

Post-war girlhoods: Jill Craigie, British social realism and local stardom

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On the BBC's West of England Home Service in 1947, filmmaker and guest film reviewer Jill Craigie declared that one of her conceptions of a good film was that it should be 'indigenous in character'.¹ Her recent film *The Way We Live* had focused on the plan for rebuilding Plymouth; it was highly praised by newspaper critics, and when shown at the Cannes Film Festival in 1946 was deemed 'one of the best examples of documentary film art'.² It proceeded to be screened widely in cinemas as well as to housing groups, town councils and film societies.³ The following year, *Illustrated* magazine featured an article titled 'Independent Miss Craigie', announcing that 'the girl who caused a sensation in art and housing circles with her first two films is now in the hills of Wales, ferreting out those details, sometimes humorous, sometimes sad, which she relies on so much to give her work an authentic flavour'.⁴ The article is accompanied by photos of Craigie talking to miners in a bar, photographing the industrial landscape from a hilltop (figure 1), observing as a miner receives first aid, and sitting in the corner of a miner's living room as his daughters sing, and play piano and violin. Film historian David Berry notes that, compared to other mining features, Craigie's first and only feature film *Blue Scar* 'sought its inspiration in the actual urban Wales of the period'.⁵ An independent production, it was part-funded by the National Coal Board (NCB) and filmed on location in the small mining village of Abergwynfi, in a makeshift studio built in a derelict cinema in Port Talbot, and at a number

- 1 Jill Craigie, 'Films in the West', West of England Home Service, 24 August 1947, BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham (hereafter BBC WAC).
- 2 'Dutch tribute to Plymouth film: "The Way We Live"', *Western Evening Herald*, 5 October 1946, p. 27, 2732.2 Plymouth Newspaper cuttings book 6, Plymouth and West Devon Record Office (PWDRO, now held at The Box Plymouth).
- 3 Newspaper cuttings relating to screenings of *The Way We Live* (TWWL), press scrapbook for *Blue Scar* and *The Way We Live*, pp. 192–206, British Film Institute Special Collections (hereafter press scrapbook, BFI SC).
- 4 'Independent Miss Craigie', *Illustrated*, 1 February 1947, p. 29, press scrapbook, pp. 1–4, BFI SC.
- 5 David Berry, *Wales and the Cinema: The First Hundred Years* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994), p. 160.



Fig. 1. 'Independent Miss Craigie', *Illustrated*, 1 February 1947. © John Frost Newspapers/Mary Evans Picture Library.

of collieries in the surrounding area. Basing herself in Abergwynfi for three months to write the script, Craigie was intent on representing the experiences of miners' daughters. In *Illustrated's* interview she vividly imagines their point of view, leading the writer to suggest 'the girls of Wales have Miss Craigie's profoundest sympathy', and emphasizing Craigie's attention to young women's lives as part of her local research and production methods.⁶

This essay explores how *The Way We Live* and *Blue Scar*, Craigie's two 'indigenous' films from the 1940s, negotiated young women's lives and individual aspirations as part of an exploration of processes that were reorganizing local ways of life and work in the immediate post-war years. It contributes to a wider field of screen studies focusing on cinematic girlhoods, and specifically to feminist scholarship exploring an evolving strand of British social-realist cinema that has included, indeed foregrounded, young working-class women's subjectivities and identities in formation. Through contextualizing and analysing Craigie's social-realist filmmaking, this research builds on scholarship in British film history that in the last decade has made significant inroads into the

6 'Independent Miss Craigie', p. 30.

- 7 Jo Fox, "‘To be a woman’": female labour and memory in documentary film production, 1929–50', *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, vol. 10, no. 3 (2013), pp. 584–602. New scholarship in this field was presented at the 'British Women Documentary Filmmakers 1930–1955' symposium organized by the Jill Craigie: Film Pioneer project, London School of Economics, 5 April 2019; published in *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, vol. 18, no. 4 (2021), special issue 'Jill Craigie and Women in British Film and Documentary Cultures 1930–55'.
- 8 Sharon Lin Tay, *Women on the Edge: Twelve Political Film Practices* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 43, 55.
- 9 The 'Jill Craigie: Film Pioneer' team consists of Lizzie Thynne (PI), Yvonne Tasker and Sadie Wearing (co-Is). This essay draws on research completed as part of the making of *Independent Miss Craigie* (Lizzie Thynne, 2021), a biographical documentary.
- 10 Yvonne Tasker, 'Jill Craigie, post-war British film culture and the British Film Academy', *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, vol. 18, no. 4 (2021), p. 420.
- 11 See Frances Gateward and Murray Pomerance (eds), *Sugar, Spice and Everything Nice: Cinemas of Girlhood* (Detroit, IL: Wayne State University Press, 2002); Fiona Handyside and Kate Taylor-Jones (eds), *International Cinema and the Girl: Local Issues, Transnational Contexts* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).
- 12 David Forrest, *Social Realism: Art, Nationhood and Politics* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), p. 16.
- 13 The following works explore *TWWL* and *Blue Scar* in terms of their intervention in these issues: Leo Enticknap, 'Postwar urban redevelopment, the British film industry and *The Way We Live*', in Mark Shiel and T. Fitzmaurice (eds), *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

illumination and exploration of women documentary filmmakers' work.⁷ In comparison with other female documentarists working in the same period, Craigie's career was much more 'visible': she was making films for commercial circuits and was promoted as 'Britain's first woman filmmaker', later remaining in the public eye as the wife of Labour Party leader Michael Foot. Her work has been mentioned in a number of accounts of British cinema but only recently reassessed with close attention to her authorship. Sharon Lin Tay resituates Craigie's oeuvre in terms of her politics and strong visual sense, arguing that her films were inspired by the political contexts in which she worked and expressed her 'socialist and feminist ethics'.⁸ This research emerges out of the AHRC-funded 'Jill Craigie: Film Pioneer' project, which takes a biographical approach to exploring Craigie's work as socialist feminist filmmaker in the context of the British film industry. It analyses and contextualizes her films using an array of evidence from archival sources, examining them as part of a career that spanned different cultural spheres and media industries, as a journalist, television personality, screenwriter and feminist scholar.⁹ Responding to Yvonne Tasker's suggestion that 'a lack of attention to Craigie's film work risks perpetuating an exclusionary history of British cinema's documentary and realist modes as the domain of men', I make the case for Craigie's distinctive feminist contribution to social-realist filmmaking.¹⁰ Drawing on local evidence of *The Way We Live's* and *Blue Scar's* regional production and promotion, I examine how their portraits of young women were shaped by Craigie's participatory work with regional and industrial working-class communities – demonstrating continuities with earlier conventions of the documentary movement – as well as by contemporary, aspirational narratives of film stardom. In this, I suggest, these projects tested the boundaries of British social realism by expressly weaving popular modes of femininity and identification, specifically those offered by film stardom, into their explorations of post-war landscapes. With this in mind, these films can be recognized as constructing nuanced 'cinematic girlhoods', which have been explored in global cinema as part of the growing field of girlhood studies in the last two decades and that, in this context, were as much in the process of construction as their post-war communities.¹¹

The Way We Live and *Blue Scar* take up the interwar documentary movement's emphasis on 'framing the lives of the "real", within their "real" environments';¹² they focus on regional and industrial working-class communities in order to explore nationwide initiatives of urban planning and nationalization.¹³ Released during what Peter Hennessy terms Britain's most 'progressive phase', they were shaped by a climate of hopeful optimism for the post-war world under the Labour government and its manifesto for a more egalitarian 'New Jerusalem'.¹⁴ Indeed Craigie campaigned for Labour and met the party's future leader Foot during the production of *The Way We Live*, in which he appears giving a speech on rebuilding the city. Evoking the post-war promise of

pp. 233–43; Mark Tewdr-Jones, 'From town hall to cinema: documentary film as planning propaganda in post-war Britain', in Robert Freestone and Marco Amati (eds), *Exhibitions and the Development of Modern Planning Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 163–76; Gwenno Ffrancon, "'The same old firm dressed up in a new suit': *Blue Scar* (Craigie, 1949) and the portrayal of the nationalization of the coal industry', in Siân Nicholas, Tom O'Malley and Kevin Williams (eds), *Reconstructing the Past: History in the Mass Media 1890–2005* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 49–61.

