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2013-06-30

<https://doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/14065>

Veröffentlichungsversion / published version
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Collie, Hazel: "It's Just So Hard to Bring It to Mind": The Significance of 'Wallpaper' in the Gendering of Television Memory Work. In: *VIEW Journal of European Television History and Culture*, Jg. 2 (2013-06-30), Nr. 3, S. 13–21. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/14065>.

Erstmalig hier erschienen / Initial publication here:

<https://doi.org/10.18146/2213-0969.2013.jethc027>

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“IT’S JUST SO HARD TO BRING IT TO MIND”

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ‘WALLPAPER’ IN THE GENDERING OF TELEVISION MEMORY WORK

Hazel Collie

School of Media and Communication
De Montfort University
The Gateway
LE1 9BH Leicester
UK,
hazel.collie@myemail.dmu.ac.uk

Abstract: Memory is theorised as constructive and unreliable, while television has been characterised as forgettable and guilty of undermining memory. In a recent series of oral history interviews, British women of different generations shared their recollections of television in the period between 1947 and 1989. This article presents some of these narratives to demonstrate how, far from undermining memory, television’s domestic presence has enabled women to use everyday television in their memory work across the life course. The findings suggest that in the process of memory work itself, at least for these women viewers, the metaphor of television memory as ‘wallpaper’ needs to be developed since it is *precisely* these narratives located within everyday and the quotidian that are loaded with most emotional significance.

Keywords: Television, Memory Work, Oral History, Women, Reception Studies

1 Introduction

Despite television’s rapid embedding within modern life since its post-war re-introduction in 1947 and its obvious location within large shifts in social change, work on the relationship between television and memory has largely been carried out from theoretical and textual perspectives in which the audience can only be implied. Such work has traditionally understood television as ‘unmemorable’ and even ‘amnesiac’, producing audience engagement with television as one in which nothing but the ‘big moments’ can be remembered.¹ My research indicates that this is not the case, in line with more recent challenges to this approach.² Empirical memory work has been heavily invested in documenting and analysing the testimonies of Holocaust survivors or those recollections of similar traumatic historical events that are rendered more memorable by their extraordinary nature. Television reception work on the

1 Mary Ann Doane, ‘Information, Crisis, Catastrophe,’ in: Patricia Mellencamp, eds., *Logics of Television: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, BFI, 1990, p. 228

2 Amy Holdsworth, ‘Televisual memory’, *Screen* 51(2), 2010, p. 129-142

more everyday aspects of early broadcasting use has hinted at the gendered differences in recalling how radio and then television came to be positioned in the domestic environment, but has typically used the technology as a focus of study rather than the formations of memory itself.³ While Jérôme Bourdon's typologies of memories⁴ as 'wallpaper', 'media events', 'flashbulbs' and 'close encounters' are broadly reproduced within my interview data, the definitions that he draws underestimate the gendered nuances of such memory work.

Drawing upon a series of recent oral history interviews with thirty British women of different ages about their memories of television between 1947 and 1989,⁵ this piece considers the intricate nature of memory work and the ways in which television's 'after-life' and its own memorialising help produce the relationship between television and memory in historical interview work. My interview data indicates that, although it can often be difficult to remember the specifics of television programmes, the medium has become so interwoven with daily life that memories of programmes and domestic viewing circumstances are deeply embedded in the emotional psyches of women who take great pleasure in their recollection. Emily Keightley's proposition that gender shapes what is remembered and how remembering is enacted, 'acting simultaneously on past and present'⁶ is also evident in my own research. Through the women's narratives of television viewing this article indicates how women recall something so common place by situating it within a broader framework of sociality, family and domestic routine, and suggests reasons that this memory work might represent a gendered difference.

2 Methodology

As part of the AHRC funded project [A History of Television for Women in Britain 1947-1989](#),⁷ I carried out thirty oral history interviews with generationally and geographically dispersed British women to try to get a sense of which programmes a female British television audience had viewed as being 'for them' and how significant they may have been to their identities. The women I interviewed were aged between 42 and 95, represented various regions of the United Kingdom,⁸ and were exclusively white.⁹ The women's social class identification spanned working class and middle class backgrounds, and twenty eight of the thirty women were mothers.

