6. ‘BEYOND NATURALISM’: JOCELYN HERBERT, IF... (1968) AND DESIGN FOR PERFORMANCE IN 1960s BRITISH CINEMA

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The world she (Jocelyn Herbert) comes out of is one of total theatre, where the director, the designer and the writer are working together for a unified concept, and her work isn’t born out of conflict but collaboration.¹

This chapter will examine the artistic collaboration between director Lindsay Anderson and designer Jocelyn Herbert on the production design of the film If... (1968), offering a historical account that locates this partnership within a broader creative environment encompassing practice across film and theatre. My contention is that the writing of theatre and film histories is often constrained by ad hoc disciplinary boundaries, which preclude a fuller examination of practitioner experience. Whilst intermedial approaches have transformed our understanding of contemporary media forms in recent years, historical accounts of creative practitioners’ work remains largely media-specific and therefore not necessarily reflective of their professional and cultural experience or able to encompass the cross-fertilisation of practice that impacted on their work.

Intermediality as a term is used in this chapter to refer to a process within a broader historical framework, where the boundaries between media blur. Mueller’s definition is useful in this respect:

Intermediality would not be a question of content (which I would link to intertextuality) but of form, or more precisely, of interactions between specific media ‘structures’/‘procedures’ which can/could be reconstructed on the basis of the traces which these processes left in the media ‘products’.²
Anderson and Herbert were only one example of creative practitioners who worked across theatre, film and television. As Geoff Brown has noted, because of the geographical proximity of the production centres for film and theatre in Britain, cross fertilisation between the two industries was already well established. Yet the influence of theatre on the development of cinema in this country has often been understood to be detrimental, tying film to an over-dependence on adaptation and literary material and limiting its cinematic potential as a result. ‘The history of cinema’, as Susan Sontag has suggested, ‘is often treated as the history of its emancipation from theatrical models’.

Whilst I have argued, alongside others, that the relationship between theatre and cinema can be understood in much more productive and positive terms, their shared identity as performance mediums has continued to be underemphasised and visual reciprocities between the two practices have been overlooked. For instance, one of the key influences in the 1960s across theatre and film was the German director and playwright Bertolt Brecht. The effect of Brechtian dramaturgy and practice was important across media in terms of what television historian Billy Smart has described as ‘the political and aesthetic direction and value’ of drama at that time. Both Lindsay Anderson and Jocelyn Herbert were actively thinking about these questions in relation to their creative practice in theatre and cinema and it is the intention of this chapter to think through how production design ideas in the feature film *If* . . . can be contextualised with reference to similar experiments for the stage. In this respect, Charles Musser’s plea for an ‘integrated history of stage and screen’ is relevant as research suggests a system of reciprocal borrowing between the different media.

However, this chapter will argue that it was not just in terms of the film’s visual aesthetics that exchange of ideas between theatre and cinema can be understood. As Knopf argues, ‘We have to look beyond the product – the theatrical performance and the cinematic screening – towards the interweaving of influence and differentiation between the two media.’ Notwithstanding the very different producing contexts of film and theatre, I will argue that ways of working involving creative collaboration, established in the theatre, characterised the making of *If* . . . Asserting the importance of collaboration in film perhaps sits uneasily with analytical protocols which have asserted the overall importance of the director as the governing principle in understanding the film’s creative impact. Martin Stollery has argued for the importance of scholars attending to the collaborative nature of film production in understanding key issues such as relative individual control and influence over the shape of the finished film:

For film historians, research into the power wielded by technicians, as well as the more subtle forms of influence they may bring to bear, can precede analysis and evaluation of their creative contributions, and
provide a solid grounding for the latter. The outcome is likely to be an 
enhanced understanding of collaboration rather than the identification of 
purely personal artistic expression.\(^\text{10}\)

Anderson himself had very clear ideas on the notion of the auteur and refuted 
the idea that the director was solely responsible for the creative vision of the art 
work. As he wrote in the 1980s:

We certainly had no time for the auteur theory. From the start we knew 
that the film director was the essential artist of cinema – but we also knew 
that films have to be written, designed, acted, photographed, edited, and 
given sound.\(^\text{11}\)