- 14 Peter Hennessy, *Never Again: Britain, 1945–51* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1992), p. 454.
- 15 'Film: "The Way We Live" by Jill Craigie', *TWWL* press cuttings file, p. 4, BFI Reuben Library.
- 16 Andrew Higson, *Waving the Flag: Constructing a National Cinema in Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), p. 220.
- 17 Carl Rollyson, *To Be a Woman: The Life of Jill Craigie* (London: Aurum, 2005), p. 151. Craigie talked about her experiences of working in London in her late teens and early twenties in BECTU interview no. 363 (with Toby Haggith, side 1), <<https://historyproject.org.uk/interview/jill-craigie>>. See also Hollie Price, 'Jill Craigie, interwar girlhood and *Bank Holiday*', May 2020, <<https://www.jillcraigiefilmioneer.org/bettys-paper-intervar-girlhood-and-bank-holiday-1938/>> both accessed 8 December 2021.
- 18 'Two new "discoveries"', *News Chronicle*, 17 January 1946; Two Cities Publicity, 'Stars of the future: many new discoveries in "The Way We Live"', and 'Film: "The Way We Live" by Jill Craigie', *TWWL* press cuttings file, pp. 1, 2, 4, BFI Reuben Library.
- 19 'Plymouth Film Star', *Western Morning News*, 4 January 1947, p. 3, British Newspaper Archive (hereafter BNA); Catherine de la Roche, 'Jill Craigie', *Picturegoer*, 7 May 1949, p. 14.

democratic community, her Plymouth film opens with an aerial shot of the city while a voice-over introduces the film's 'tale of a town and of the townsfolk' and its key players, including 'the Lord Mayor – and corporation, big business, little business, the fishermen, the mothers, and the Copperwheats' – a 'typical Plymouth family'.¹⁵ Likewise, *Blue Scar*'s portrait of life in the valleys of South Wales particularly highlights the endurance of traditional working-class, community-based rituals as the collieries are nationalized, and includes scenes of miners singing together in a local club and villagers climbing to the top of the hill in Abergwynfi to watch a football match. As part of these portraits of local life, *The Way We Live* and *Blue Scar* centre on fictional families who cope with a variety of personal and everyday issues. The films therefore continue the legacy of wartime 'melodramas of everyday life' that, as Andrew Higson contends, negotiated characters' private dilemmas and priorities – including work, romance and family life, alongside public themes of wartime service, duty and nation, firmly situated as part of 'a knowable and known community'.¹⁶ In *The Way We Live* and *Blue Scar*, wartime 'melodramas of everyday life' are reformulated in order to depict the British social landscape in the immediate post-war years. Their images of a 'knowable and known community' were shaped by contemporary issues of housing, planning and nationalization being discussed and experienced at a national level, and their 'indigenous' approach to including locals, town councillors, miners, groups and campaigners as actors, collaborators and supporters was designed to depict such changes from regional perspectives.

The Way We Live's and *Blue Scar*'s family-centred narratives foreground young women concerned with forging their own identities as the post-war settlement is being planned, mapped and implemented around them. In *The Way We Live*, Alice Copperwheat – the daughter of a local dockworker – faces being rehoused with her family in Plymouth as the city is replanned. In *Blue Scar*, Olwen Williams – a miner's daughter – decides between her miner boyfriend Tom and her dreams of escaping the mining village to become a singer, during which time Tom experiences changes and continuities in his newly nationalized workplace. Craigie's biographer Carl Rollyson notes that 'it is not too much to say that Jill always looked at the world through the eyes of a young girl and that she relived her own start in life through the young girls she met and wanted to film'.¹⁷ While scouting for performers in Plymouth in 1945, Craigie and her producer William MacQuitty discovered 17-year-old telegraphist Patsy Scantlebury jitterbugging with a GI at a local dance – a scene that is recreated for her performance as Alice in *The Way We Live*.¹⁸ Patsy was proudly described as a 'Plymouth film star' in the local press, and Craigie suggested that the next film she would direct would combine 'a vital theme' – the coal industry – with 'a dramatic story, stars and all'.¹⁹ During the production of *Blue Scar* in South Wales, Craigie's 'search for the Welsh girl singing star' was a way of securing local support and publicity

- 20 'The search for the Welsh girl singing star', *Daily Herald*, 10 May 1948, press scrapbook p. 13, BFI SC.
- 21 '200 Welsh girls bid for star role', *Herald of Wales*, 15 May 1948, press scrapbook, p. 18, BFI SC.
- 22 Melanie Williams, *Female Stars of British Cinema: The Women in Question* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), p. 36; Raymond Durnat, *A Mirror for England: British Movies from Austerity to Affluence* (1970) (London: Palgrave Macmillan/BFI, 2011), p. 218.
- 23 Geoffrey Macnab, *J. Arthur Rank and the British Film Industry* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 142, 145.
- 24 David Liversidge, 'Rearing to-morrow's film stars: "Charm School" prizes worth £7,000 a year', *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 11 February 1947, p. 6, BNA.
- 25 Williams, *Female Stars*, p. 62; Macnab, *J. Arthur Rank*, p. 141; *Tuesday Documentary: The Rank Charm School* (BBC, 1982).
- 26 Sarah Street, *British National Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 134.
- 27 Liversidge, 'Rearing to-morrow's film stars', p. 6.
- 28 Jackie Stacey, *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 80, 32, 110.

for the project.²⁰ National and local press featured photographs of young women queuing outside Outlook's Port Talbot studio or crowded around a piano during the audition process, and reported that Craigie and MacQuitty had been inundated with more than 200 applications for the lead role of Olwen.²¹ By drawing on evidence of their local production and promotion, I will explore here how Craigie's portraits of girlhood combined close attention to the hopes of communities undergoing reconstruction with giving consideration to popular discourses of youth, femininity and film stardom in British post-war culture.

Melanie Williams stresses that, in the immediate post-war years, 'female stars flourished in abundance', and Raymond Durnat notes (with some disdain) the presence of 'starlets, female, assorted, innumerable'.²² Based on the Hollywood studio system's enticing discovery narratives, the Rank Organisation's Company of Youth – known as the Rank Charm School – functioned on the maxim that 'anybody at all, provided they looked the right way, had personality and were prepared to learn, could become a star'.²³ In 1947 an article in the *Coventry Evening Telegraph* romantically described how

Drabness falls behind when you enter the door of the box-like building in the twisting thoroughfare known as the Highbury New Park in North London. For within this building is a glittering school of charm, a nursery in which Britain's Rank film organisation aims to rear the stars of tomorrow [...] admission to the school is the dream of would-be starlets.²⁴

Promoting the £7000 contracts on offer for successful Charm School trainees, a small selection of the 'starlets-in-training' – including Norma Simpson, Moira Kelly, Sheila Martin, Patsy Drake, Constance Smith and Zina Marshall – were pictured half-ready for their lesson, and half-posing for the camera (figure 2). The trainees' performances on-screen were limited: they were more often to be seen appearing at a local cinema, department store or opening a church fete, and Geoffrey Macnab notes that 'most of them were headed towards oblivion'.²⁵ Nonetheless, at a time of continuing austerity, they offered 'the visibility of stardom' that, as Sarah Street argues, 'was clearly very much desired and [...] was deeply embedded in popular cultural discourse',²⁶ and regional newspaper coverage suggests that these figures embodied glamour and escapism at a local level.

The Charm School's lead tutor, Molly Terraine, reported that she was receiving hundreds of letters from young hopefuls or their fond mothers, and would occasionally be followed home by 'would-be stars'.²⁷ The scheme relied on and encouraged the pleasures of stardom, encompassing escapism, identification and consumption, which, as Jackie Stacey has discussed, were entangled with feminine subjectivities and identities.²⁸ In *Star Gazing*, Stacey's analysis of the relationship between spectators and Hollywood stardom in 1940s and 1950s Britain

Fig. 2. 'Where starlets are put through the paces of play-reading', *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 11 February 1947. © Mirrorpix.



emphasizes the importance of film stars to adolescent women, describing how their 'cultural ideals of feminine beauty and charm, played a key role in [...] processes of identity formation' and the transition from childhood to adult femininity.²⁹ Offering 'enjoyment in the recognition of familiar aspects of everyday life' but also 'the possible fantasy of something better' on the distinctively indigenous scale that Bruce Babington identifies as key to understanding the significance of British stardom, in 1948 *Picturegoer* characterized the Charm School starlets as being 'under construction' – drawing attention to their everyday backgrounds, their personal labour and individual success.³⁰ Popular emphasis on the starlets' youth, their homely regional origins and a trajectory based on self-improvement was closely linked to the contemporary popularity of beauty and talent contests, which as Claire Langhamer highlights, 'intensified the idea of beauty as work' and 'the competitions as a rational way of earning a living'.³¹ Indeed the school enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with talent contests and pageants, which offered short traineeships to their winners; these prizes were presented by Rank stars and trainees, who provided a living marker for contestants' aspirations.

At the same time, the increasing visibility of young female stars in the immediate post-war years both informed and was influenced by a burgeoning youth culture. Bill Osgerby's study of youth in Britain notes that after 1945, a range of factors – including the expansion of educational provision, the organization of young people's leisure and the increased demand for youth labour – 'combined to intensify the institutionalisation and formalisation of youth as a distinct age grade'.³²

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 197, 110.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 126; Bruce Babington, *British Stars and Stardom: From Alma Taylor to Sean Connery* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 10. See, for instance, John K. Newnham, 'Progress report on the Charm School', *Picturegoer*, 25 September 1948, pp. 6–7.

³¹ Claire Langhamer, *Womens Leisure in England, 1920–60* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 44.

³² Bill Osgerby, *Youth in Britain Since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), pp. 2, 17–28.

