekt' – the attempt to 'defamiliarise' or even 'alienate' the spectator from the events on stage. Through a whole range of techniques, Brecht sought to defuse the audience's emotional identification with the characters, in order for them to understand and debate the broader issues at stake.

Some of these techniques are evident in *If….* – and (as we shall see) to an even stronger extent in Anderson's subsequent film *O Lucky Man!* Like many of Brecht's plays, *If….* is broken up into separate 'chapters', with white-on-black intertitles; and some of the titles clearly indicate broader themes or make intertextual references ('ritual and romance' and 'forth to war', for example). Famously, the film also shifts between black-and-white and colour. As I've indicated, this was done partly for economic reasons, although these reasons do not always seem to apply: the scene in the transport café, for example, is shot in both black-and-white and colour. Some critics have attempted to assign a consistent symbolic significance to these shifts, albeit without much success. At least in terms of their potential effects on the viewer, they are probably better seen as instances of Brechtian 'defamiliarisation': they momentarily draw attention to the fact that we are watching a film, and not gazing through a window onto the world.

Anderson also uses other texts within the film as a kind of commentary on the action. This is particularly the case with the collages of images that adorn the pupils' common rooms and studies: there are some very specific references here (to which I'll return), but in general what we see are images of conflict, war and violence, as

well as sex. The collages also illuminate and comment on the characters, occasionally in rather heavy-handed ways: Mick expresses enthusiasm for an image of a black guerrilla toting a machine gun, which becomes the centre of his display, as well as for images of lions; while the prefect Denson is seen against images of school, religious ceremony and military scenes. This approach helps to define the characters as what Brecht calls 'social types' rather than unique individuals.

More broadly, there are elements where the film moves beyond conventional naturalism and into the realm of fantasy – although the line between them is not always clearly marked. This is evident, for example, when Mick and the café waitress engage in a mock lions-and-tigers fight before apparently having sex; and in the self-consciously staged and half-hearted nature of the military exercises. It is especially notable when the headmaster pulls the chaplain out of his bookcase drawer and asks the three rebels to apologise to him. This latter scene was questioned by Paramount executives, and subsequently by some critics, who found it clumsy and laughable – although Anderson insisted that it was a necessary preparation for the film's conclusion: 'After that, anything can happen,' he wrote. 'It makes the end of the film possible'.

Indeed, as the film proceeds towards its violent denouement, these disruptions of conventional naturalism begin to mount up. The scenes featuring the housemaster's wife, in the bedroom and then later wandering naked in the dormitory, border on surrealism; and when Mick and the others clear out the cellar underneath the stage, they find a whole range of bizarre props, including a stuffed crocodile (which they proceed to burn) and an embalmed human foetus in a jar. Of course, one might claim that the cellar represents the sub-conscious, and it would be possible to generate all sorts of symbolic explanations here; but the overall effect is to move the film beyond surface naturalism, and to blur the boundaries between reality and fantasy. (In terms of cinema, the obvious point of reference here would be the films of Luis Bunuel: Anderson occasionally wrote about Bunuel as a film critic, although he does not refer to him very frequently.)

However, there are other influences on the style of *If….* In developing the script, and in subsequent commentary, Anderson frequently describes the film as having a 'poetic' approach – a term that seems rather at odds with the more rationalistic, political style of Brecht. One of his main points of reference was the 1934 film *Zero de Conduite* [Zero for Conduct], directed by Jean Vigo – a film that he watched a few times in the months before shooting, in order (as he put it) 'to give courage'. The structure and perspective of Vigo's film are broadly similar to those of *If….* The pupils in the school are shown resisting the teachers' and the prefects' attempts at discipline: they smoke, fight and climb the classroom walls. When one of the teachers steals their precious food, and the headmaster tries to put a stop to a romantic relationship between two of the boys, the pupils seek revenge. The authority figures in the film are roundly mocked (the headmaster is played by a dwarf with a fake beard), although one of the teachers is a more likeable eccentric with a line in Charlie Chaplin impersonations. The film culminates on Commemoration Day, with the boys on the school roof throwing shoes and other paraphernalia down at the visiting dignitaries. Despite the boys' cries – 'war is declared!', 'up with revolution!' – *Zero de Conduite* is less obviously 'political' than *If….* The boys are

naughty and playful, but they are younger and less dangerous than Anderson's adolescents.