This view is further emphasised by research into the creative relationship 
between Anderson and the co-writer of If . . . , David Sherwin, with Charles 
Drazin arguing that the refusal to acknowledge the importance of collabora-
tion in the production of the film, in effect occludes an appreciation of Ander-
son’s achievement in recognising and marshalling individual talent towards as 
shared vision. As Drazin writes:

This is not to deny Anderson the status of ‘author’ but rather to assert 
that in the kind of close collaboration If . . . was, the film was an exam-
ple of the key creators in effect pooling their authorship through shared 
values.\(^\text{12}\)

Whilst acknowledging, alongside Drazin, that it is almost impossible to dissect 
a creative relationship in retrospect, I would like to investigate Anderson and 
Herbert’s working relationship to try and comprehend the importance of the 
look of If . . . and how it worked with the narrative structure. This necessitates 
going beyond the idea of sole authorship to think about creative collaboration 
and shared values. The musician Brian Eno has used the concept of ‘scenius’ 
as a corrective to ‘genius’ to describe ‘the creative intelligence of a community’ 
with the innovations of individuals dependent on an ‘active flourishing cul-
tural scene’.\(^\text{13}\) Whilst the Lindsay Anderson who emerges from his diaries and 
archive materials would probably strongly deny that there was any ‘flourishing 
cultural scene’ in Britain at the time, there is a sense that both he and Herbert 
sought to find like-minded people with whom they could work. Indeed, after 
his experiences working with filmmakers of the Czech New Wave, Anderson 
bought over cinematographer Miroslav Ondricek to film The White Bus (1967) 
and then If . . . .\(^\text{14}\)

Where possible, I will draw upon Anderson and Herbert’s respective 
archives, alongside oral history collections to track their collaboration and
explore the ideas that underpinned their conception of the visual aesthetic of the film. The Lindsay Anderson Archive at the University of Stirling provides a fascinating insight into the director’s life and career and consists of a comprehensive collection of his private papers and working files. Records of the production, promotion and reception of all his films and some forty plays are present along with correspondence to colleagues and friends. The Jocelyn Herbert Archive at the University of the Arts in London is an extensive holding of twentieth-century theatre and film design spanning the late 1930s to 2003. The main body of the collection comprises over 5,000 of Herbert’s drawings for set and costume design, and includes production photographs, notebooks, sketchbooks, research materials and correspondence with key figures of the period such as Anderson, Tony Richardson and John Osborne. One of the challenges of using these archives together is that they are very different in terms of the type and scope of materials that they hold. Anderson’s archive mostly consists of written materials – he was an extensive letter writer and kept diaries for most of his life. They offer a comprehensive account of his understanding of events at the time, although one of the few omissions is the coverage of the production and pre-production of If... Herbert’s archive, in contrast and as you would expect from a designer, is overwhelmingly visual: there is some written material but it is often to be found in her scrapbooks. These combine sketches, scribbled notes, thoughts, phone numbers and shopping lists and perhaps reflect the gendered nature of her professional practice, combining work with domestic and familial obligations (Herbert had four children). Very different to the ordered and information ‘rich’ offerings of Anderson’s archive, they demand different competencies in fully interpreting the materials.

The danger, of course, is that Anderson’s more extensive written account can dominate the historical record, a problem that has been identified as of particular relevance for researchers investigating women’s place in film history. As Gledhill and Knight argue, ‘many women have left few historical traces, their roles in production or film culture obscured by more publicly visible or self-promotional male partners or concealed behind collective or collaborative practices’. Thus whilst the respective archives offer rich sources for understanding the nature of collaborative work, I do not want to underestimate how much patriarchal structures of power might be replicated within them. To try and offset this, I will also be referring to a fascinating series of interviews recorded between Herbert and Cathy Courtney that look back over her career. In addition to literally restoring Herbert’s voice to the historical record, they offer a comprehensive account of the designer’s challenging relationship with Anderson, one that is difficult to codify but gives an indication of how much their output can be understood in terms of their creative collaboration.