- 33 Ibid., p. 3. Both Osgerby and David Fowler stress the interwar roots of youth culture: Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*, pp. 7–8, 52; David Fowler, *The First Teenagers: The Lifestyle of Young Wage-Earners in Interwar Britain* (London: Woburn Press, 1995).
- 34 Penny Tinkler, *Constructing Girlhood: Popular Magazines for Girls Growing up in England, 1920–50* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1995), pp. 45–46.
- 35 Penny Tinkler, 'Miss Modern: youthful feminine modernity and the nascent teenager, 1930–40', in Catherine Clay, Maria DiCenzo, Barbara Green and Fiona Hackney (eds), *Women's Periodicals and Print Culture in Britain, 1918–1939* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), p. 154.
- 36 Rollyson, *To Be a Woman*, pp. 18–19; Angela McRobbie highlights a focus on the 'personal' and individualism that was exemplified by problem pages in her study of girls' magazines, *Feminism and Youth Culture: From 'Jackie' to 'Just Seventeen'* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1991), pp. 107–09, 131.
- 37 Richard Hornsey, "'The modern way to loveliness': middle-class cosmetics and chain-store beauty culture in mid-twentieth century Britain', *Women's History Review*, vol. 28, no. 1 (2018), p. 112.
- 38 Lucy Bolton, 'A phenomenology of girlhood: being Mia in *Fish Tank* (Andrea Arnold, 2009)', in Handyside and Taylor-Jones (eds), *International Cinema and the Girl*, pp. 75–84; Anna Coatman, 'A holiday from reality', *Sight and Sound*, vol. 28, no. 10 (2018), p. 27; Sophie Mayer, *Political Animals: The New Feminist Cinema* (London: IB Tauris, 2016), pp. 79–96; So Mayer, "'I'll write": Shelagh Delaney's *The White Bus* and the future-perfect of women's writing', in *Red, White and Zero*, BFI DVD booklet (2018), pp. 14–16; Williams, *Female Stars of British Cinema*,

Osgerby particularly draws attention to the 'gradual emergence of more active and assertive versions of feminine identity', a shift influenced by the wartime mobilization of young women but which also had its roots in interwar discourses surrounding youth, femininity and modernity.³³ Craigie was in her twenties in this formative, interwar period and in 1932 was a journalist for the 'working girls' magazine *Betty's Paper*.³⁴ This was one of an array of new papers for single, working women in their teens and early twenties, which Penny Tinkler suggests targeted a market of young women who, with their free time and their wages, 'created distinctive youth identities through commercial and informal leisure choices' and were 'constructed and courted as consumers'.³⁵ As agony aunt 'Betty', Craigie imparted advice on beauty, relationships and leisure, focusing on readers' ability to 'improve' themselves through new diets or beauty treatments, or by going out dancing more often with friends, thus directly contributing to and encouraging a 'self-fashioning' that was closely modelled on Hollywood stardom.³⁶ Richard Hornsey's exploration of make-up in this period highlights how young women were able 'to forge a mode of public self-fashioning out of the cheap, mass-produced delights of Hollywood', allowing them to 'express their own defiant modernity and explore a short-lived moment of freedom before the onset of marriage and motherhood'.³⁷ Girls' papers were part of this 'moment of freedom', and encouraged readers to write in with their own problems, escape into the world of torrid romance stories, compare their lives to those of the stars, or fashion their appearance and lifestyle on the basis of beauty, health and relationship advice. These papers offered a space for, and relied upon, young women's subjective experiences, imaginative lives and individual processes of identification as part of their construction of modern, feminine identities.

I contend that Craigie's films in the immediate post-war years can be recontextualized as making a distinct contribution to a strand of British social realism concerned with young women in the process of 'identity formation' and 'self-fashioning'. Recent feminist scholarship by Lucy Bolton, Anna Coatman, So Mayer and Melanie Williams has emphasized how British social realism – historically, but also specifically in the last few decades – has been shaped by its focus on young female characters and their subjectivities.³⁸ Coatman suggests that working-class women became the focus of certain films from the late 1960s to the 1980s; and that since the 1990s, expanding on conventional definitions of gender, 'a younger generation of British women, trans and non-binary filmmakers and television writers have been pushing at the boundaries of a rather narrowly conceived social realism, often focusing on the subjective experiences of working-class women and girls in their films'.³⁹ Exploring a broader field of film genres and modes of production, Sarah Hill's study of young femininity in contemporary British cinema examines a 'mode of self-making' central to post-feminist culture and negotiated (with a sense of ambivalence) by the growing number of 'British girl films'.⁴⁰ In altogether different circumstances in the 1940s, Craigie's

pp. 88–110; ‘Girl with Green Eyes’, in *Woodfall: A Revolution in British Cinema*, BFI DVD Booklet (2018), pp. 41–45.

39 Coatman, ‘A holiday from reality’, p. 27.

40 Sarah Hill, *Young Women, Girls and Postfeminism in Contemporary British Film* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), pp. 3, 1–2.

41 Rollyson, *To Be a Woman*, pp. 151, 358.

42 ‘The cinema in Wales’, 15 February 1949, BBC WAC. Craigie’s film reviews acknowledge that some of the best films are those without stars, but also reveal her appreciation of star performances. In her later writing for the *Evening Standard*, she praises the ‘earthy, primitive’ and unglamorous style of neorealist star, Anna Magnani, and draws attention to the idiosyncratic star quality of Barbara Archer, a young British actress from East London. ‘She turned her back on glamour’, *Evening Standard*, 22 March 1956, p. 7; ‘Cinderella of East Ham’, *Evening Standard*, 1 August 1955, p. 8.

43 Andrew Higson, ‘“Britain’s outstanding contribution to the film”: the documentary realist tradition’, in Charles Barr (ed.), *All Our Yesterdays: Ninety Years of British Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 1986), p. 83.

44 Bolton, ‘A phenomenology of girlhood’, p. 75.

45 Mayer, *Political Animals*, pp. 94–96, 86.

46 Sarah Projansky, *Spectacular Girls: Media Fascination and Celebrity Culture* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2014), pp. 4–6, 10.

work was influenced by the documentary realist tradition, but also by popular culture promoting the agency, selfhood and glamour of young femininity. This combination was due in part to Craigie’s background on *Betty’s Paper* and her interest in the ‘young women she met and wanted to film’, but also to her idiosyncratic position working on the borderlines between documentary and feature filmmaking.⁴¹ She made *The Way We Live*, under the banner of the Rank Organisation, for Filippo Del Giudice’s company Two Cities, and made *Blue Scar* with Outlook Films, her own production company with MacQuitty – in both cases with the aim of theatrical distribution. While she was critical of ‘pandering’ to the box office, and even of starlets, Craigie’s interviews and radio talks often show her awareness of both the industrial value and ‘human’ appeal of stardom: in 1949 she stated that while she thought the star system had ‘gone too far’, it was ‘human nature to have personal favourites’.⁴² With this in mind, I now explore how Craigie’s post-war projects blurred traditional realist boundaries between ‘a common, public sphere of responsible social activity’ and escapist ‘individual desire and wish fulfilment’ – embodied by Hollywood stardom, and carved out spaces for feminine subjectivities and processes of identification through their local stars.⁴³

By resituating Craigie’s films with an eye on their engagement with popular, regional interests in stardom, I suggest that *The Way We Live* and *Blue Scar* addressed the individual experiences and aspirations of young women as part of their examination of the post-war settlement, stretching the boundaries of social realism to include them. Indeed Craigie’s work can be reassessed as contributing to an evolving tradition of British social realism in which, as Bolton suggests, ‘girls’ stories have been given prominence, even if usually as symptomatic of society’s fears’.⁴⁴ Mayer explores this tradition within contemporary feminist cinema as an ‘imaginatively liberating project’ characterized by hybridity, ambiguity and permeable boundaries, ‘deeply invested in investigating subjectivity’ and the reclamation of girlhoods ‘without being contained by them’.⁴⁵ Comparable to the ambivalent nature of the ‘spectacularization of girlhood’ – structured by dual narratives of ‘cultural adoration and disdain’ – identified by Sarah Projansky in more recent media culture,⁴⁶ Craigie’s filmic address to young women’s lives was simultaneously shaped by contemporary tensions, insecurities and anxieties surrounding such figures in the mid to late 1940s.

Following her appearance as Alice Copperwheat in *The Way We Live*, the local paper *Western Morning News* announced that 17-year-old Patsy Scantlebury had been offered a seven-year contract with the Rank Organisation. Enlisted to join the Charm School, Patsy was pictured smiling in a cinema foyer in *The Sphere* in December 1946, accompanied by a caption explaining: ‘A Devon beauty gets a film contract: Patsy Scantleberry [sic] becomes Patsy Drake for her new career. She was

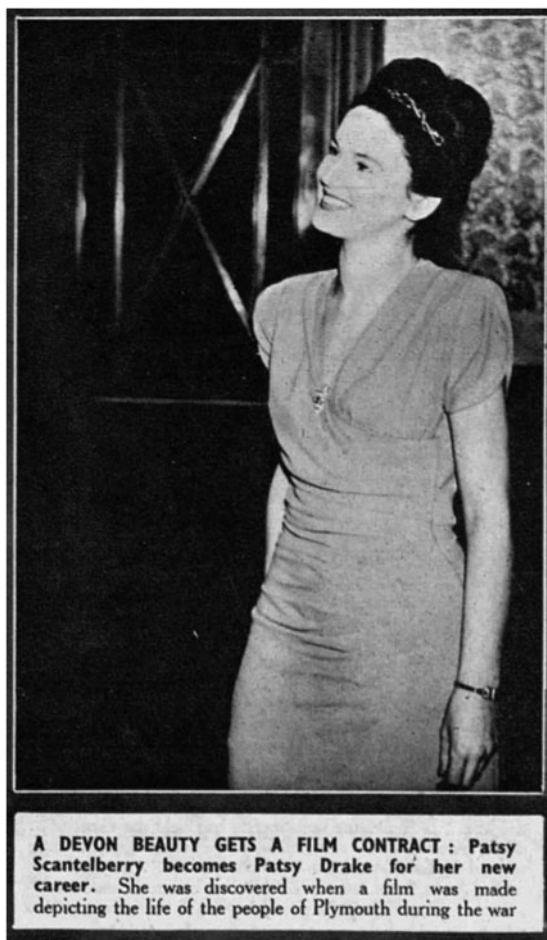


Fig. 3. Patsy Drake in *The Sphere*, 7 December 1946. © Illustrated London News/ Mary Evans Picture Library.