The interviews were modelled on an oral history approach. The first part of the interview was designed to encourage the women to narrate their life story. It separated out their television experiences into life stages, which I categorised as childhood, teenage years and adulthood. The questions were broad and gave the women space to explore themes around programming that they had particularly enjoyed during each stage, why they thought they had felt particular resonance with those programmes, who they watched television with, how they watched and who controlled what they watched.

[Audio file 1](#). Sylvia, 57, discussing her early viewing

The middle section probed more temporally general questions around the ways they perceived that television had influenced their actions and choices, who their television role models were and what other people thought of their viewing choices. In the final part of the discussion I ran through two separate lists of programmes which had been

3 For accounts of how audiences remember broadcasting see Shaun Moores, "'The Box on the Dresser': Memories of Early Radio and Everyday Life', *Media Culture Society* 10: 23, p 23-40; Tim O'Sullivan, 'Television Memories and Cultures of Viewing 1950-65,' in John Corner, eds., *Popular Television in Britain: Studies in Cultural History*, BFI, 1997

4 Jérôme Bourdon, 'Some Sense of Time: Remembering Television,' in: *History and Memory* 15(2), 2003, p. 13

5 The interviews were carried out between June 2011 and March 2012.

6 Emily Keightley, 'From Dynasty to Songs of Praise: Television as a cultural resource for gendered remembering', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 14, 2011, p. 398

7 The project's purpose was to begin a sustained historical analysis of television for women in the period 1947-1989 from both production and reception perspectives. Dr Helen Wheatley, Dr Rachel Moseley and Dr Mary Irwin investigated the production and archival aspect of the project at Warwick, whilst Dr Helen Wood and I carried out the audience research at De Montfort. (AHF01725/1) The period of investigation was narrowed down to these dates: 1947, when television begins its sustained broadcast after the Second World War closedown until 1989, when exclusively terrestrial broadcast television ended.

8 I designated these as Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, North East England, North West England, Central England, South East England and South West England. I received no advert responses from women in Northern Ireland, so this region is not represented in my sample.

9 I did not receive any responses to my call to interview from ethnic minority women. Furthermore, the De Montfort University press office approached magazines such as *The Voice* and *Asian Eye* when the press release that was run by other publications and neither chose to run it. This is highly suggestive of a different relationship with television within ethnic communities.

broadcast during the period 1947-1989. The first of these was generated by archival work carried out by my project colleague Mary Irwin, comprising a list of programmes that had been created and produced specifically for women in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. The second list documented light entertainment and drama programmes of the period in question, which had emerged from lists that the project team compiled through talking to female friends and relatives. Memory work involves a set of complex cultural processes which will produce identities, or what Jackie Stacey describes as "the negotiation of 'public' discourses and 'private' narratives".¹⁰ The recounting of memories is not a straightforward representation of events. As such, in the histories that the women have provided, I discovered a series of retrospective reconstructions of a past which are shaped by nostalgia for that recent history in which popular versions of the period have gained cultural currency. The recollections are further shaped by the women's desire to portray themselves to me in a very specific way.¹¹ Of course, important questions arise around how personal investments shape the memories we produce and how we prioritise what we remember.

3 Television as Amnesiac?

Mary Ann Doane has conceived television as "conceptualized as the annihilation of memory, and consequently of history in its continual stress upon the 'nowness' of its own discourse".¹² As Doane perceives it, only the catastrophic moments, those moments which "can be isolated from the fragmented flow of information" can be remembered.¹³ By this definition, other television of a quotidian nature must necessarily be forgotten. Amy Holdsworth has identified how the privileging of this type of traumatic media moment in a televisual sense is a replication of the dominant modes of memory discourse more generally. She also proposes that the domination of Raymond Williams's concept of 'flow' in models of television textuality has allowed television to be characterised as "inducing a wider vacuum within cultural memory resulting in historical amnesia."¹⁴ Her dismantling of the conception of television as amnesiac, or as a force for undermining memory, from a textual position examines television as memory text and memorialised television moments through a focus on the everyday rather than the extraordinary with the use of examples of popular programming such as *ER*, *Grey's Anatomy* and *The Wire*.¹⁵ Holdsworth suggests that by reflecting on patterns and similarities between the textualities of memory and television, we can capture a sense of the experience of watching and remembering television.