There is also a methodological challenge in researching intermedial performance practice in terms of the disparity between what remains of the finished...
film compared to the theatrical performance in terms of tracing the currents of influence between the two. Matthew Reason has contended that ‘Instead of containing the original thing itself, therefore, the performing arts archive represents the formal collecting, cataloguing, preserving and consecrating of traces of past performances, but crucially not the performances themselves.’

Whereas with cinema the finished product remains as an artefact, live performance is essentially ephemeral and although traces might endure in the form of both written and visual material the ‘actual thing itself’ disappears at the moment of its showing. Diana Taylor has explored this question in the Archive and the Repertoire, making a clear distinction between the archive ‘of supposedly enduring materials (i.e., texts, documents, buildings, bones) and the so-called ephemeral repertoire of embodied practice/knowledge (i.e., spoken language, dance, sports, ritual)’. Considering the ‘repertoire’ then allows historians to consider traditions and influences as more than simply material traces, but also how ‘embodied and performed acts generate, record, and transmit knowledge’. My approach therefore will be to combine research into the practitioners’ respective archives and oral histories with textual analysis of the film and understandings of relevant theatre productions, with a view to thinking about the reciprocity of practice between theatre and film at the time of making If . . .

**BACKGROUND: HERBERT AND ANDERSON**

Production design is often overlooked in writing on both British cinema and theatre but in films there is a notable downplaying of how agency is invested in the visual setting. For instance, Laurie Ede argues that cinema is often characterised as how light interacts with film but ‘it is also crucially about the play of light on structures of various kinds’. Therefore, the production designer has to think about how to represent the narrative world; the places in the scripts and how they are inhabited by the actor; whether they are adapted from ‘real’ locations or whether they are constructed in the studios. Ede argues that British cinema has often invested in a realist aesthetic, and thus the production designer’s role is a kind of paradox: to create environments unobtrusively that serve to underpin the realness of the dramatic action. However, Herbert, who was more used to the very different design paradigms of the theatre, had very clear ideas on how the visuals presented on film should operate.

Jocelyn Herbert was still more of an accidental film designer and her work in in the cinema seemed very much to emerge out of her initial collaborations with creatives in the theatre and the working relationships that developed. Described as a ‘quiet revolutionary’ by director Tony Richardson she studied set design at the London Theatre Studio, established in the 1930s by director Michel Saint-Denis, with the help of Motley, the ground-breaking design trio
of Sophie Harris, Percy Harris and Elizabeth Montgomery. In the mid-1950s Herbert found employment as a prop maker at the Royal Court, just as a new wave of writers and directors were developing an anti-establishment body of work, including plays such as John Osborne’s *Look Back in Anger* (1956) and Arnold Wesker’s *Roots* (1959). She swiftly became the in-house designer and was a champion of the writer-director-designer team system by which the head of the Royal Court, George Devine, set great store. Between 1957 and 1966 she designed an average of three plays a year at the Court.

Herbert first came into contact with Lindsay Anderson at the theatre. The first play they worked onto together was John Arden’s *Sergeant’s Musgrave’s Dance* in 1959. Anderson recalled that Herbert ‘terrified him’ by ‘removing realistic protective walls and furniture’ from the set of which he remarked ‘there weren’t a great deal to start with at the set up’. A measure of the play’s challenge to established orthodoxies was that it was not particularly well received at the time, leading to Anderson producing a leaflet asking, ‘What kind of theatre do you want?’ to be distributed to potential audiences, encouraging them to ignore the critical notices and come and see the production at the Court. Anderson and Herbert went on to collaborate on thirteen film and theatre productions over a period of twenty-four years, including David Storey’s *Home* at the Royal Court in 1970, *O Lucky Man* (1973) and *The Whales of August* (1987).

It is clear from the extensive letters in their respective archives that there was a sense of long-standing, mutual respect and closeness between Herbert and Anderson and a sense of them bouncing ideas about projects off each other. The boundaries between friendship and a professional relationship were blurred because even when not directly working with each other on a project, there were shared attempts to articulate artistic philosophies through commenting on their own and other peoples’ productions, evidenced through many of the letters to each other in their respective archives. There is a sense that artistic collaboration was important to both of them, however difficult a process it might be. Although, their working relationship was relatively harmonious on the production of *If . . . ,* it came to be sorely tested by their collaboration on Anderson’s subsequent film, *O Lucky Man ,* to the point that Herbert swore she would never do another film with the director again.