47 'English players in Paris, and other news of stage, film and ballet', *The Sphere*, 7 December 1946, p. 337, BNA.

48 Stacey, *Star Gazing*, p. 126; Richard Dyer, *Stars* (1979) (London: BFI Publishing, 1997), p. 43.

discovered when a film was made depicting the life of the people of Plymouth during the war' (figure 3).⁴⁷ The photograph and description evoke the close proximity between Rank's Charm School and provincial beauty pageants: Patsy is presented both as a local representative and as an embodiment of the desirability, glamour and success of stardom. She is constructed as a figure of identification through a proximity to the everyday and recognizable, but also as a 'fantasy of something better' through her clothes, make-up and hair style, exemplifying the tension between natural 'ordinariness' and 'extraordinariness' that Richard Dyer highlights as characteristic of stardom.⁴⁸ Illustrative of this tension are other publicity photographs issued by the Rank Organisation of her being coached by Molly Terraine, outdoors feeding ducks or picking flowers, establishing a girl-next-door image by showing the labour involved in becoming a star. More formal portraits stress a more 'extraordinary' glamour as part of the film industry's efforts to ape the Hollywood star system during this period. In a portrait included in the publicity stills for

49 *Blue Scar* publicity stills album, BFI SC.

50 'Film: "The Way We Live" by Jill Craigie', pp. 4–6.

51 'Stars of the future', p. 2; 'Local stars in new film – chosen by director', *Western Morning News*, 6 August 1945, p. 4, BNA.

52 'Local stars in new film', p. 4; Babington, *British Stars and Stardom*, p. 22.

53 'Stars of the future', p. 2.

54 Film premiere, Odeon Cinema, 29 July 1946, 3094.20 Lord Mayor of Plymouth: files of correspondence and associated paperwork, PWDRO; *Western Evening Herald*, 26 July 1946, p. 1, Plymouth Central Library.

Blue Scar (in which Patsy also made a small appearance), she is pictured in a studio with rays of light spreading across the background in an art deco style, wearing a pristine white dress with her hair neatly curled.⁴⁹ Patsy's promotion as an up-and-coming young star at Rank – a 'Devon beauty' – is congruent with her appearance in *The Way We Live*, in which her role as Alice is simultaneously defined by her connections with ordinary, everyday life and community in Plymouth and more individualist modes of young femininity.

Craigie's account of the production of *The Way We Live* explains that she scouted the city for 'promising "naturals"' to appear on camera as a means of presenting the local perspective on town planning.⁵⁰ The film's narrative centres on a journalist (Peter Willes, the film's only professional actor) who visits Plymouth with the aim of researching *A Plan for Plymouth* – a 1943 blueprint for rebuilding the war-damaged city from scratch by eminent town planner Sir Patrick Abercrombie and city engineer James Paton-Watson. Shopkeepers, councillors and fishermen play themselves in scenes in which they discuss the merits of, and problems with, this Plan, and Craigie cast the Copperwheat family from amateur and non-professional actors living in the city. Mr George Copperwheat was played by Francis Lunt, a dockyard worker already known locally for his appearances on radio and on the stage; Mrs Copperwheat was Verena Chaffé, a war widow whom Craigie had met while interviewing women at the local War Widows Guild; and the girls playing their three daughters (Patsy Scantlebury, June Riddolls and Beryl Rosekelly) had either responded to local advertisements or been 'discovered' on the spot.⁵¹ In the *Western Morning News*, the film's local players were described in terms of their real-life experiences of being bombed-out, losing possessions and family members, further promoting the veracity of the film's treatment of planning through the lens of wartime experiences and connections to living conditions in the city – offering the kind of specific sociocultural, regional meanings (or 'parochial baggage') that Babington argues British stars 'signify [...] in relation to their original environment'.⁵² Publicity emphasized that the Copperwheat actors had been 'gathered from various districts in Plymouth – all have been blitzed, billeted and are waiting for the new homes they hope the Plan will provide'.⁵³ At the film's premiere at Plymouth's Odeon in July 1946, the family cast was presented on stage, followed by a post-screening speech from the planners; a group photograph of the 'local stars' in the foyer, published in the *Western Evening Herald*, reinforced their ordinariness and their connection to the spaces of the city being planned.⁵⁴

The Way We Live's Copperwheat family storyline allows for an exploration of Abercrombie and Paton-Watson's plan for completely rebuilding the city that illuminates everyday material and contemporary realities of living there. The family are shown queueing up to be rehoused, settling into their claustrophobic billet and taking a tour of a prefabricated house. Patsy's performance as the Copperweats' eldest

teenage daughter, Alice, is often given special attention in these scenes. The family's arrival at their billet, for instance, emphasizes her reaction through a close-up of her wrinkled nose and slight pout as she looks up at the house and then, laden with blankets and saucepans, follows her family inside. In a 1995 television interview, Craigie remembered that she had engineered the inclusion of a scene in which the journalist interviews local housewives and mothers, eliciting details of their responsibility for childcare, laundry, shopping and cooking, and their need for improved housing conditions: Craigie suggested that this scene was 'inserted in as a deliberate piece of feminism', as she felt the planners had not taken women's concerns into consideration.⁵⁵ Depicting a range of priorities and opinions across three generations of women in the same family, the Copperwheat scenes also indicate Craigie's feminist inclusion of day-to-day discussion of housing issues in Plymouth. On the family's first arrival at their temporary billet, an establishing shot frames them in the room together as they discuss their needs in the small, shared space: the youngest daughter dreams of a toy cupboard; the mother and daughters discuss sleeping arrangements; the grandmother inspects the cutlery provisions. As they settle in, it becomes apparent that the family have competing priorities and a range of domestic requirements: Patricia needs space and quiet to do her homework, while Alice paints her nails and argues with her mother about going out to see her friends. Dreaming of their future family home, all three daughters agree on a need for 'a room of one's own' – a site for their own hobbies, interests and identity formation – a desire which, in its allusion to Virginia Woolf, also indicates the influence of Craigie's feminist beliefs.⁵⁶

As a member of the Copperwheat family, Alice is constructed as part of the local community shown to be in dialogue with the planners,⁵⁷ yet the film's drama sequences also stress her more individual concerns with her romantic life, with meeting friends and attending dances. This chimes with the visual vocabulary of cinematic girlhoods that Fiona Handyside and Kate Taylor-Jones describe as 'the rhythms, patterns and different temporalities of girlhood',⁵⁸ and is situated distinctly beyond the realms of the Planners' public talks, their illustrated designs and maps of the future city. As in wartime 'melodramas of everyday life' that combine an emphasis on private life with 'a knowable and known community',⁵⁹ the aesthetic treatment of Alice in a dancing scene on the Hoe demonstrates her own private dilemmas – her independence, subjectivity and a host of her personal priorities – while also depicting the specific social environment in Plymouth in 1945. The sequence combines shots indicative of what, in wartime realist filmmaking, Higson has identified as a blend of 'documentary's distanced public gaze' and 'the individuated private looks of the fictional protagonists in narrative cinema'.⁶⁰ It begins with a medium shot of Alice standing at the front of a crowd of people looking on at the dancers – characterized by a 'distanced public gaze', though one that is accompanied by a first-person voice-over offering access to her private thoughts. She dwells on her

55 Channel 4 Interview with Peter Hennessy, *What Has Become of Us?*, November 1994, 15263 Imperial War Museum.

56 Thank you to the audience members at the screening of *The Way We Live* at the Plymouth Arts Cinema in November 2019 for their comments on the Copperwheat daughters' priorities, and to Lizzie Thynne for our conversations about Patsy in particular.

57 Leo Enticknap and Mark Tewdr-Jones emphasize *The Way We Live's* contribution to changing the popular image of urban planning – shifting away from depicting planners as 'scientist-dictators' to showing them as modern, visionary figures who were including locals as part of the planning process.

58 Handyside and Taylor-Jones (eds), *International Cinema and the Girl*, p. 7.

59 Higson, *Waving the Flag*, p. 220.

60 Higson, "'Britain's outstanding contribution to the film'", p. 83.

friend Dorothy's absence, on whether she should go home, on potential beaux and what they might think of her – 'can't look anywhere for sailors, hope they don't think I'm here to be picked up'. She is swept into the dance by an American sailor, and her thoughts continue, covering her friendship with Dorothy, wondering about the name of her dancing partner, her attraction to a friendship with both Jimmy and Jock (the eligible sailors to whom she is introduced), what her father would think, and the hole she will be wearing in her shoes from dancing. The editing and cinematography in this scene reinforce Alice's impressions as a set of 'individuated private looks', which include close-ups of her with the sailor to accompany her thoughts on him (figure 4), medium-long shots as she judges her friend from afar, and a high-angle shot of her dancing as if to imagine her father's point of view (as she expresses her relief that he is not there). While the locally recognizable pastime and setting, featuring local extras and showing landmarks on the Hoe (figure 5), emblemize the area's history, community and the film's 'tale of a town and its townsfolk', the scene simultaneously offers a brief yet detailed depiction of a teenage girl's night out with a friend.

