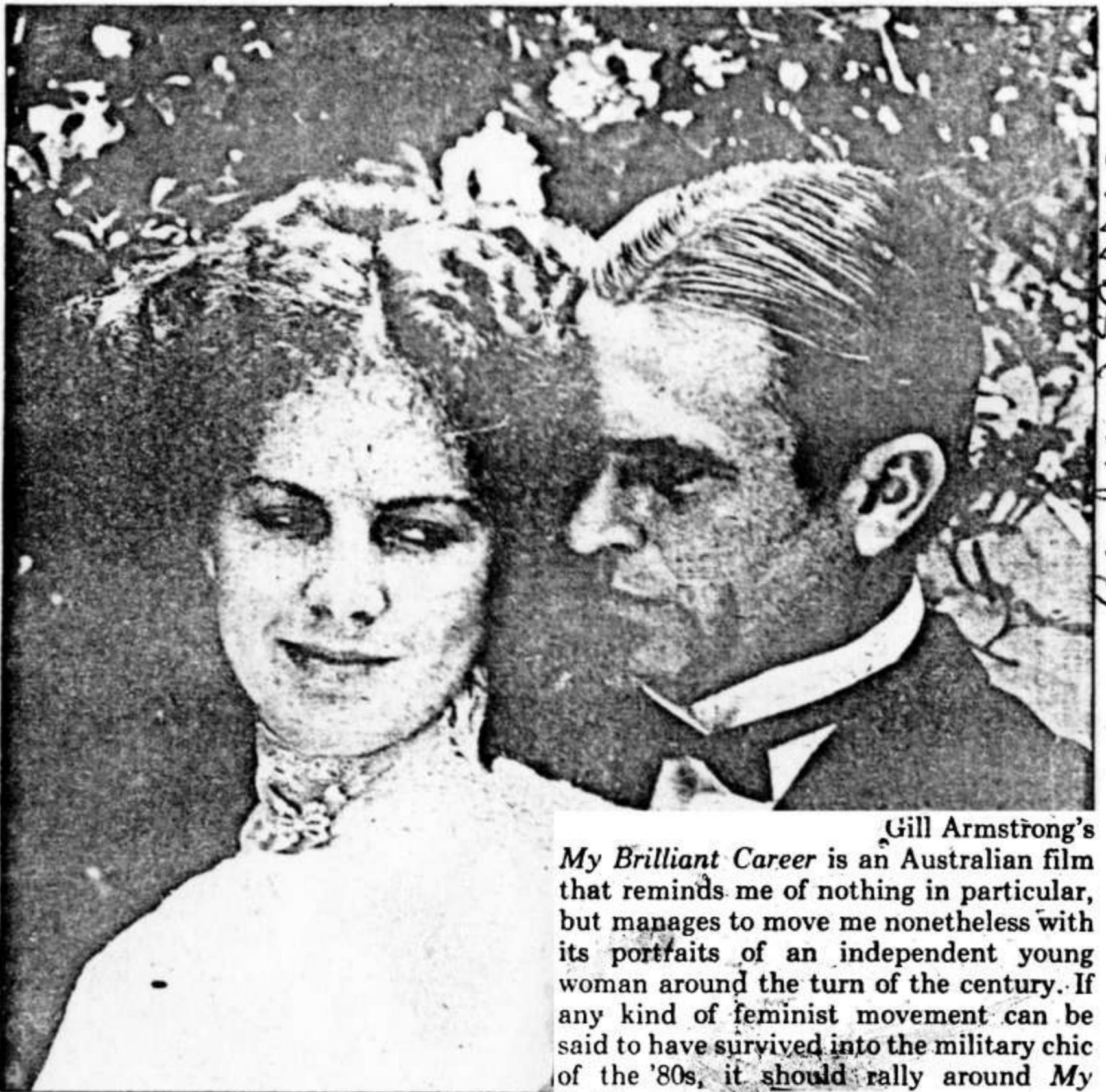


Document Citation

Title	[My brilliant career]
Author(s)	Andrew Sarris Andrew Sarris
Source	<i>Village Voice</i>
Date	1980 Feb 04
Type	review
Language	English English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	My brilliant career, Armstrong, Gillian, 1979



Andrew Sarris

Gill Armstrong's *My Brilliant Career* is an Australian film that reminds me of nothing in particular, but manages to move me nonetheless with its portraits of an independent young woman around the turn of the century. If any kind of feminist movement can be said to have survived into the military chic of the '80s, it should rally around *My Brilliant Career*.

A bit of virtue: Judy Davis as spunky feminist with suitor Sam Neill

VILLAGE VOICE FEB 4, 1980

FILMS IN FOCUS

Gill Armstrong's *My Brilliant Career* may seem to be good, old-fashioned, full-bodied entertainment given its spunky heroine played with energy and subtlety by Judy Davis. Eleanor Witcombe's adaptation of Miles Franklin's turn-of-the-century novel, set in rural Australia, gives ample time and space for the characters to develop in a surprising variety of social relationships. The desire of a girl to reach out to the world as a writer instead of making the only proper choice available to young women of the time strikes me as a marvelously fresh subject, particularly in the despairing and alienated context of recent cinema. What makes her dilemma so fascinating is that there's real passion stirring within her, not simply a withered frustration. Also the director gives us an

interesting view of economic reality in the Australian class structure, and this somehow makes all the characters more substantial than they might have been as merely gothic cartoons.

The heroine's beau is played with considerable charm by Sam Neill, and Wendy Hughes, so memorable in *Newsfront*, provides a wisely discerning presence as Aunt Helen. Yes, the movie is refreshingly entertaining and stirringly edifying in a way with which we are unfamiliar these days. But *My Brilliant Career*, like *Newsfront*, is neither corny nor archaic. It simply has its mind and heart together, and that is why the audiences cheered it at Cannes, and why it deserves our patronage now. ■