While Holdsworth's depiction of the relationship between the medium and its forms of memory and remembrance has been central to nuancing my understanding of how the women have spoken to me about their historical television preferences, it falls within that body of work which implies the audience. Rather than using television as 'memory text', this article will concentrate on the 'memory work' carried out with and through television. This provides us with, in Annette Kuhn's words, "material for interpretation, to be interrogated, mined, for its meanings and its possibilities [because] [m]emory work is a conscious and purposeful staging of memory."¹⁶

4 The Struggle to Remember: Memory as Work

During the interviews many of the women drew attention to the difficulties of memory work more generally, with the ephemeral nature of memory proving to be a particular frustration to many. The effort involved in retrieving memories was clear, and particularly well exemplified by Sue O:

10 Jackie Stacey, *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship*, Routledge, 1994

11 For more on interview performance and interviewing women, see Norman K. Denzin, 'The reflexive interview and a performative social science', *Qualitative Research* 1, 2001, p.23-46; Kristin. M. Langellier, 'Personal narrative, performance, performativity: Two or three things I know for sure', *Text and Performance Quarterly* 19(2), 1999, p.125-144 and Ann Oakley, 'Interviewing Women: A Contradiction in Terms,' in Lincoln, and Denzin, eds., *Turning Points in Qualitative Research: Tying Knots in a Handkerchief*, Rowman and Littlefield, 1981

12 Doane, 1990, p. 227

13 Ibid. p. 227

14 Holdsworth, 2010, p.130

15 Amy Holdsworth, *Television, memory and nostalgia*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011

16 Annette Kuhn, 'Memory texts and memory work: Performances of memory in and with visual media', *Memory Studies* 3, 2010, p. 303

Oh...god, my brain. It's driving me mad because things keep flashing in and out. Once the memories start flowing. No, it's gone... Maybe it'll come back. Just on the edge of my mind and I find that more annoying 'cos I know it's just there and I can't access it. Never mind, there will be other things.

Sue O, 66

The struggle to remember television more particularly was also evident, although the possibility that this might be related to the object itself was not identified by the women. The interviews were littered with errors regarding dates, programme titles and programme personnel and the women constantly sought confirmation of production details. Further, television's role as a form of social conversational currency often led the interviews to move out of a historical register and into talking about more current programming, partly because it was easier to remember but also because it was an activity that was enjoyed by the interviewees and by me, the interviewer.

The role of television as this type of social currency, and the implications that it might have for memory, is indicated here by Enid:

Enid: Yes, but I – I remember, it's strange – I remember the programmes being talked about [*Dixon of Dock Green* (BBC, 1955-1976)] but I can't remember any episodes.

Hazel: That's interesting. So you remember people talking about it?

Enid: Yes.

Hazel: But you don't really remember the programme?

Enid: No.

Enid, 80

This gives a clear picture of the importance of 'television talk',¹⁷ and how television's 'after life' is central to the formation of memories of the medium, muddying the waters when it comes to recalling what the difference was between what was watched and what was discussed. Indeed it may even indicate that the conversational talk about television is more memorable than the television itself.

Memories are of course further influenced by the various ways that the television industry affects and alters viewer's memories through reruns,¹⁸ its own memorialisation¹⁹ and depiction of its own history. The manner in which a television broadcaster chooses to repackage older programming into new schedules might suggest and promote particular histories and sensibilities that diverge from the original broadcast. This can intervene in memories about responses to programmes when they were first aired. For example, in my interviews the women's enjoyment of pop music programmes during adolescence was a frequent topic of conversation.²⁰ Over the course of many of the interviews the first programme the women would talk about was *Top of the Pops* (BBC1, 1964-2006). As the interviews progressed many of the women would recall that they had actually frequently found the programme disappointing and would go on to recount programmes which on reflection they felt had in fact had a greater relevance and resonance to them personally, such as *Ready, Steady, Go!* (ITV, 1963-66) and *The Tube* (Channel 4, 1982-1987). Various factors might have caused this particular order of memory, but one of these must be the BBC's management of *Top of the Pops*' legacy through sister programme **TOTP2** (BBC2, 1994-present) which curated together all the best bits of the long running series and also more recent repeats of full episodes of *Top of the Pops* from the 1970s on BBC4 without a similar legacy for *Ready, Steady, Go!*.

This indicates that television's social and institutional 'after-lives' are factors which require on-going negotiation, constituting a particular type of television memory work. The richness of the conversations indicates that the women *were* able to remember television viewing if not always the programmes themselves. It might be *difficult* to carry out memory work of this kind, but television, and particularly commonplace, everyday programming, *is* emphatically remembered.