Herbert’s ideas about the relationship between the director and the designer can be identified by some jottings from her notebooks, indicating how in the theatre, working with other people allowed artistic endeavour to thrive:

> For me the only interesting way to work in the theatre – whatever you do – is to work with a group of people whose ideas and talents you know and respect – only then can theatre as you have it here can [*sic*] happen.
For Herbert, the designer’s relationship with the director was crucial. In the same notebook there is a small scribble on the margins of a page, where she explores what she means by collaboration. She writes that ideas have to ‘grow’ for a successful design project; that a bad relationship would be when the director has no ideas and lets the designer plan it and then in the course of the production has no idea how to use the sets and the lighting.27

In the recordings made with Cathy Courtney about her career, Herbert indicated that she was well aware of how these ideal collaborative conditions could be tested by the very different hierarchies that characterise film production. For instance, she talks about how the relationship between director and designer is often usurped by the director’s relationship with the lighting cameraman. This was her experience making Isadora (1968), her first film as a production designer, after working as an art director on Tom Jones (1963). She describes the director Karel Reisz as being ‘absolutely under the thumb of his cameraman and lighting’ and how she ‘kept saying it should be dressed a certain way and I’d go back the next day and it had all been changed’.28 She also reveals the many instances where her design ideas were sabotaged by art directors and set dressers who are more interested in things looking ‘nice’ than having an aesthetic coherence:

In films very often the set dresser puts in the set what he thinks should go in and the designer doesn’t have anything to say, or he doesn’t say it as it makes it much less trouble for him [. . .] It’s alright if you don’t have any feeling about it but if you have been born in the theatre you do have. You regard everything you see as your responsibility.29

There are also practical impediments to design ideas being realised on screen, as at the moment of shooting, a cinematographer can often rearrange the props and change the lighting whilst the designer is busy preparing the next set-up. Herbert gives the impression that in the film world she wasn’t regarded as ‘one of them’, and there is a sense of her sticking to the design practices learned from the theatre, often in the face of the very different protocols involved in film production:

If you do a set drawing, most real film designers, they do it from an angle. I can’t do that. I have to say ‘this is the kind of room this scene should be taking place in, this is the kind of place these people would live in or whatever.30

Production of If . . .

It is clear that even before Herbert was officially involved with the filming of If . . ., Anderson was sharing his thoughts and concerns with her about how the project was developing. In a letter dated 27 October 1967, whilst
Herbert was on location shooting *Isadora* with Karel Reisz (in which he also indicates his troubled relationship with his former Free Cinema collaborator), Anderson refers directly to the script of the *Crusaders*, the original title of what became *If* . . .

I hope it is coming out a bit stronger, less bittily charming in a suggestive rather literary way which I feel is the danger with the present version. I still have no absolutely clear image of what the film should look like – not just visually but also in terms of casting. It is going to be a style difficult to hit.\(^3\)

Herbert did not actually become involved with the production until filming had started, as she describes in her contribution to the Anderson *Diaries* covering the making of the film (as it is one of the few productions where no direct entries from the diaries exist, details of the filming are given over to Herbert, Malcolm McDowell and interviews conducted by Anderson at the time). She details how she was brought in to replace the incumbent designer the moment she had finished *Isadora*. From the evidence of this entry, demonstrating Herbert’s typical modesty, it would seem as if all she did was ‘buy a few things and repaint the Hall’ because Anderson was dissatisfied with the original designer’s work.\(^3\)

However, Herbert’s own archive and the oral history collection suggests she had a much more critical impact on the look of the film. In the tapes, Herbert describes how she had been called up by Anderson to come and re-do the Hall at Cheltenham (actually the interior of St John’s Church in Cheltenham) as they were shooting in it the next day for the final scene. Her description of the problems reveals not only her eye for detail but also her conviction that the visuals had to mean something. She describes how she found the Hall painted ‘bright orange’ with reproductions of random generals all with ‘the same white wood big frame’. She notes how the platform had ‘little swivel chairs’ and awful, tatty little red curtains’ and ‘was impossible’, because the designer hadn’t realised that ‘the whole humour is that it’s conventional’. She relates how they, ‘got some old masters’ and ‘other chairs’ and ‘some new curtains’ and

set to start painting this bloody great church [. . .] I heard a voice saying, “Oh thank god that’s better” [. . .] The boy who was designing it said he didn’t mind but then he left. He got paid his full fee and I got whatever was left.\(^3\)