The influence of Vigo's film was also to do with its 'poetic' style, however. *If….* certainly has some more poetic moments, most notably a night-time montage sequence and the scenes of the housemaster's wife. Again, these elements tend to come to the fore towards the end of the film, by contrast with the more naturalistic scenes with which it begins. On the other hand, the early sequences of both films are also somewhat episodic: in both, the revenge theme that drives the narrative only kicks in at a fairly late stage.

More generally, like many of Anderson's other films, *If….* is replete with references to literature, and to other films. As well as Kipling, there are echoes and lines from Wordsworth, Tennyson, Byron and Blake, as well as scenes that appear to draw on some of Anderson's favoured film directors, including Ford, Lean and Jennings. (Erik Hedling's book on Anderson catalogues countless examples of these references.) The choice of hymns sung in the chapel at the opening of several 'chapters' is highly pointed. The film is clogged with 'quotable', epigrammatic lines and speeches, as well as a great deal of self-conscious symbolism (Mick places a plastic bag over his head, one of the boys watches cells reproducing under a microscope, Denton confiscates Mick's necklace made of his own teeth). In some respects, the film seems almost to have been designed for pretentious critical explication on the part of film academics – although this was an approach that Anderson predictably condemned in an essay called 'Critical Betrayal'. At the same time, this dense forest of references might create another kind of distancing or 'defamiliarisation effect' – at least for those who are sufficiently well-informed to recognize them. Yet, like some of its characters, the film seems at times to be rather too knowing and clever for its own good.

If…. may be 'poetic' and even *avant garde* in some ways, but its style of cinematography is quite straightforward. Anderson uses conventional establishing shots and shot/reverse shot patterns, and tends to cut on action. Unlike Godard for example, he mostly obeys the rules of 'classical' Hollywood film-making and editing. Anderson described the style of the film as 'extremely sober' and 'straightforward', and indeed as 'traditional and conventional'. Perhaps with an implied reference to Godard, he differentiates his approach from 'what we might call "trendy", or eccentric, or showy technique' that he felt had become popular in recent years.

There are certainly aspects of *If….* that might be described as 'Brechtian', either in style or intention, therefore. However, they are to some extent in conflict with other aspects that might be called 'poetic' or literary, or simply naturalistic. Interestingly, David Sherwin later described *If….* as Anderson's '*least* Brechtian' film, and there may be some truth in this.

A revolutionary hero?

How we assess the political message of *If….* depends especially on how we read its ending, and more broadly on how we relate to its lead character. As we've seen, some commentators have been keen to present the film as in some way 'revolutionary' – an anti-authoritarian 'rebel yell', or even 'a knife in the heart of the

establishment'. Yet this interpretation presumes that we fundamentally approve of the actions of Mick and his followers, and even that we identify with him. However, I'm not sure things are quite so straightforward.

Certainly, there is a good deal in the narrative that serves to position us with Mick and his friends. Mick makes a charismatic entrance at the start of the film, dressed as a kind of Guy Fawkes: it is only when he pulls away his scarf that we learn that he has been hiding the vaguely Zapata-style moustache that he has been growing during the school holidays. The narrative does not by any means follow the three boys exclusively, but they are by far the main focus of attention. We see them being singled out for punishment, often for minor infractions – although this is something that Mick at least actively invites. Denson leaves Mick in a freezing cold shower for longer than the others, and Mick also receives more than his allotted number of strokes of Rowntree's cane. There is an element of unfairness here that obviously aligns us with Mick, and to some extent justifies his ultimate response. We also view Mick's beating – and indeed some of his other confrontations with authority – from his perspective.