17 Discussions of the significance of television talk and gossip can be found in Dorothy Hobson, 'Soap Operas at Work', in: Seiter, Borchers, Kreutzner and Warth, eds., *Remote Control: Television, Audience and Cultural Power*, Routledge, 1991 and Helen Wood, *Talking with Television*, University of Illinois Press, 2009

18 Lynn Spigel, 'From the Dark Ages to the Golden Age: Women's Memories and Television Reruns', *Screen*, 36(1) Spring 1995, p. 16-33

19 Amy Holdsworth, '"Television Resurrections": Television and Memory', *Cinema Journal*, 47, 3 (Spring, 2008), p. 137-144

20 Hazel Collie and Mary Irwin, '"The Weekend Starts Here": Young women, pop music television and identity', *Screen*, forthcoming and Hazel Collie, 'From Cathy "Queen of the Mods" to Paula "Pop Princess": Women, Music Television and Adolescent Female Identity', in: Mee and Walker, eds., *Rethinking Cinema and Television History*, Cambridge Scholars Press, forthcoming

5 Watching the Big Events

Much of the 'memory work' carried out in these interviews broadly echoes Jérôme Bourdon's typologies of memory discussed earlier, comprising 'wallpaper', 'media event', 'flashbulb' and 'close encounter'.²¹ What is particularly noticeable in my interviews is how little discussion there was about the catastrophic moments identified by Doane, those moments which would fall within Bourdon's 'media event' or 'flashbulb' memories. Where that conversation around television landmark events occurred, particularly JFK's assassination, it indicates the increasing importance of television to our personal narrativisations of public history; how increasingly engagement with key historical moments is carried out through television and then also recalled in relation to television:

Yes. Um...things about disasters like when I watched Challenger exploding at take-off. Oh...that was just...I mean I watched the first Tel-Star...I'm trying to think about TelStar, when was the first broadcast? That would have been in the early Sixties maybe. I don't even know when it was, but it was midnight. And me and my father stayed up to watch, and they said 'this is the first broadcast coming by TelStar'. I think it was a satellite. So I like to be there for one-offs. Things like the man landing on the moon. I like to think 'I was there', you know?

Fiona

The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II was also a key event in the interview discussions, particularly among women in their sixties who would have been children at the time of broadcast. Conversation around the Coronation was strikingly redolent of Bourdon's suggestion that 'the memories of media events include detailed narratives not so much of the event itself as of the process of reception and the emotions that were triggered in the viewers at that time'²² in most circumstances. Memories were recounted which detailed how the event acted as the catalyst for the purchase of a first television set, the circumstances of viewing the royal event in those broad, popularly received terms of all the neighbours crowding around one television, and feelings about watching the event on television, all of which reproduce the familiar ways in which the relationship between television and the Coronation has become popularly mythologised:

And then there was the Coronation, and of course we had neighbours come round for that. But my father was, um, in The Guard's band so he was on parade and he was out there playing the trombone and leading them up the Mall sort of thing. So he was late that day and it was all hands on deck. I was half asleep, trying to put the kettle on to make him a cup of tea. And he was rushing round like a madman 'cos the bus was downstairs waiting for him with all the musicians on it. So then...well, thank God it all calmed down and the next thing I remember was this woman in a white dress. Tiny little woman. And there was all this kerfuffle and...I was bored out my mind. To be honest. And of course kids weren't allowed to sit too close to the television 'cos it would draw your eyes. Whatever that means. So we had the worst seats in the house. All the ladies were sat at the front watching this and I went out and the place was deserted. This was Victoria in London, and it was deserted. There was nobody around, everybody was watching and I was so bored. And that's how I remember it.

Maureen, 67

This realisation about the domestic terms in which women spoke about the 'big' moments sent me back to re-assess the women's conversation around other 'traumatic' and 'big' moments in their remembered viewing and I discovered that the women frequently used these moments to talk more about viewing circumstances and familial relationships than about the events themselves. This was a theme that was constant throughout their talk around *all* programming and references to big events which interrupted the flow were relatively rare in the interviews. This is compared to the enormous amount of discussion about everyday, often 'low status' programming, indicating that it played a more dominant role in the women's modes of remembering their lives in relation to television.

²¹ Bourdon, 2003, p 12.

