

Institution: De Montfort University
Unit of Assessment: 36 – Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management
Title of case study: Television for Women
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>This AHRC-funded research project examining the production and consumption of women's television in Britain between 1947 and 1989 has documented, for the first time, the development of programmes made explicitly for a female audience, their production culture and the responses of female audiences. Through dissemination to the profession, public engagement events, and media appearances the results of the research have had a demonstrable impact on cultural life and professional practice in the television industry. The project has highlighted the potential of feminist historical research and archiving practice to enhance women's understanding of their own histories.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Helen Wood worked at DMU from 2007 until 2013. Her research into television and audiences has been published widely and she is widely known through two seminal book length studies which were written during her time at DMU: <i>Talking With Television</i> (2009), and (with Beverley Skeggs) <i>Reacting to Reality Television</i> (2012) (from the ESRC funded 'Making Class and Self through Televised Ethical Scenarios' project, undertaken in collaboration with Skeggs and Thumim). In these studies, Wood developed a 'text-in-action' methodology to capture the dynamic nature of television viewing, emphasising the importance of method selection to the understanding of this kind of data, and drawing attention to the <i>form</i> as well as the <i>content</i> of participants' responses: see 'Oh goodness, I am watching reality TV' (Skeggs, Wood and Thumim, 2008).</p> <p>The next stage in the research was to undertake a diachronic, historical study of the distinctive interaction of women viewers with this new form of domestic technology. Wood was approached by colleagues at Warwick University to apply collaboratively for AHRC funding to research television programming made for and watched by female audiences during a significant period of British television history: 1947-1989. Prof Helen Wood (co-Investigator) and PhD student Hazel Collie were based at De Montfort University. The Principal Investigator Dr Rachel Moseley, co-investigator Dr Helen Wheatley and Post-Doctoral Research Fellow Dr Mary Irwin were based at Warwick University. It is from this AHRC funded collaborative project (running from September 2010 to April 2014) between De Montfort and Warwick Universities that the reported impacts were realised</p> <p>This project had three key strands: 1) Interrogating the television production culture and policy which produced a strong vein of programming for women, through sources such as the BBC written archives and the ITC collection at the BFI (archival work on which was conducted by Irwin at Warwick); 2) documenting, using listings magazines, popular publications for women, and television archives, the factual and dramatic programming that was addressed specifically to a female viewer, to establish and attempt to protect what is available in the archives (archival work by Irwin at Warwick, textual analysis by whole team); and 3) conducting interviews with women from different generations across Britain during 2011-12 to obtain 30 oral histories detailing their memories of television during the period in question. These interviews used the theoretical paradigms developed in Wood's previous research to explore the role of television in women's personal narratives, examining the importance of television in personal relationships and the domestic sphere and uncovering the significance of less typically 'feminine' genres such as sport, music programming and natural history (conducted by Collie and Wood at De Montfort). The overall result of the research has been a deeper understanding of women's interaction with television, and a greater awareness of the need to preserve the archive of televisual history as a</p>

resource for future historians of twentieth century history and culture.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- Helen Wood, Beverley Skeggs and Nancy Thumim, 'It's just sad': Affect judgement and emotional labour in reality TV viewing, in Hollows J and Gillis S. (eds) *Domesticity, Feminism and Popular Culture*, London, Routledge. ISBN 0-415-96314-1
- Helen Wood (2009) *Talking With Television: Women, Talk Shows and Modern Self-Reflexivity*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press ISBN 978-0-252-03391-9
- Helen Wood and Beverley Skeggs (2012) *Reacting to Reality Television: Audience, Performance and Value* London and New York, Routledge ISBN 978-0415-69370-7
- B. Skeggs, Wood, H. and Thumim, N (2008) 'Oh goodness, I am watching Reality TV': How methods make class in multi-method audience research. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*. 11 (1), pp. 5-24 DOI?
- Hazel Collie, Mary Irwin, Rachel Moseley, Helen Wheatley and Helen Wood (2013) 'Researching the History of Television for Women in Britain: 1947-1989' *Media History* DOI:10.1080/13688804.2012.752761 (refereed journal article)

Evidence of Quality: all publications peer reviewed.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The main beneficiaries of the research have been archivists (BFI, BBC, BBC Birmingham, MACE), industry professionals (Members of Women in Film and Television), and members of the public, at both local and national level. The project's main impacts are:

(1) Informing the ethics and practice of archiving and preservation in television. One key focus of the research is archiving and media practice in relation to the value and preservation of women's television which has often been dismissed as ephemeral. The project's research has directly impacted upon the preservation and availability of archival holdings of women's television, highlighted the importance of gendered categories of television in decisions about preservation and raised awareness of the feminist politics of archiving.

Work in archives by members of the project team has already uncovered key personnel (Doreen Stephen in particular) and untouched files such as those in the BBC written archives on *Wednesday Magazine* (a little known arts programme produced for women) which Irwin is helping to get catalogued. Members of the team are working closely with key archivists in the industry and have conducted a number of interviews with them, including Steve Bryant and Lisa Kerrigan at the NFTVA, Garry Campbell at BBC Birmingham, and Richard Shenton McQueen at MACE. These interviews have enabled the team to establish the ways in which decisions have been taken about the preservation of women's television and to enter into a dialogue with the industry which will inform their practice. (A report written specifically for industry and archivists will be produced at the end of the project).