In his accounts of *If….* and *O Lucky Man!*, Anderson frequently makes reference to Brecht's theories about acting – and particularly the idea that actors should 'quote' their lines, rather than speaking them naturalistically. Some of the characters in *If….* (most notably the history teacher and to some extent the headmaster and the chaplain) verge on caricature: the acting is somewhat exaggerated, often with comic effect. However, Malcolm MacDowell's acting style is a little harder to pin down. For much of the time, his facial expression is quite blank. He has prominent eyes, and often looks back at his accusers with an open, even innocent gaze. As a character, Mick is somewhat of a fantasist, and he occasionally tends to dramatise himself. He is prone to come out with portentous epigrams: 'violence and revolution are the only pure acts… war is the last possible creative act', and so forth. He is also somewhat of a narcissist: he enjoys studying himself in the mirror – 'my face is a never-ending source of wonder to me', he says; and in the dorm scene, he flamboyantly whips aside his purple dressing gown to reveal yellow silky pajamas. His name is an obvious echo of Mick Jagger; yet at times, it's not entirely clear whether Mick is supposed to be cool, or just a bit of a smug idiot.

In his self-interview, Anderson claims that Mick is a traditional hero. 'He is a hero in the good, honourable, old-fashioned sense of the word,' he writes. 'He is someone who arrives at his own beliefs and stands up for those beliefs, if necessary against the world.' Here, and elsewhere, Anderson describes the film as 'anarchistic', but once again seeks to define this in traditional rather than revolutionary terms: 'anarchy,' he writes, 'is a social and political philosophy which puts the highest possible value on responsibility. The film is not about responsibility versus irresponsibility. It's about rival notions of responsibility and consequently well within a strong Puritan tradition.' On the other hand, he argues in the preface to the published film script that the boys' politics are not at all 'intellectual' but 'instinctive' – they are a consequence of Mick's 'outraged dignity, his frustrated passion, his vital energy, his sense of fair play if you like'.

Of course, we should beware of taking Anderson's statements about his work at face value, not least because they are so frequently contradictory: he was always

very keen to use interviews and articles to shape public response to his films in ways that would secure maximum advantage. Elsewhere, he argued (I would say correctly) that the film is not 'propagandist' or a 'tract'; but he then goes further to suggest that it could equally be seen as 'an illustration of the ruinous effect of irresponsibility and over-lenient treatment of the young'. (Where exactly this 'over-lenient' treatment is to be found is something he does not explain.)

The ending of the film is equally ambivalent in this respect. Anderson claimed that, like his image of the school, the violence was 'metaphorical'; but, as Jeffrey Richards suggests, audiences did not necessarily seem to perceive it in that way. For some of them, this was the beginning of an actual revolution, even a call to arms. However, Anderson was keen to argue that the ending was not a moment of victory for Mick and his followers, but of despair. 'Emotionally,' he said, 'the film is revolutionary – but intellectually, I don't know. The massed fire power of the establishment is ranged against Mick.' Nevertheless, Mick's attempt to wreak revenge on the system is at least partly justified; and at the close of the film, he remains undefeated.

David Sherwin has reportedly claimed that 'by the end of the film Mick has become a monster as bad as the system he fights against'. However, Anderson dismissed this view. On the contrary, he seems to pity Mick: 'he's terrified… absolutely desperate'. 'I was surprised that young people cheered that ending when it first came out,' he says. 'Perhaps they didn't look beyond the end, because it's very difficult for me to imagine that Mick is going to win.' While the final images of Mick, with his contorted face, might resemble that of the black freedom-fighter he puts on display in his study, his cause isn't quite on the same level – and of course, there might be some irony in the fact that the group are wearing flying jackets like those of British airmen in the Second World War. Unlike the children in *Zero de Conduite*, the rebels do not escape across the roof, singing their song of liberation. In the closing shot, Mick shoots out directly into the camera, towards us; but it's possible to read this as a moment of triumph, of despair, or even of futility and failure. Here again, *If….* appears to be rather more ambivalent, and even more confused and contradictory, than the mythology that has come to surround it tends to suggest.

A text of its time?

'Appearing when it did, at the end of a year of youthful dissidence and revolt, If…. has often seemed to be a film conceived and made purposely to reflect (even to cash in on) the revolutionary fervour of the late sixties. The truth is very different…'

Both at the time and subsequently, Anderson was keen to refute the claim that *If….* was in some way a response to the momentous political events of 1968. The quotation above comes from an unpublished article, 'How *If….* Came About', presumably written some time afterwards, although he made similar points in his self-interview and in press reports published on the film's release. As I've noted, he did not wish to be seen as 'trendy' or 'journalistic', either in terms of style or content: it was apparently for this reason that he avoided using contemporary pop music on the soundtrack, and why he claimed to have 'eliminated all the fashionable iconography of revolt from the walls of the boys' studies'.