Herbert’s archive also offers visual evidence of her particular contribution to the film’s production design. Of interest here are an extensive set of coloured pen and ink drawings for each of the key locations. This is a practice that
corresponds to her approach to designing theatrical productions, in which she would start with pen/ink drawings before embarking on scale models of the set. Through cross-reference with the oral history, it is clear that these were produced after Herbert visited Cheltenham, when she had been officially appointed as the film’s production designer. Although a few scenes were shot on location at Cheltenham, much of the material was filmed elsewhere, including some on sets that had to be specially built. Herbert’s drawings therefore give a coherent visual aesthetic to the range of disparate locations and imposed a sense of the visual style that Anderson could not quite understand whilst writing the script. They also give clear indications of how sets, on location or otherwise, should be dressed. Herbert mentions in her interviews with Courtney that Anderson and cinematographer Miroslav Ondricek saw the drawings and gave them their blessing. The speed with which the film was subsequently made, along with the restricted budget (500,000 dollars according to Alexander Walker), meant that the locations and studios had to be made ready extremely quickly with little preparation time. In the press book for the film, Herbert talks about a frequently occurring scenario of Anderson shooting one end of the corridor, whilst the other was being repainted.

Although the designer’s drawings provide an imprecise pictorial match with the film itself (with some of the interiors being more impressionistic than exact), it is clear that the colours used were key. Colour is usually only talked about in relation to the switches between colour and black and white in the film. What has been overlooked is the use and function of the colour within certain sequences. Here Herbert’s drawings give a vital sense of the overall film’s colour palette. Steven Peacock argues colour is often overlooked in film as it can appear ‘uneasily abstract [. . .] existing only as a property of an object’ and thus gets ‘subsumed into broader qualities of film style’. The dominant colours in the drawings for are dominated by dark browns, blacks and dark green, colours which communicate the sense of tradition, conformity and claustrophobia that Anderson wanted to impart with his public school setting, but also gesturing at the ‘dark heart’ of Britain’s powerful social system of privilege and power.

Against this overall impression of dark browns and blacks, Herbert occasionally includes a dash of mustard yellow. For example, a picture entitled ‘Rifle Room’ is accented with a queasy yellow against the drab dark browns. This yellow can be seen almost quite obtrusively at various points throughout the film: in a schoolboy’s jumper in the introductory scene of boys arriving at their bedrooms; in the colour of the shelves in the close-up of Travis’s (Malcolm McDowell) reflection in the mirror, whilst shaving; the yellow of the prefect’s dressing gown and even at the end in the gloves worn by Jonny (David Wood) as he lifts up the crocodile, whilst looking through the objects under the stairs. Significantly, yellow has been used by other film makers (most memorably of
course by Fassbinder in *Fear Eats the Soul* (1973)) both in terms of affect to evoke uneasiness and repulsion, but also as a way of drawing attention to the artificiality of the image.

Although the film was shot at Anderson’s old school Cheltenham College in addition to another four locations (one of which was Aldenham School in Elstree, Hertfordshire), these had all been dressed and given an overall coherent visual aesthetic by Herbert. This element of what has been termed a ‘rendering of real life’, shooting on sets (which can be manipulated) combined with real locations had been essential to Anderson’s aesthetic from *This Sporting Life* onwards. The design thus had been plausible as a realistic environment while also working on a more symbolic level to show the school as a microcosm of the nation, as ‘the school does not teach the getting of wisdom but dullness, obedience and conformity: for Anderson the nation is far from great’. This corresponds with Herbert’s insistence that the visuals of a film had to mean something, beyond simply being a plausible environment. Her strategic deployment of colour is therefore essential to the overall purpose and meaning of *If . . .*