We have also formed a relationship with the Women in Film and Television organisation and its Chief Executive. Wheatley and Wood gave a presentation on early findings from the project to 25 key female industry personnel (from SKY, Virgin, BBC and ITV) on 21/9/11 at the Theatre's Trust, London. The organisation has since collaborated on a public engagement event at the BFI in London and contributed to our conference in May 2013 'Television for Women: International Perspectives' where the team disseminated findings to reach an international audience.

Impact case study (REF3b)

In June 2012 the team organised an event called 'Career Girls on the Small Screen' at the BFI Southbank, featuring a presentation by Rachel Moseley and Helen Wheatley, extracts from archive shows featuring working women such as *The Rag Trade*, *Compact* and *The Liver Birds*, and a panel discussion with prominent women in television, including Abi Morgan (writer of *The Hour*), Hilary Samon (executive producer of *Silk*) and Amanda Redman (actress), chaired by Kate Kinnimont of WFTV. This was an enormously successful event, filling 112 of a possible 134 seats in National Film Theatre 3 and the postcards filled in by the audience, and follow-up emails received by the team indicate that its research encouraged people to think about the representation of women on television in new ways. The BFI's TV programmer reported that the event had provided 'a greater understanding of the way women have been represented historically at work on TV' and that the project offered 'new critical tools of analysis to better understand patterns across television history'. The media industry participants also expressed that the event had made them think differently about the ways in which television represented working women. The event was featured in 'The Cultural Highlights you have to see' section of the 'i' newspaper (20.6.2012).

Connecting women with their television history and cultural heritage. The project has had a Facebook page since 2011, a Twitter presence and a blog. Through existing networks and the placement of a Facebook ad, the page now has a growing and lively community and is active every day, with members discussing and sharing their memories of and thoughts about women's television past and present.

This use of social media together with a range of press opportunities and public engagement events, has shared the research with the wider national public, extending its 'reach'. Adverts for participants to interview were placed in *Women's Weekly*, *Yours*, *Saga*, *TV Times* and *The Lady*. *Yours* ran a small feature with the advert. Rachel Moseley was invited to talk about the project on Radio 4's *Woman's Hour* on 19/8/11 and links to the project webpages and Facebook page appeared on the website. Following this a report by Chris Arnot about the project appeared in the *Education Guardian* 5/9/11. The project has also prompted stories in local press, including the *Coventry Evening Telegraph* and the *West Briton*. From this publicity women came forward to take part in the study.

The project's other major and most innovative impact strategy to connect the project to the wider public's sense of television heritage has been a 'pop-up' exhibition in conjunction with ArtSpace/Coventry City Council. The 'shop' ran for the calendar month of May 2012 and looked at the relationships between women viewers and television pop music programming. Featuring documents, artefacts, quotes from the research findings, and a video feed of archive television, this exhibition enabled members of the public to share their memories via a visitor's book, postcards and short 'on the spot' interviews, and led to some longer, in-depth interviews following the event. Impact was measured via questionnaire postcards and a visitor's book which logged visitors' reactions to the exhibition. This showed not only that people had learned from the exhibition and had a better understanding of British television history as a result of their visit, but also that people valued the opportunity to revisit their own memories of television and that they valued the chance to find out about academic research. The 'pop-up shop' attracted media coverage locally being featured in the *Coventry Evening Telegraph* (27.4.2012; daily circulation 31,000) and on BBC Coventry and Warwickshire radio (30.4.2012, average 86,000 weekly listeners, BBC figures).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Inform the ethics and practice of archiving and preservation in television

A Statement from Chief Executive from women in Film and Television about our collaboration verifies the claims made in this case study about impacts relating to archiving and preservation. This statement can be made available upon request.

2. Raising awareness about the gendered politics of archival practice with industry professionals

Several contacts from the BFI Southbank and regional film theatres have provided statements that verify the claims to impact in this section, including the quoted references that the event had provided 'a greater understanding of the way women have been represented historically at work on TV' and that Moseley and Wheatley offered 'new critical tools of analysis to better understand patterns across television history', and the number of seats filled at the National Film Theatre. Copies of these correspondences can be made available upon request.

Samples of postcards and emails about these events can also be made available upon request.

3. Connecting women with their television history and cultural heritage.

Evidence for Moseley's appearance on 'Woman's hour' can be seen at this link <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0138yl0> (accessed 23/09/13). This link also shows the on-going links to the projects website and facebook pages.

The Article in *The Education Guardian* by Chris Arnot can be accessed via this link: <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2011/sep/05/fifties-women-daytime-tv> (accessed 23/09/13)

The article in the Coventry Evening Telegraph can be seen at <http://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/pop-up-1960s-exhibition-coventry-city-3026957> (accessed 23/09/13).

Samples of postcards and emails about these events can also be made available upon request.

Facebook, Twitter and blog links which show the engagement and participation of the public with the research and its findings: [@TVforWomen](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Womens-Television), www.televisionforwomen.wordpress.com (both accessed 23/09/13).

A letter is available from the Science Museum in London which verifies the claim that this project was used to inform the development of their new gallery "making modern communications"