However, Anderson liked to have his cake and eat it too. On the one hand, he frequently claimed that the film was about universal, timeless themes – it was a film about 'law and disorder, about love and the denial of the heart', for example; yet he was also very attuned to its contemporary relevance. In his self-interview at the time, he suggests that in starting work on the script eighteen months earlier, he and Sherwin had been 'prophetic': they were 'forecasting the shape of things to come – the conflict between established tradition and youthful independence that is evidently breaking out all over the world.' The timing may have been merely 'fortuitous', but the iconography and rhetoric of the publicity campaign also undoubtedly reflected recent events.

Furthermore, the statements I've quoted above are only partly true. As we've seen, Anderson liked to refer to the heroes of the film as 'traditional'. Here, for example, is his preface to the published film script: 'the heroes of *If….,'* he writes, 'are, without knowing it, old-fashioned boys. They are not anti-heroes, or drop-outs, or Marxist-Leninists or Maoists or readers of Marcuse.' It's certainly interesting then to ask why we can spot a photograph of Mao in the boys' study, or why we see Mick with a famous picture of Lenin on the wall behind him – or indeed why Geronimo (bearing a rifle) and Che Guevara are on display in the pupils' common room (Anderson claimed that this latter poster had been pinned up by one of the boys at Cheltenham, and that he 'didn't have the heart to take it down'.). These collages themselves, with their mix of raw photojournalism and glossy advertising images, are also of their time, reflecting a style that was very much in vogue in the fashionable newspaper colour supplements that had begun to appear in the 1960s. Likewise, the theme music that recurs throughout the film may not be 'Street Fighting Man', but it is also of the period: 'Missa Luba' is sung by a Congolese boy choir, but (as Mark Sinker describes) it was released on record in 1962 and 'embraced by hipsters' at the time. The rebels are seen drinking vodka rather than smoking dope, but there is an ongoing guerrilla war between the whips and the rebels about the length of their hair. While Anderson is predictably scathing about what he calls 'the permissive society', the film also undoubtedly pushes boundaries in its representation of sex and nudity.

While Anderson himself may have tried to limit these contemporary references, it seems more than likely that audiences would have recognized them; and however much he may have insisted on the 'metaphorical', and even timeless nature of the film, one can certainly see how audiences would have read it in relation to the political developments of the preceding few months. However confused or ambivalent it may be, *If….* ultimately remains a film of its time.

The story continues…

If…. was effectively the high point of Anderson's career, at least as a film director. It was followed by two other films featuring Malcolm MacDowell in the role of Mick Travis – *O Lucky Man!* (1973) and *Britannia Hospital* (1982) – neither of which enjoyed much commercial or critical success. These three films are sometimes described as a trilogy. They have the same scriptwriter, David Sherwin, and many of the same crew. In addition to MacDowell, many of the actors from *If….* reappear, sometimes with the same character names, and the later films make several

references back to the previous ones. However, the later films are not sequels. Mick Travis in the later films is not really the same character as the Mick Travis of *If….*: in *O Lucky Man!* he is largely conformist, naïve and eager to please, while in a more marginal role in *Britannia Hospital* he plays a cynical representative of the media. While acknowledging that the films are not quite a trilogy, Anderson argued that they were nevertheless 'a philosophical sequence': the ideas they dealt with were similar, he said, but he hoped that there was a 'development in maturity' or in 'thought and feeling' across them. Most reviewers would probably beg to disagree with this.

I don't intend to consider either of these films in great detail, not least because they go beyond my remit here. *O Lucky Man!* does arguably represent a transition to adulthood – Mick is frequently described as a 'boy', and according to Anderson's early publicity, the film was going to be about 'what happens after school' – but neither of them are essentially 'youth' movies. Rather, both might more aptly be seen as 'state of the nation' films, albeit in different ways. *O Lucky Man!* is a picaresque 'road movie', in which we follow a character through a sequence of different locations, while *Britannia Hospital* is closer to a situation comedy. Nevertheless, both are clearly attempting to provide a wide-ranging critical or satirical portrait of the key social institutions of their time. The first part of *O Lucky Man!* focuses on forms of corruption, in business, government, the police force and the law; while the shorter second part offers an equally scathing critique of the various organizations or groups that have attempted to provide solutions (such as liberal charities, religious groups, and political activists). The setting of *Britannia Hospital* is more focused, but its targets are equally wide-ranging, including science, politics, business, the media, royalty and left-wing radicalism.