Echoing Craigie's experience of the modern modes of femininity encouraged by *Betty's Paper* in the interwar years, Alice is also constructed as a figure aligned with aspirational consumption – albeit during austerity conditions. On the family's visit to a prefabricated house, they inspect each of the rooms and discuss how the new domestic environment could work in practice. When Alice wanders into a bedroom with a dreamy look, however, stopping to consider her reflection in a mirror, a static shot foregrounds her appearance – including a new hairstyle and clothes – and her own preoccupation with it. Alice's changed appearance is situated as the result of the influence of her friendships with American sailors: she suggests the house is 'bound to be good' if it's American, and 'a few frilly curtains in here and I think it would look cute as cute', in contrast to her father's demands for a more straightforward comfort. In realist home front films, Antonia Lant describes a sense of consternation surrounding 'glamour' and its 'potentially anti-national connotations'; here, facing the post-war world, Alice's visual transformation is aligned with an aspirational Hollywood-style glamour.⁶¹ There is also a sense of her youthful experimentation here evocative of 'home-based' practices of individual expression – 'the rituals of trying on clothes and experimenting with hair-styles and make-up' – identified by Angela McRobbie as characteristic of women's participation in youth culture in the 1950s.⁶² Alice's preoccupation with 'frills', a 'cute' home and with her own appearance is therefore at odds with the concerns of her family, and also with the civic participation that Abercrombie and Paton-Watson suggested that the town plan would involve. Whereas her younger sister takes pleasure in the new spaces and opportunities offered by the Plan, detailing them excitedly to her younger sister, Alice is uninterested. She is presented as a mouthpiece for feelings of apathy articulated in the film's commentary, an attitude encountered

61 Antonia Lant, 'Prologue: "mobile femininity"', in Christine Gledhill and Gillian Swanson (eds), *Nationalising Femininity: Culture, Sexuality and British Cinema in the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp. 13–34, 22, 24.

62 McRobbie, *Feminism and Youth Culture*, pp. 5–6. Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*, pp. 56–57, highlights the 'home-centredness of young women's cultural life', gaining and demonstrating independence through 'bedroom culture'.



Fig. 4. Alice dancing with sailor, in *The Way We Live*.



Fig. 5. Dancing on the Plymouth Hoe, in *The Way We Live*.

63 'Film: "The Way We Live" by Jill Craigie', p. 5; Toby Haggith, "'Castles in the Air": British film and the reconstruction of the built environment, 1939–51' (PhD thesis: University of Warwick, 1998), pp. 169, 177–78.

by Craigie in the course of her research in the city.⁶³ On visiting an exhibition detailing the Plan at the Plymouth Museum with her sailor boyfriend, they consider a model of the proposed new city. She simply states: 'I don't think there's anything in it [...] I don't know if I want it or not. I don't think it matters much', moving away and flummoxing the journalist who suggests the need for a more inquisitive outlook and the communitarian approach to planning that the film otherwise promotes.

Craigie later recounted how during the film's production she visited a local youth group in the city and encouraged an agitational approach to town planning by posing the question 'what are YOU going to do about it?' The youth group were then involved in staging a protest march in favour of Abercrombie and Paton-Watson's plan in *The Way We Live's* closing sequence.⁶⁴ While this optimistic ending promoted an idealistic, social democratic community united in favour of the Plan, the film's construction of Alice suggested the presence of a more complex figure: a young woman affected along with others by the post-war conditions of the city, but with an interest in individual opportunities of leisure, friendship, romance and 'self-fashioning' for her generation. On its release, *The Way We Live* broke box-office records in Plymouth, with Patsy described as a local success story. Two Cities encouraged connections between her 'discovery' and Hollywood star counterparts, announcing her as a 'Vivien Leigh type, whom producers are watching'.⁶⁵ In 1947 she reprised her role as Alice for a radio play based on the film and featuring the majority of the same cast, and local press periodically announced 'Patsy's' return visits back to Plymouth, for events such as her role as bridesmaid at her sister's wedding to a US Navy ensign and an appearance with fellow Rank star Bonar Colleano at a party for 400 children organized by Plymouth dockworkers in 1947.⁶⁶ In December 1948 the *Western Morning News* reported that she was mobbed by 'youthful autograph hunters' while opening a church bazaar in Devonport.⁶⁷ As for many from the Charm School, her stardom is evidenced more in publicity photos and local appearances than in her film performances. Patsy's career on-screen was limited and she appeared in just a few of the low-budget B-films produced by Highbury Studios, the Charm School's training ground. These included a romantic comedy, *Love in Waiting* (Douglas Peirce, 1948), in which she plays a timid runaway in London who gains confidence and new friendships working as a waitress in an old-fashioned restaurant (alongside other Charm School stars). Her role not only presents traces of her performance as Alice but echoes key components of her star image, as an ordinary young woman from the 'provinces' concerned with forging a more exciting, independent life of her own.

Following *The Way We Live's* release, press reports began to detail Craigie's search for local performers to appear in her new mining film set in South Wales. In April 1948, *Sunday Pictorial* noted: "'The Way We Live" produced one promising girl starlet, Patsy Scantlebury, who has since been named Patsy Drake. Jill hopes that "Blue Scar" will produce another, for she is seeking an unknown Welsh girl who can sing.'⁶⁸ A couple of months later, the South Wales press announced the casting of 22-year-old Gwyneth Vaughan as the film's female lead: Vaughan would be playing the part of Olwen, a miner's daughter and aspiring singer, opposite established actor Emrys Jones. Already contracted to Alliance Studios and with some experience of acting on stage and in B-films, Vaughan's casting was announced with slight disappointment, as it followed a widely publicized search for a 'Welsh girl singing star'.⁶⁹ Outlook had held auditions in May for hopefuls, and camera tests for a

64 Interview with Jill Craigie by Geoffrey Macnab, June 1991, qtd in Tewdr-Jones, 'From town hall to cinema', p. 174.

65 'Stars of the future', p. 2.

66 'City's film star sees sister wed', *Western Evening Herald*, 16 July 1947, press scrapbook, p. 180, BFI SC; 'Celebrities at party' and 'Plymouth dockers' party', *Western Morning News*, 6 January 1947, p. 6, BNA.

67 'Patsy returns: guard of honour for young actress', *Western Morning News*, 13 December 1948, p. 6, BNA.

68 *Sunday Pictorial*, 18 April 1948, press scrapbook, p. 7, BFI SC.

69 'Welsh actress chosen for "Blue Scar" film', *Western Mail and South Wales News*, 14 June 1948; 'The search for the Welsh girl singing star', *Daily Herald*, 10 May 1948, press scrapbook, pp. 24, 13, BFI SC.

- 70 'Search for local film talent', *Glamorgan Gazette*, 14 May 1948, p. 13, BFI SC.
- 71 'Local girls given screen tests', *Port Talbot Guardian*, 28 May 1948, p. 22, BFI SC.
- 72 Siân Phillips, *Private Faces: The Autobiography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1999), p. 128.
- 73 While 'chosen from hundreds of girls', press suggested that Dilys had not in fact applied but was invited to audition on the basis of a performance Craigie heard on BBC Cardiff's Home Service. 'She didn't ask – gets film job', *Daily Herald*, 17 June 1948; 'Welsh pupil teacher new screen "find"', *Western Mail and South Wales News*, 17 June 1948, press scrapbook, p. 25, BFI SC.
- 74 'True to life film of the Welsh coal valleys', *South Wales Argus*, 9 November 1946; 'Making "Blue Scar"', press scrapbook, p. 5, insert 95, BFI SC.
- 75 'Writing the script by Jill Craigie', and 'The real Welsh miner – and the film one', *South Wales Echo and Evening Express*, 5 November 1946, insert 105–06, and press scrapbook, p. 5, BFI SC; 'Miners won't act for film', *Gloucester Citizen*, 5 November 1946, p. 9, BNA.
- 76 'Wales should form own film company', *Port Talbot Guardian*, 14 May 1948, press scrapbook, p. 14, BFI SC.
- 77 'Making "Blue Scar"', contribution for *In Britain Now*, BBC Home Service, 8 December 1948, press scrapbook, pp. 96, 74, BFI SC; Gwyn Thomas, 'The miners call it "our film"', *Coal*, July 1948, pp. 20–21, National Coal Mining Museum for England.
- 78 *Blue Scar* publicity stills album, BFI SC. Gwyneth Vaughan was pictured 'resting' on a pile of pit props, on a visit to a mountain colliery.

selected few, and these were followed by a week of performances from applicants at the Odeon cinema in Port Talbot. Alongside these appearances, members of the Outlook team gave talks on the film's progress and announced some of the locals who were to be given minor roles, but by their final night the casting of the film's lead was still a mystery.⁷⁰ A sense of anticipation for Craigie's casting of a 'local girl' was captured in the *Port Talbot Guardian*, which noted:

it is not known whether Miss Craigie has been successful in finding the heroine [...] Soon, we hope, we shall know, and if a local girl is selected we shall all be delighted. Whoever it is, it is certain that the young lady in question is on the road to stardom.⁷¹

Television and stage actor Siân Phillips, who grew up in Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen, later recalled her teenage frustration when Craigie came to her village: 'everyone auditioned for [*Blue Scar*] in the Miners' Welfare Hall. Everyone except me. It was summer and I longed to join the queue.'⁷² While those who auditioned were to be disappointed when it came to the lead role of Olwen, a new scene was reported to have been added for six of them, and a second female lead was announced as Dilys Jones, a 19-year-old trainee teacher and daughter of a Port Talbot carpenter, thereby including a more locally representative cast and young female lead.⁷³ The search for a star and the public audition process were a way of reinforcing a sense of the film's authenticity through involving 'indigenous' talent and reassuring locals in the process.⁷⁴

Craigie's contemporary accounts of researching *Blue Scar* indicate that she had initially met with an attitude of wariness towards 'film people', who had previously misrepresented Welsh miners as uneducated and shown them in clichéd ways – wearing cloth caps and mufflers, and singing on their way to work (she quoted one miner as saying 'we only sing when we leave').⁷⁵ In addition to talent scouting in the valleys and holding public auditions in Port Talbot, Craigie promoted the formation of Welsh independent production companies 'with Welsh actors, script writers and directors', which would make use of the 'wonderful scenery and studio space, with ready-made stories in nearly every valley'.⁷⁶ Alongside her close collaboration with miners and the NCB on the film's industrial scenes, her script was developed through spending time with mining families, attending meetings in the Workmen's Hall and youth clubs, and liaising with locals, and the non-professional, amateur and established Welsh actors playing the Williams family.⁷⁷ During the 'star' search and in *Blue Scar*'s publicity, Craigie placed an importance on casting natural, characterful young women, in contrast with the more polished, glamorous image popularly associated with film stardom. Reinforcing their authenticity and connections with the local community, Outlook's publicity portraits of the two lead women depict them sitting casually outside on location, with an emphasis on their 'natural' appearance and ordinary (although pretty) outfits.⁷⁸ Publicity photos of Dilys pictured her smiling as she came out of college with friends or

perched on a stile in a field (further bolstering her ‘natural’ image), but also having make-up applied, listening to the sound on set (figure 6), and talking to MacQuitty about the script. In these photos, Dilys’s ‘ordinariness’ as a local discovery is combined with her delighted participation in the ‘extraordinary’ process of *Blue Scar*’s production, simultaneously embodying connections to the local community as well as film stardom’s offer of escape from the everyday.