²² Ibid, p.14

6 Talking About Everyday Television

It became clear that the women's memories of television they had watched and their viewing practices within the domestic context were bound together tightly. Tim O'Sullivan's (1997) comment on his own oral history research that "other memories frequently fuse television programmes and experiences to the rites of passage of domestic biography, serving as markers for remembered people and situations, of changing relations of kinship, lifestyle and shared experience"²³ appears to be borne out in my own research. Television is grounded in these women's lives, and it is interesting to see how many of the women work to remember specific dates by anchoring public events to their personal biographies, as exemplified here by Enid:

"Um...ooh no, wait a minute, no it would be before then...no actually, yes. Cos if I was married sort of – I can never remember really. It was about 1958, 59 when I was married and I had my daughter the first year and then my son two years later. So it would be very early Sixties."

Enid, 80

Audio file 2. Enid, 80, uses personal biography to work out public debate

Traditionally viewed as both a domesticated and feminised medium, my interviews demonstrate that television has become such an integral part of 'the everyday' that it is precisely through other everyday activities such as relationships with family and friends and domestic routine that the programmes recalled, and the reasons for their significance in the women's lives, emerge. Here Marilyn begins to talk about Sunday Night at the London Palladium (ATV, 1955-1967), a programme that many of the women aged in their sixties and older spoke about;

There was one time my sister was due to give birth to my second niece and we were all sat there one Sunday, 'cos she'd come down, we were all sat there watching TV and she started going into labour. *Sunday Night at the London Palladium* was on, I'll always remember it [HC laughs] and her husband came down and had to take her into hospital. And I'll always remember my mother saying 'don't you dare have that baby, I've gotta hear Shirley Bassey tonight. So don't you dare have that baby before'. But I've never forgotten that. We always watched that.

Marilyn, 64

This animated memory led into quite a detailed account of her family's viewing of the programme, including having to watch it in her pyjamas because it over-ran her bedtime and she had to run to bed the moment it had finished and how her dad used to make toffee on a Sunday so that each member of the family could have two squares in a handkerchief to eat while they watched. The fullness of her recollections of the programme, a fixture of her family's week, as a result of the biographical detail involved is much richer than any of the discussion that occurred around 'catastrophic' news moments or events.

Often, the television moments that were remembered as special in some way, were deemed thus because of the involvement of a family member in the programme and, importantly, the role that programme played in reinforcing the familial bond. In the following interview excerpt, talks about *The Clothes Show* (BBC1, 1986-2000), a programme which she identified as enjoying very much and yet the memory she chose to share with me was one which related to her step-daughter's interaction with the show.

Audio file 3. Belinda, 70, talks about her step daughter on the Clothes Show

²³ Tim O'Sullivan, 'Television Memories and Cultures of Viewing 1950-65,' in: John Corner, eds., *Popular Television in Britain: Studies in Cultural History*, BFI, 1997, p. 163.

"That was lovely [*The Clothes Show*]. But then again, I remember that because of a personal connection. 'Cos my step daughter who was only sixteen, and her father was a – you know, my partner was a photographer. She didn't live with us but I persuaded him to take some photographs of her, um, to send into *The Clothes Show*. And they were wonderful photos. I mean, they really were wonderful photos, and she got in and we went up to Derby and – she got into the finals, the last sixteen so we went up there to watch her. I mean, she was only sixteen, never walked along a catwalk, walking along, carrying her...fur coat and – oh, it was just incredible."

Belinda, 70

Other examples of family and friend's influence in remembering television programmes extended to sibling and spousal disagreement about what to watch, discussing favourite programmes with friends and colleagues the day after broadcast, and using television programmes as a basis for childhood group play:

Audio file 4. Sue E, 60, discusses childhood viewing and play

I do remember *Watch with Mother*, so I must've seen a bit of those. Um...but the teatime programmes were the sort of action adventure ones like *Champion* [starts singing the theme tune] *Champion the Wonder Horse*, and so I went out in the garden and played on a broom handle pretending it was a horse, and all of that. And so our games very often were dictated by what we'd seen on television. This was still the time when playground games were dominated by the war...you know, kids were still – less the girls, but the boys were playing Germans and...you know, British or they were playing cowboys and Indians, so there was a lot of – the cowboy genre was all over the place then. And so we watched a lot of *Wagon Train*, [*Tales of*] *Wells Fargo*, *Bonanza*. That was a bit later on I think. I wasn't so keen on the westerns 'cos I couldn't really identify with them. I could identify more with Robin Hood and Ivanhoe, I don't know why. But less with the westerns I think.