Very briefly, *O Lucky Man!* follows the adventures of Mick Travis across the country, as he moves from one job and one social sphere (and indeed one sexual encounter) to another. He begins as a trainee coffee salesman, encounters a group of corrupt policemen at a sex club, is apprehended and tortured by the secret service at a nuclear power plant, is apparently saved by the church, becomes the subject of a genetic research experiment, takes up with a group of rock musicians, becomes the assistant to a businessman selling chemical weapons to Africa, is unjustly convicted and eventually ends up in jail. Mick's 'progress' continues after his release: having read numerous philosophy books in prison, he abandons his pursuit of material success. He encounters the Salvation Army, attempts to prevent a downtrodden housewife from committing suicide, distributes soup to vagrants, and finally turns up at an audition, where he is given a part by a director, played by Lindsay Anderson, in a film that sounds a lot like *If…. O Lucky Man!* is almost three hours long, and the events I have described are only the half of it.

As its title suggests, *Britannia Hospital* is set in a hospital – although, much more obviously than the school in *If….*, this is a metaphorical hospital that somehow stands for the nation as a whole. The action takes place on a day when a new research wing of the hospital is due to be opened by the Queen Mother. The hospital staff are on strike, partly over the issue of private patients, and the hospital is surrounded by demonstrators protesting about the presence in a private room of a corrupt African dictator and his entourage. Meanwhile, a domineering (and probably insane) professor who runs the plush, high-tech research wing is

conducting genetic experiments in order to create an ideal life form – experiments that eventually include an investigative reporter (Mick Travis) who is seeking to expose him. The hard-pressed hospital administrator struggles to cope with these challenges, while negotiating the demands of the police, the Queen Mother's minders, the trades unions, the private patents and the protesters.

O Lucky Man! is probably Anderson's most 'Brechtian' film. Its use of music is particularly striking in this respect. Alan Price's songs, performed in a studio with a visible film crew, operate in a similar way to those of the street singer in Brecht's *Threepenny Opera*, for example. While the songs themselves are melodic and easygoing, they interrupt the action and provide a kind of commentary on it – in some cases, helping to make the messages clearer, while in others providing ironic counterpoint. More broadly, the film constantly reminds us that it is constructed. Like *If….*, it is broken into sections, although the intertitles are largely descriptive rather than providing much by way of commentary. The film is also replete with knowing references to other literary and film texts: it invokes Browning, Coleridge, Gorky, Eisenstein and Ford, as well as MacDowell's earlier role in Stanley Kubrick's notorious *Clockwork Orange* (1971). According to Erik Hedling, the plot owes a great deal to Preston Sturges's eccentric Hollywood film *Sullivan's Travels*, as well as to Voltaire's *Candide*, and many other sources besides. As with *If….,* Anderson provides ample opportunities for critics to play Hunt the Symbol; and here again, the script overflows with self-consciously clever epigrammatic lines. (This 'art film' tendency – and indeed the 'Brechtian' elements – are less apparent in *Britannia Hospital*.)

In both films, the use of actors is also quite non-naturalistic. Several of the actors play two or more parts – something that (like the use of black-and-white in *If….)* appears to have been introduced for logistical reasons during the filming. As in Brecht's plays, many of the parts are 'social types' rather than psychologically rounded personalities: the evil capitalist, the oppressed working-class housewife, the mad scientist, the corrupt third world leader, and so on. Most of them are essentially caricatures, and they are performed in deliberately stylized, exaggerated ways. Both films – and particularly *Britannia Hospital* – use actors who were very well known at the time for their roles in television sitcoms.