Blue Scar’s opening sequence establishes Olwen’s hopes of becoming an opera singer as part of its detailed depiction of working and living conditions for the mining community. The first shot, indebted to establishing shots of industrial landscapes and working-class environments from interwar documentaries, pans across the village from the top of a hill to the Afan colliery at the end of the valley. Scenes set at the mine introduce the working pressures faced by local miners, with boyfriend Tom (Emrys Jones) finishing his shift and chatting in the newly installed showers. A shot of Tom washing the back of a fellow miner fades into one of the back of Olwen’s father (Prysor Williams) being washed by his wife in a tin bath in their cottage. The Williams family are framed in the surroundings of their living room in a similar style to the framing of the Copperwheats in their billet. As ‘Mam’ (Rachel Thomas) washes her husband and son in the tin bath, Olwen announces that she has won a scholarship to the University of Cardiff to pursue her career (figure 7). Two shots construct and firmly situate Olwen’s narrative in relation to her home surroundings, defined by domestic family rituals, her mother’s labour and its proximity to the mining industry: a shot of her father in the bath is shown as if from her point of view; another frames her with a portrait of a mining ancestor in the background and her Left-sympathizing brother, Thomas (Kenneth Griffith), also a miner, in the foreground. While Olwen is shown dreamily thinking of her scholarship, Thomas articulates a cynical view of her likely prospects of success, a view based on his low opinion of the aspirational desires of young women in the village who ‘get better chances’ through marriage or jobs in the local plastics factory.

In an interview quoted in *Illustrated* magazine in 1947, Craigie vividly imagined the thought processes of miners’ daughters:

Usually you find that the daughter of a miner was brought up on the dole. She doesn’t want her husband to be a miner, to see his life broken by silicosis. She visualizes herself doing washing day after day, a chore without end. She often works in a big town and sees an entirely different type of life there. Can you blame her for wanting a ‘collar-and-tie’ husband, in these circumstances?⁷⁹

Olwen’s narrative – which centres on her decision to pursue her career, and her romantic options of Tom the miner or an English ‘collar-and-tie’ psychologist at the colliery, Alfred Collins (Anthony Pendrell) – clearly evokes this desire to escape the constrictions of mining. Olwen articulates this when she explains her hopes that Tom will give up mining

79 ‘Independent Miss Craigie’, p. 30.

Fig. 6. Dilys Jones on the *Blue Scar* set, Outlook Films and BFI National Archive.



Fig. 7. Olwen at home, in *Blue Scar*.



and ‘better himself’: ‘Dad studied too, and what did it get him? Dust in the lung [...] whatever happens, he’ll still be only a collier, right at the bottom of the social ladder.’ Olwen’s dreams of opportunities beyond the mining community also engage with a contemporary expansion in employment opportunities for young women in the local area. On a national level, Osgerby notes that ‘in place of the constraints of domestic service girls took advantage of opportunities opened up by the expansion of consumer industries, business services, retailing, and especially the growing clerical sector’; with more leisure time and disposable income, ‘many girls’ economic and social horizons were broader than they might

80 Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*, p. 51. These shifts in employment opportunities for young women had begun in the interwar years, as noted in: Leonore Davidoff and Belinda Westover, "From Queen Victoria to the Jazz Age": women's world in England, 1880–1939", in Leonore Davidoff and Belinda Westover (eds), *Our Work, Our Lives, Our Words* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1986), pp. 18–19; Selina Todd, "You'd the feeling you wanted to help": young women, employment and the family in inter-war England", in Krista Cowman and Louise A. Jackson (eds), *Women and Work Culture, Britain c. 1850–1950* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 123–40, 130–31.

81 'Barbara Davies', *South Wales Argus*, 24 June 1948; 'Said "No" to film career', *Daily Herald*, 12 May 1948, press scrapbook, pp. 34, 16, BFI SC. Mary Drew was featured in newspaper coverage having turned down a screen test: her mother suggested the part 'might turn her head'.

82 Gillian Swanson, "So much money and so little to spend it on": morale, consumption and sexuality", in Gledhill and Swanson (eds), *Nationalising Femininity*, p. 81.

have been before the war'.⁸⁰ Illustrative of these opportunities, during Outlook's talent search in 1948, national and regional newspapers featured photographs of 17-year-old shop assistant Barbara Davies and 18-year-old factory worker Mary Drew in their coverage of the film's casting process. These photos drew attention both to the everyday labour of Barbara's and Mary's work, while also relating it to their independence and glamour: Barbara poses in the shoe shop stockroom in a manner that recalls the Charm School stars' publicity photos; Mary is shown carefully made up, working at a machine in a plastics factory.⁸¹ While the role undoubtedly offered opportunities to enter the film world, their work in retail and at the factory already engaged them with contemporary, local and national discourses around feminine modernity and the broadening of young women's horizons, albeit on a more everyday level.

Olwen achieves her hopes of escaping to a 'big town' to train as a singer. While Tom and her family remain in Abergwynfi, she is shown surrounded by other young women, also in training to be stars, in her shared digs in Cardiff, where she 'sees an entirely different type of life' away from the village. On reading a letter from her mother about her father's worsening health, she dwells on a life growing up on the dole, while her room-mates variously brush their hair, make tea and – through their attempts to console her – reveal that they are accustomed to a different level of material comfort. Patsy Drake's brief appearance as one of her room-mates offers an extratextual embodiment of Olwen's aspirations, her own image combining regional origins and the desirable success (and escape) of stardom. By the film's final scenes, Olwen is on her way to achieving fame as a singer, and her London flat shared with new husband Alfred represents her ascent to the comfortable life espoused by her middle-class room-mates. Yet the film's depiction of Olwen's upward trajectory is coloured by its competing sympathies with the miners, especially with Tom. In a scene in which Olwen chooses to go to a dance with Alfred rather than go out with Tom, for example, the camera follows as he pensively travels to a local miners' hall. He glances around the village and up at the colliery as he walks to the train station, tears down a poster declaring 'I'm a miner and proud of it!', and meditates on a *Picture Post* magazine he finds on the train that pictures three relaxed, smiling young women in swimming costumes, strolling along Copacabana beach. Shown in close-up, the photograph represents a world away from the village, colliery and landscape of the valleys he looks onto from the train window, and is identified as a world of opportunity, leisure and travel for young women, situated as a cause of the miners' feelings of inferiority and evincing their inability to offer this kind of lifestyle to potential girlfriends. In doing so it captures a sense of broader post-war anxieties around working-class adolescent women 'as a composite of the problems of female consumption and sexuality', and associated with anti-social, individualistic motivations.⁸²

83 Letter from Jill Craigie to Noel Newsome, 14 September 1947, Coal 27.96 Publicity Films Outlook Films Ltd – The Blue Scar, July 1947–Jan 1949, National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA).

84 *Paradise Alley* – shooting script for *Blue Scar*, 18 August 1947, p. 1, BFI SC.

85 Letter from Jill Craigie to Noel Newsome, 14 September 1947.

86 *Paradise Alley* – shooting script for *Blue Scar*, p. 109.

87 Jill Craigie, 'Do we get what we want from the cinema?', *Woman's Hour*, 31 October 1949, BBC WAC.

88 The distinction between realism and melodrama is further reinforced by setting the naturalistic performance of Emrys Jones against Gwyneth Vaughan's more histrionic style. Many of the cards returned from test screenings singled Jones's natural performance out for praise, with a few criticizing Vaughan. Test screening response cards, BFI SC.