**BEYOND NATURALISM – INFLUENCE OF THE THEATRE**

Charles Drazin has talked about the influence of the French filmmaker Jean Vigo on Anderson and Sherwin. As many critics have noted, the famous ending of *If . . .* can be understood as a tribute to Vigo’s *Zero de Conduite* (1933):

> The affinity of approach that Vigo, Sherwin and Anderson share lies in suppressing conventional suspense so that we think more deeply about the relationship between the people and the objects in the frame. They shift the emphasis from a series of steps in a sequence, where the primary drive is the unfolding narrative, to the texture of the sequence itself.42

Attention is drawn therefore to the interplay between elements in the frame. The drawings indicate this play of texture(s) within the image and I would argue that Herbert’s experience as a production designer in the theatre would have made her aware that this needed to be taken account of in the visual style of the film. Space precludes a detailed discussion of Herbert’s design practice in the theatre, but it was clear that in her work at the Royal Court, she was constantly addressing the visual, sonic and kinetic aspects of the stage space. For instance her design for Arnold Wesker’s *The Kitchen* (1961) opened up the back wall of the theatre, so the bare brick wall was exposed to the audience. Herbert recalls how they

> used the bare stage for the first time with the back wall and all the pipes showing. It was a real breakthrough and I think it was also the first time we put the lighting rig above the set and allowed everything to seen.43
For the first performance of the play, the designer used trestle tables for the stoves and put black material on them. She wanted to show a contrast with the sweets and salad tables so a last minute addition was distinguishing them by covering them with white sheets. The importance of sound to the production was also clear as she recalls that the serving points made from orange boxes were covered in tin so they made the right clashing noises during the frenzied service. Sound was also highlighted by the growing hiss of the ovens as they are turned on at the beginning of the performance and was coordinated with the lights getting brighter one by one. John Dexter recalls how ‘The Kitchen pointed me in the direction – not of minimalism that’s the wrong word – but of provoking the audience to think for themselves and to use their imagination.’

The experience of watching film is both material and haptic, in that visual perception is not cut off from sensory experience. Moreover, texture is clearly the designer’s province, in terms of the choice of materials and their rendering for the camera. As production designer Richard Sylbert notes, ‘even the smallest detail, like the surface of a wall texture, is part of everything’. Lucy Donaldson has considered the importance of texture on film, arguing that the invisibility of the relationship between construction and expressivity that forms texture is one reason why it has not been of sustained interest to writing on film. She quotes Pye and Gibbs in terms of the importance of trying to identify this decision making and its affective significance:

Much filmmaking seems to encourage us to treat this complex tapestry of decision making as ‘transparent’, so that we are often unaware of the craft and artifice involved. But all this decision making is material and it has material effects on our experience of the film.

The drawings in the Jocelyn Herbert Archive allow a partial access to the ideas that informed the texture of materials used in certain scenes, for example the sequence in the shower block, where Travis, Knightley and Wallace are forced to take cold showers, given out as punishment for drinking, under the supervision of the sadistic prefect, Denson. Herbert’s drawings demonstrate a fascination with particular details of the scene, such as the shape of the shower heads. They seek to convey a sense of the various textures of the scene: the decaying brown tiles and tinny shower heads, which are old and rusting, conveying a haptic sense of alienation and austerity. This works in tandem with performance. McDowell’s naked back facing the camera, alive with possibility, flinches against the cold water coming from the shower. Set against those dull brown tiles, it fairly bristles with febrile tension and repressed violence. It is a scene where very little is expressed in dialogue and much in the haptic qualities of location and performance combined.
CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS

Figure 6.1  Jocelyn Herbert’s sketch for the shower set in *If . . .* (1968). JH436
Jocelyn Herbert Collection, National Theatre Archive.