In this respect, and in terms of narrative, both films might be described as allegories. *O Lucky Man!* in particular has the structure of a moral fable, in the manner of *Pilgrim's Progress*: the hero moves almost schematically through a range of social institutions, and finds each of them wanting in various ways. By the end of the film, Mick has effectively reached rock bottom: he finds himself penniless in the middle of London, and goes to the audition in response to a placard saying 'star wanted – try your luck' that he sees in the street (notably carried by another of the actors from *If….*). At the audition, Anderson ('playing' the film's director) modestly occupies a role akin to a Zen master: he repeatedly asks Mick to smile, and when he refuses to do so, he slaps him round the face with his script, perhaps precipitating some kind of enlightenment. In writing about the film, Anderson was fairly explicit about this dimension, noting also that there is a discussion of Zen Buddhism playing at one point on Mick's car radio – although an expert in the field would almost certainly regard this view of Zen as utterly superficial.

The climax of *Britannia Hospital* is even more sardonic and cynical. To an assembled audience of the entire cast, the Professor gives a lengthy speech about the impending environmental apocalypse, global war and inequality, ignorance and deprivation, and then proposes that his experiment will create 'a new human being of pure brain… a new beginning for mankind'. The large brain he has created will, he says, eventually be replaced by a tiny silicon chip. Needless to say, this Frankenstein-like experiment is a disastrous failure; and the film ends with the Professor's new creation 'Genesis' reciting Hamlet's speech 'what a piece of work is man!', endlessly looping the phrase 'like a god' as the screen cuts to black. It is difficult to imagine a more nihilistic conclusion.

Certainly, there is little hint in either film that revolutionary politics might provide a way out, despite the corruption and hypocrisy of the powers that be. In *O Lucky Man!*, this possibility is merely dismissed in a passing piece of graffiti that informs us that 'revolution is the opium of the intellectuals'. By *Britannia Hospital*, we have come a step further. Anderson originally conceived of the film as an attack on 'doctrinaire Leftists' opposed to private medicine; and he described the strikes that were occurring around this time as symptomatic of 'semi-socialist Britain'. (The film is not in any sense a prescient critique of the privatization of the National Health Service.) The workers are shown to be lazy, racist and stupid, and their union representatives are self-serving hypocrites; while the protesters who appear at the hospital gates are easily fooled. While *If….* might have been read as an incitement to revolution, neither of these films could ever be interpreted in such a way.

Ultimately, however, there is a gap between intention and outcome with both films. *Britannia Hospital* in particular borders on the unwatchable, not only in my view but in that of many critics. The film was very poorly received in Britain, partly because of an incoherent publicity campaign, but also because of Anderson's persistent tendency to provoke the journalists who interviewed him. Privately, it seems, he was aware of the film's failings, but he also took the negative response as further evidence of the stupefied conformism of the mass audience. The film was better received in the USA and in some parts of Europe, but its failure in the UK merely confirmed Anderson's familiar self-image as a misunderstood and embattled martyr to his art.

Anderson described both films as comedies, but they provide very little to laugh about. There are many moments in both that are positively cringe-worthy, although the performance of Arthur Lowe in blackface as an African dictator in *O Lucky Man!* is perhaps the most astonishing. As with *If….*, Anderson and his supporters have claimed that these elements are 'Brechtian', although there is a danger that this becomes a justification for things that are merely misjudged and inept. *Britannia Hospital* resembles nothing so much as a Carry On film; yet despite including some good comic acting, it has little of the vulgar gusto of those films, and it signally fails to be funny. It is certainly questionable whether any of this has a 'Brechtian' effect: it may distance us from the action, but it can hardly be seen to invite the more considered, rational debate Brecht was seeking to promote. On the contrary, the films push home their pre-determined messages with a clod-hopping lack of complexity or subtlety.

Some academic critics at the time – most notably Colin MacCabe – were keen to celebrate the 'Brechtianism' of Jean-Luc Godard (in films like *Tout Va Bien*), while dismissing the 'vulgarisation and depoliticisation' of Brecht in Anderson's films. MacCabe argues that, far from identifying the 'contradictions within the society' as Godard does, Anderson's *O Lucky Man!* merely reaffirms 'that endless message of the reactionary petit-bourgeois intellectual – that we can do nothing against the relentless and evil progress of society (run as it is by a bunch of omnipotent capitalists with the morality of gangsters) except note our superiority to it.' Certainly by the time we get to *Britannia Hospital*, it's hard to dissent from this: across the 'trilogy', Anderson appears to become increasingly embittered, misanthropic and cynical – adopting a curmudgeonly tone that is echoed in much of his writing as well. At the same time, one might well ask whether 'Brechtianism' can ever really work in cinema – as compared with the stage, for which it was intended (and in this respect, I wouldn't share MacCabe's wholesale enthusiasm for Godard, whose work at this time has not aged well).