Craigie's proposal to the NCB in 1947 had stated that 'a good prestige film about the coal miner is long, long overdue', and she suggested that her film would 'indirectly benefit recruiting and create greater understanding of some of the problems of the industry'.⁸³ A preface included in Craigie's draft script indicated that *Blue Scar* would address and rectify miners' feelings of inferiority in particular.⁸⁴ Although her proposal suggested the film would also 'get at' the women in mining areas, this focused on encouraging their feelings of pride in their roles within those communities rather than presenting them with opportunities to 'escape'.⁸⁵ It was perhaps this focus on the miners that caused originally planned sequences offering further insight into Olwen's perspective not to appear in the final film. These included a visit to Tom in the rehabilitation clinic, in which Olwen explains her reasons for choosing Alfred ('he has a regular income ... he's not always in and out of strikes ... he can give me a decent home, he's educated and he's even good looking'), and another in which she visits the suburban, middle-class home of Alfred's mother, who has preconceived ideas of her as a miner's daughter.⁸⁶ Instead it is often the miners' perspectives that benefit from an expressive use of cinematography and sound. A shot from the pit cage of the disappearing light above, point-of-view shots of the ceiling of the mine and the echo of voices as Tom is carried out of the shaft following an accident, the blurred visuals and heightened sounds of Olwen's father struggling to breathe when he collapses while listening to football on the wireless – such scenes bring a poetic sensibility to bear on problems in the industry and issues of miners' welfare.

In a 1949 talk for *Woman's Hour* on the subject of 'Do we get what we want from the cinema?', Craigie criticized the escapist appeal of the cinema by drawing on her experience of living in mining areas, and using the example of a young miner and 'his girl' escaping 'into a world of luxurious surroundings' and 'drinking in the philosophy of easy money', dreaming of jobs as car salesmen or advertising agents rather than in the great 'under-manned industries'.⁸⁷ In *Blue Scar*, Tom mocks Olwen's aspirations, aligning her escape with a materialistic consumerism and 'cheap, flashy' superficiality and individualism, as opposed to the collective spirit and working-class solidarity of the village. These sentiments are echoed in the film's stylistic distinction between scenes shot on location with local extras and the more staged interior destinations Olwen reaches beyond the village: her student room in Cardiff, the ornately decorated restaurant where she drinks champagne with Alfred, and her (small) luxury flat in London, with its drinks bar, kitchenette and modern furnishings.⁸⁸ In the film's final scenes, Olwen is surrounded by a set of pretentious friends from the art scene and her material success is conveyed through her changed appearance, styled hair and 'flashy' jewellery. With its unease over this more superficial material landscape, *Blue Scar* offers a precursor to New Wave filmmakers' pitching of nostalgic images of working-class communities against the threat of affluence, consumerism and mass

- 89 Higson, "Britain's outstanding contribution to the film", p. 92; John Hill, *Sex, Class and Realism: British Cinema 1956–1963* (London: British Film Institute, 1986), pp. 150–51.
- 90 Sue Harper, *Women in British Cinema: Mad, Bad and Dangerous to Know* (London: Continuum, 2000), p. 52; Gavin Lambert 'Film and the idea of happiness', in A. G. Weidenfeld (ed.), *Good Living, the Thirteenth Contact Book* (London: Contact Publications, December 1948), p. 61.
- 91 Berry notes that Glenis's 'quiescent attitude, her malleability, are not what we would expect from Craigie's feminism', in *Wales and the Cinema*, p. 173.
- 92 Craigie argued that films depicting different aspects of contemporary life – from the colonies to railways, industry to funfairs – depended on the relevant authorities granting facilities to filmmakers on the condition that scripts were 'subject to the blue pencil of the Public Relations Officer', constituting 'an unseen, insidious censorship'. Craigie, 'You can't jam comedians in a Tube train', *Evening Standard*, 29 March 1954, p. 13.
- 93 P. L. Mannock, 'Homely feeling', *Daily Herald*, 7 April 1949, *Blue Scar* press cuttings file, p. 22, BFI Reuben Library.
- 94 Berry, *Wales and the Cinema*, p. 173.
- 95 Ffrancon, "The same old firm dressed up in a new suit", pp. 49, 54.
- 96 Philip Gillett, *The British Working Class in Postwar Film* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 101.
- 97 The idea of mythology influencing the depiction – and self-representation – of working-class communities is noted in Amy Sargeant's analysis of Joan Littlewood's portrait of post-war East London, 'Sparrows Can't Sing: East End kith and kinship in the 1960s', *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, vol. 6, no. 2 (2009), pp. 256–66.

culture.⁸⁹ Its punishment of Olwen for a perceived 'excess' certainly adheres to a 'puritanical streak' in post-war British cinema that Gavin Lambert identified in his essay 'Films and the idea of happiness' in 1948, noting that 'to judge from the popular British cinema, the pursuit of luxury in everyday living is either criminal or disastrous'.⁹⁰ In contrast with Olwen's 'pursuit of luxury', local girl Glenis (Dilys Jones) waits for Tom: on his return to the village in the film's final scene, she walks with him to the top of a local mountain, illustrating her close proximity to the natural scenery and the colliery.⁹¹ This contrast is suggestive of Craigie's difficulties in reconciling an engagement with young women's individual desires with a careful depiction of the mining community. Olwen, with her desires for stardom and a better material quality of life, is depicted as isolated and unhappy in London; Glenis is portrayed as a homely representative of community and the traditional, supportive feminine networks on which the colliery relied, reinforced by her own vocation as a physiotherapist at the miners' rehabilitation centre.⁹²

On *Blue Scar*'s release, reviews praised its realist exploration of 'authentic mining surroundings' but were unconvinced by 'its prolonged thread of romance sadly lacking in polish': the interior scenes shot in the makeshift studio made Olwen's more glamorous surroundings seem all the more superficial, particularly when critical preference was for 'quality' realism.⁹³ David Berry takes the same tack, praising the film's engagement with the real, urban Wales of the period but criticizing the 'tacky formula writing [that] takes over' by its finale. He notes that 'the romance between Tom Thomas and Olwen, generally poorly handled and strained, tends to dominate the film's more worthwhile elements', and that the film suffered from 'Craigie's ambivalence about its priorities' and an unsatisfactory, un-feminist ending, particularly for Glenis, who is 'demeaned by seeing herself as second best'.⁹⁴ Gweno Ffrancon is similarly dismissive of Craigie's treatment of Olwen's aspirations, but does stress that *Blue Scar* offers 'an important historical source' in its account of nationalization, noting that it 'attempts, and, in some respects, succeeds in depicting a community and a way of life which faced remarkable social changes in the late 1940s and early 1950s'.⁹⁵ Similarly, Philip Gillett astutely indicates that 'change is at the heart of the film – change which does not always proceed as anticipated'.⁹⁶ The scenes featuring Olwen's escape from the Valleys are suggestive of an attempt to foreground, or at the very least include, the changes in young women's experiences within the mining community, and were influenced by Craigie's close engagement with local living and working conditions in South Wales. Olwen's aspirational narrative, however, was ultimately constrained by this mode of production, affected by the NCB's sponsorship and attendant pressures to present the mining industry positively and in accordance with its own vision of itself.⁹⁷ Yet *Blue Scar* bears comparison with contemporary cinematic girlhoods that Handyside and Taylor-Jones

98 Handyside and Taylor-Jones (eds), *International Cinema and the Girl*, p. 3.

99 Catherine de la Roche, 'The mask of realism', *Penguin Film Review*, no. 7 (1948), p. 43.

100 Craigie, 'Do we get what we want from the cinema?'

101 Gillett, *The British Working Class*, p. 102

102 The spelling of 'Glynis' here is based on the shooting script.

103 *Paradise Alley* – shooting script for *Blue Scar*, pp. 123–31.

104 *Ibid.*, pp. 129–30.

argue express 'the shifting terrain of gender roles in a neoliberal postfeminist culture that emphasises agency, choice and empowerment for all; failing to take into account structural and institutional obstacles'.⁹⁸ *Blue Scar*'s somewhat conflicted portrayal of Olwen's and Glenis's agency evokes its own 'shifting terrain' of post-war girlhood: discursively engaging with feminine modernities promoted in popular culture as well as the questions, tensions and obstacles faced by young women in this period.

In 1948, film critic Catherine de la Roche criticized British cinema's suppression of women's experiences, suggesting that they were hidden beneath a 'mask of realism' – a 'mask' that Craigie's work in the same period attempted to pick at and peer beneath, by weaving popular narratives of stardom and modes of feminine identification into her social-realist explorations of the post-war settlement.⁹⁹ An alternative final sequence in an earlier version of *Blue Scar*'s script, which sees Olwen return to the village, now a successful star, to judge a singing competition with the Abergwynfi choir in the local workman's hall, would perhaps have reconciled more successfully its competing elements of community and individual aspiration. The inclusion instead of the London scenes was most likely influenced by the interests of commercial exhibition circuits and, as Craigie herself stressed, by a production context encouraging 'a far greater proportion of escapist pictures', and the kinds of affluent landscapes or 'dream worlds' offered by 'unreal romances, murder stories, phony psychological stories and horror films'.¹⁰⁰ Gillett suggests that *Blue Scar*'s attention to mining offered audiences little relief from everyday life, and 'a decade was to pass before industrial landscapes became fashionable in the new wave of British realist films'.¹⁰¹ In this earlier version, however, Tom drives Olwen to the hall and she expresses doubts about life in the city and her marriage; he mocks her dreams of stardom, and later proposes to Glynis with a note passed to her at the concert.¹⁰² The sequence is still very much aligned with Tom and the mining community: Olwen is positioned as an outsider, on the stage of the miners' hall with the judges and looking on at Glynis's engagement ring, while Tom, compering the competition, remains at the heart of the community.¹⁰³ Nonetheless, on Olwen's arrival, children of the village crowd round to see 'Olwen Williams' and a montage is detailed as follows:

the whole village turning out miners coming up the street in their best clothes with families. Doctor putting up notice 'If wanted at Workman's Hall'. Publican puts notice 'No Bear' [sic] outside pub and hurries off with wife. Little groups hurry beneath shadow of tip. One group of miners are seen walking in the opposite direction in their pit clothes. The night shift going to work. Crowds pouring into entrance of Workman's Hall. Miners entering colliery yard.¹⁰⁴

105 Ibid., p. 131.

The sequence ends with a pan across the faces of miners as they sing, moving outside to ‘the wheel of the shaft turning in the moonlight indicating work still goes on’.¹⁰⁵ Continuing the film’s depiction of village and colliery life, with a nostalgic emphasis on the local community reinforced by its featuring of a local choir, this alternative ending potentially offered a more successful, social-realist combination of Olwen’s escapist narrative with the pastimes and surroundings of the mining region and, as such, a slightly more optimistic reconciliation of contemporary ideas of modern femininity and stardom with its celebration of the mining community.