Figure 6.2  The shower scene in *If . . .* as realised with Malcolm McDowell.
The only setting in Herbert’s sketches to eschew the overall colour and texture aesthetic is the cafe scene, which is coloured in pink, blue and white and gives a sense of space and light that is clearly in contrast to the claustrophobic browns and greens of the school environment. Although the cafe interior as shot is more confined, it is notable that this section is shot in black and white which I would argue underlines the sense of liberation and escape that is inherent in Herbert’s design and potentially challenges the notion that the black and white sequences were filmed at random.\textsuperscript{47}

Although it is clear that budgetary constraints determined the use of black and white film stock (for example, the chapel scenes were easier to light for monochrome), Anderson, in the preface to the published script to the film, describes them as a way to keep the audiences constantly aware of the film as a construction: ‘I also think that in a film dedicated to understanding, the jog to consciousness provided by such colour change may well work a kind of healthy Verfremdungseffekt, an incitement to thought, which was part of our aim.’\textsuperscript{48} ‘Verfremdungseffekt’, or alienation effect, was a key element of Brechtian dramaturgy that sought to create a distancing effect to the world portrayed so that instead of having their responses confirmed, the spectator would be constantly questioning their instinctive reactions to the material. In an article for \textit{The Observer} in December 1968, Anderson writes how a Brechtian approach was taken to the film’s aesthetic construction: ‘We were after something bigger, something that went beyond naturalism, yet with \textit{realism}, an inner logic that would enable us to progress from an apparently naturalistic start to a violently epic conclusion.’\textsuperscript{49}

Various critics have discussed the Brechtian influence on \textit{If . . .} in terms of Anderson’s ‘Epic’ style, as well as the use of titles, non-linear narratives and switches between colour and black and white.\textsuperscript{50} However, it is clear that Herbert and Anderson, developing on from their collaborations in the theatre, where they tested the limits of naturalism, sought to achieve a similar ambition with the visual aesthetic of this film. Sophie Jump has described the poetic realism of Herbert’s work at the Royal Court as ‘providing a recognisably real but mediated environment that could communicate both the physical and psychological context of the play’.\textsuperscript{51} The drawings that indicate the settings in the film give us a sense of a real place (important for Anderson to root his fiction in an observable reality) but also of the ‘something that went beyond naturalism’, through Herbert’s strategic use of colour and texture.

\textbf{Conclusion}

I just wanted to say how glad I am about ‘\textit{If}’, not because of the critics but because it really is good ‘a Masterpiece’ as you say yourself. Somehow the whole operation – in spite of the agonies, has been a great experience

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and somewhat revived my flagging faith. You just are different to work with than anyone else – far more demanding – and far more rewarding – the difference I suppose between being a creative artist or not?  

This chapter has argued that we should attend to collaborative practice in the cinema, despite the difficulties in piecing together who did what in a collective enterprise from the traces left behind. It also considered how collaborative practice in the 1960s facilitated and was facilitated by the work of practitioners across media, notably film and theatre, through the consideration of the collaboration between Jocelyn Herbert and Lindsay Anderson on the production of *If* . . . Economic necessity often meant that creatives worked across media during this time, but this in turn created the conditions receptive to a cross-fertilisation of ideas and personnel. To a certain extent, this research indicates that creative units were forged in the theatre, which then transferred across to film and television, but there is little doubt that ideas worked through in film and television made their way back to the theatre too. Archival material can point to some of these practices and relationships but there is still a necessity to connect film production to other cultural forms and determine patterns in cross-media discourse. One of the challenges of this kind of work is balancing the obviously subjective understanding of the environment represented in the archive materials of a practitioner with broader industrial or cultural understanding of the historical moment. Further research is therefore needed into this cultural ecosystem, which did not just involve dramaturgical influences but also provided models of practitioner working relationships. In this way we can begin to understand how theatre and film are, as Christine Gledhill argues, ‘cultural spaces open to each other’s products and practices’.  

Notes  


22. Ibid. p. 4.


27. Ibid.

CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS

29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
37. See Mark Sinker, If . . . (London: British Film Institute, 2004); Paul Sutton, If . . ., 2005.
38. Steven Peacock, Colour (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p. 3.
40. John Izod et al., Lindsay Anderson: Cinema Authorship, p. 50.
41. Ibid. p. 56.
42. Charles Drazin, ‘If . . . before If . . .’, p. 329.
44. John Dexter, in Courtney, p. 38.
47. For example, Izod et al., p. 128.
50. For example, Sinker, If . . .; Sutton, If . . .
52. Jocelyn Herbert, quoted in Izod et al., p. 119.