Conclusion

Towards the end of his life, in the early 1990s, Anderson was in discussion with David Sherwin and others about the possibility of making a genuine sequel to *If….* Paramount apparently commissioned a script, and permission was granted to film at Cheltenham College, despite the objections of the former headmaster, who wrote a stinging criticism of the making of the original film. A summary of *If(2)….*, as it was known, can be found in Paul Sutton's book. It reads partly like a knowing parody, in which MacDowell acts the role of a film star revisiting the school, while others reprise their roles in comic or satirical form, or alternatively receive their come-uppance. However, it also comes across as a rather self-righteous, sentimental parable, complete with sententious moral lessons. The reputation and popular memory of the first film may not entirely correspond with how it appears in retrospect today; but we should probably be grateful that this sequel was never made.

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

I have used a range of sources for quotations and biographical information about Anderson, and about the making of these films. These include:

Anderson's *Diaries*, edited by Paul Sutton (London: Methuen, 2004) – these include the 'self-interview' produced for the release of *If….*

Never Apologise: The Collected Writings, edited by Paul Ryan (London: Plexus, 2004), includes several key examples of Anderson's film and theatre criticism, including the essay 'Critical Betrayal' on academic Film Studies. The book has several pieces on *If….*, a 'commentary' and an interview on *O Lucky Man!* and a further 'commentary' on *Britannia Hospital.*

Mainly about Lindsay Anderson: A Memoir by Gavin Lambert (London: Faber and Faber, 2000) has a section on *If….*

I have also used a 1989 interview with Anderson published in Wheeler Winston Dixon's collection *Re-Viewing British Cinema, 1900-1992: Essays and Interviews* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994).

Malcolm MacDowell's filmed one-man show *Never Apologise* (Double M Productions, 2008) is a typical actorly memoir: it can be seen on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Un0htx29R0

There is also an edition of the BBC/Open University programme *Cast and Crew* with a studio discussion including key members of the crew of *If…*, as well as MacDowell (on film), made in 2005: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcbvYmyh9JA. From this I have drawn some quotes from Ian Rakoff and David Sherwin.

In terms of academic commentary, the only full-length book is Erik Hedling's *Lindsay Anderson: Maverick Film-Maker* (London: Cassell, 1998). This covers all the films, although Hedling falls over himself to dismiss any criticisms of Anderson.

There are brief discussions of Anderson's films in surveys of British cinema, such as Jim Leach's *British Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) and Robert Murphy's edited collection *The British Cinema Book* (third edition, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009) – although he is notable for his absence from many key texts.

Specifically on *If…*, there are two short books: Mark Sinker's study in the British Film Institute's *Film Classics* series (London: BFI Publishing, 2004) and Paul Sutton's in the *Turner Film Classics* series (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005). Sinker's style is somewhat pretentious, but his book is rather more critical than Sutton's.

In my view, the most balanced critical analysis remains Jeffrey Richards's chapter 'The revolt of the young: *If…*', in Anthony Aldgate and Jeffrey Richards *Best of British: Cinema and Society from 1930 to the Present* (new edition, London: I.B. Tauris, 1999).

Contemporary reviews of the film can be found online, notably in a slide show on IMDB. Gavin Lambert's *Guardian* article is at: https://www.theguardian.com/film/2002/feb/15/artsfeatures. Garry Mulholland's *Stranded at the Drive-In* is published by Orion Books (London, 2011).

Colin MacCabe's critique of Anderson can be found in his article 'Realism in the cinema: notes on some Brechtian theses', *Screen* 15(2): 7-27 (1974).

On *Britannia Hospital*, I have also used this account of the critical response to the film: **'**In Search of an Audience: Lindsay Anderson's *Britannia Hospital'* by Kathryn Mackenzie and Karl Magee in *Participations* 6(2), 2009, online at http://www.participations.org/Volume%206/Issue%202/special/mackenzie.htm