106 Mayer, *Political Animals*, p. 94.

Craigie’s film projects in the late 1940s, as well as her plans to build on them in the following decade, indicate her contribution to a field of British realist cinema inhabited by independent young women, which has since been more freely shaped by their experiences, subjectivities and aspirations.¹⁰⁶ Terry Lovell’s analysis of landscapes and stories in 1960s British realism highlights Carolyn Steedman’s feminist intervention in the social-realist depictions of working-class environments and community pioneered in Richard Hoggart’s book *The Uses of Literacy* (1957). Hoggart’s study famously charts a working-class ‘landscape of figures’ in which the traditional community is threatened by mass consumer culture, featuring a female heroine in the form of a ‘shapeless and a-sexual figure known as “Our Mam”’, and written from the perspective of the scholarship boy who has left.¹⁰⁷ Lovell states that ‘in these evocations of the working-class mother, the adult daughter is silent’; Steedman’s book *Landscape for a Good Woman* (1986) counters this with an autobiographical account of her girlhood in the 1950s and of her mother’s life: a figure who ‘is not to be found in Richard Hoggart’s landscape. She ran a working-class household far away from the traditional communities of class, in exile and isolation, and in which a man was not master, nor even there very much.’¹⁰⁸ Steedman’s mother’s desires centre on having a New Look skirt, living in a timbered cottage and marrying a prince – she is characterized by a determined self-fashioning as a means of escaping her interwar background in the industrial north. Seeking to detail and historicize the existing working-class landscapes ‘made by men’ that are presented in traditional cultural criticism, Steedman’s landscape counters their lack of attention to emotional selfhood and challenges assumed models of bourgeois subjectivity and interiority.¹⁰⁹ In doing so she highlights a meaningful engagement with the means of expression and escape offered to women by mass culture and materialism.

107 Terry Lovell, ‘Landscapes and stories in 1960s British realism’, in Andrew Higson (ed.), *Dissolving Views: Key Writings on British Cinema* (London: Cassell, 1996), pp. 158, 161.

108 Ibid.; Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman* (1986) (London: Virago, 2005), p. 6.

109 Ibid., p. 14.

In exploring these aspects of her mother’s life and her own experience, Steedman’s feminist approach to working-class social history is concerned with ‘all the dreams that help us to see ourselves in the landscape’.¹¹⁰ *The Way We Live*’s and *Blue Scar*’s constructions of young femininity were not based on Craigie’s own life in the same way –

110 Ibid., p. 24.

111 Craigie, 'Do we get what we want from the cinema?'

112 Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman*, p. 5

113 Mayer, *Political Animals*, pp. 81, 79.

114 'London's bachelor girls: the first article ... by Jill Craigie', *Evening Standard*, 20 February 1956, p. 9.

115 *Ibid.*

indeed she personally articulated proto-Hoggartian anxieties about the effects of mass culture and materialism on working-class life, and particularly on working-class young women, which can be seen in *Blue Scar*'s final treatment of Olwen.¹¹¹ Yet both films contain traces of an approach comparable to Steedman's. Basing herself within local communities, Craigie's films are notable for their attention to detail in depicting regional environments; by drawing on popular processes of identification and expression offered by film stardom, they take the dreams of young women in these landscapes into account. The 'local stardom' of Patsy, Gwyneth and Dilys is characterized by nuanced and fluctuating connections to their regional communities, and expressions of individuality, leisure, work and consumption. However, just as Steedman's account is concerned with 'lives lived out on the borderlands', in films that expound images of democratic community and participation in national processes of post-war change, both Alice and Olwen are both positioned as marginal figures by the films' final acts.¹¹² Alice is noticeably absent from the film's final optimistic march of young people through Plymouth demanding the implementation of the Plan; and Olwen is presented as stranded in her newly upper-class, metropolitan lifestyle and the trappings of a soon-to-be star, away from the changes brought by nationalization to her family and the mining community: they are post-war precursors of the 'social and cultural outsider[s]', the 'runaway girls' that Mayer follows through contemporary feminist cinema.¹¹³

Craigie would later return to similar figures alienated from political processes in a series of articles on 'London's Bachelor Girls' for the *London Evening Standard* in 1956. Echoing the methods of social investigation that had imbued her filmmaking, for her series on young career women Craigie interviewed 13 women from a variety of occupations, 'the shopgirl, beauty queen, typist, art student, hairdresser, television organiser, garage attendant – the working girl, whoever she may be'.¹¹⁴ In the first instalment, Craigie describes how she 'watched girls at work, at play and at home. I saw them with their boy friends and peeped into their bank accounts.' While some of the content of the series is out of step with feminist discourse a few decades later, it was infused with a sense of the young women's agency, individualism and their daily struggles:

All these young women make up their minds about what they would like to do and then, despite obstacles, do it.

Of course, the career girl is beset by problems – the problem as to whether to leave home, where to live, how to manage financially, how to get promotion, whether to sacrifice her independence for marriage and, finally, that age-old problem, how to cope with man.¹¹⁵

116 Higson, "Britain's outstanding contribution to film", p. 83.

117 'London's bachelor girls', p. 9.

118 Penny Tinkler, "Are you really living? If not, 'Get with it!': the teenage self and lifestyle in young women's magazines, Britain 1957–70", *Cultural and Social History*, vol. 11, no. 4 (2014), pp. 597–619, 597–98.

119 Jill Craigie, letter to Michael Balcon, 12 January 1958; qtd in Rollyson, *To Be a Woman*, pp. 147–49.

120 Harper, *Women in British Cinema*, p. 90; Melanie Williams, 'A feminine touch? Ealing's women', in Mark Duguid, Lee Freeman, Keith M. Johnston and Melanie Williams (eds), *Ealing Revisited* (London: BFI/Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 194.

Craigie's articles carefully detail the everyday environments in which these women were living and working, and some of their personal struggles and decisions: putting on make-up while commuting; the dilemma of promotion for a shop-girl on Oxford Street, intensely ambitious but unsure of whether to give up her job for marriage; moving out of the parental home to live in a bedsit, or suffering the daily conflicts of remaining there. Despite the women's increase in independence and choice in their working and domestic lives, Craigie emphasizes their lack of interest in politics or social problems – and a sense of their distance from the 'common, public sphere of responsible social activity' that she had been keen to promote in her earlier films.¹¹⁶ She complains that the independent young woman of the 1950s 'is passionately eager to live both more fully and in more beautiful surroundings than her parents without understanding that her ambitions are related to politics'.¹¹⁷ Once more she was concerning herself with young women's new experiences, aspirations and their 'lives lived out on the borderlands' of the post-war settlement.

During this period, 'a new and dynamic ideal of young womanhood', which Tinkler argues was defined by a 'celebration of the distinctiveness and potential of youth and [...] the importance of independence, fun, experience and opportunity', had become increasingly visible in young women's magazines.¹¹⁸ In a letter to Michael Balcon in 1958, Craigie sought to contribute to British filmmaking – offering herself as an alternative to the 'bright so-called Angry Young Men' – by engaging with this popular culture surrounding a new youthful, modern femininity.¹¹⁹ Craigie argued that Balcon should 'consider the fantastic circulation of women's magazines, horrible though they are. And the increasing time given on Television to women and teen-agers' programmes', noting that, compared to other 'mass media', British films and filmmakers were 'completely unaware of this new generation'. Stating that she was 'on the wave-length of youth, particularly young girls', her aim of making a film that would look 'at life through the eyes of a young girl', tapping into the contemporary figure of the teenage girl in British popular culture, suggested an expansion of her earlier depictions of Alice and Olwen. Balcon responded to say he found the project an interesting one but there 'was no immediate possibility of working together on a picture' and no such film was made: a decision 'testament to his deafness to the female voice', as Sue Harper writes, and to a lack of new opportunities at Ealing Studios at that time, as identified by Melanie Williams.¹²⁰ Craigie's ardent letter nevertheless showcases her investment in reaching a new generation of young women through cinema and, furthermore, in developing her experimental combination of social investigation with popular modes of feminine 'self-fashioning' in the 1940s in order to chart their changing lives, priorities and imaginations as part of the shifting cultural landscape of late 1950s Britain.

121 Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman*, p. 24.

In focusing on the post-war girlhoods portrayed in Craigie's two 1940s films, this essay contributes to an established field of scholarship in British film history exploring social-realist landscapes, representations of working-class community and gender. It situates Craigie's work in the social-realist tradition of British cinema but also suggests that her 'indigenous' films engaged with contemporary narratives of youth, modern femininity and stardom – distinctively addressing young working-class women's aspirations, popular modes of feminine identification and 'all the dreams that help us to see ourselves in the landscape'.¹²¹ In doing so, it makes new inroads into the cultural contexts of Craigie's work and illuminates the importance of regional perspectives, modern femininities and feminist experimentation in shaping, shifting and re-examining histories of British social realism.