Sue E, 60

Domestic routine and television's role not only in terms of fitting into that routine, but actually framing it and creating it²⁴ was also a common theme of conversation by the women. These were particularly recounted around experiences of motherhood which became a central feature of discussion around television, relationships and intimacy.

I remember when [my daughter] was little we used to have our – that was the time of day when we'd have our – It sounds awful really, but sometimes we'd have our meal in front of *Sesame Street*, 'cos that's when she would have her meal and then have a snack in the evening. So we'd watch *Sesame Street* and then go out for a walk, go to the park in the afternoon. But we'd sort of talk about things that had been going on, and she loved the dog that used to count. There was an Alsatian that used to count the numbers and things. The lovely characters in it were just fabulous really."

Jenny, 52

In some sense these types of memories broadly correspond with Bourdon's 'wallpaper' metaphor in that they appear to relegate television to the backdrop as the life story and relationship themselves take stage. Indeed there is a suggestion that 'wallpaper' memories are somehow less satisfactory than others since Bourdon suggests that, '[t]hose memories often emerge with the help of the stimulus of program magazines, apparently because they are dormant and less emotional than the rest'.²⁵ But this is clearly not the case in my study. I would suggest that, in fact, this is an area where gendered relationships to the past can be seen to differ both in terms of the ease of recollection and of the loading of emotion. In my interviews, the women's talk about specific programmes was quite cursory, more a simple mention that they had watched it, until there was a biographical hook which would begin to fill out the details of their memories. Interestingly, the final section of the interview, when I provided lists of programmes that were intended to act as a stimulus to memory, was the least successful part of the interview. With a list of titles to read through, most

²⁴ Dorothy Hobson, *Crossroads: the Drama of a Soap Opera*, Methuen, 1982

²⁵ Bourdon, 2003, p 13.

of the women resorted to responding with comments such as "Yes, I remember that" or "No, don't remember that", with little detail around the programmes, suggesting that the women were less interested in talking about programmes which did not also stimulate biographical memories. Further, it is indicative of the way that discussion of television programmes came out of personal memories, rather than vice versa.

There is a quality about these reminiscences that indicate the ways in which television can be perceived as medium of intimacy. Its situation within the domestic makes it pivotal to these moments of familial intimacy. This echoes Susan Geiger's suggestion that women's embeddedness in familial life may shape their view of the world and consciousness of historical time,²⁶ and Emily Keightley's conclusion that, 'Television content is used to mark common cultural knowledge and is actively deployed to articulate and re-establish commonality. In this process women's agency signals the gendered nature of their emotional labour in their everyday remembering and the key role that televisual texts can play in its performance'.²⁷ The interview excerpts quoted here are notable for their concentration on memories of childhood and motherhood, the life course stages that most women were most able to narrate, whereas memories of teenage television viewing, aside from popular music programmes, were more difficult for the women to articulate. Many described their viewing as something which 'dropped away' during this period, as other commitments began to eat into television viewing time. Such narratives indicate that there might be life stages or periods when we are more tied to and involved with the domestic: life stages when the 'wallpaper' itself is imbued with an emotional significance and that this might affect recollections of television as a domestic medium.

7 Conclusion

My interview data indicates that not only is television not amnesiac in the way it has historically been characterised, but that the medium substantially contributes to memories of the everyday and that this represents a gendered relationship with the past. The viewing narratives of the British women I spoke to are not significantly dominated by recollections of those moments which interrupt the flow, but rather by those programmes and viewing contexts which inhabited that flow. That is not to say that these 'big', disruptive moments have not been remembered, but that in their curation of memories to present in a specific interview the women I spoke to were preferencing more mundane, 'wallpaper' recollections. This indicates how the female audience might use television as a memory text in a similar way as the photographs and family albums of Annette Kuhn's work on memory,²⁸ to express and pick through "interconnections at the level of remembrance between the private, the public and the personal."²⁹ For these women, their personal investments, the means by which they judged themselves and asked others to judge them related to their location within family. David Morley's proposition that '[t]elevision viewing may be a privatized activity – by comparison with going to the movies, for example – but it is still largely conducted within, rather than outside, social relations',³⁰ formulated at a time concurrent with the period I have asked women to recall, indicates why this might be. Generationally, the women's narratives across the life course were remarkably similar, suggesting that a feminine gendered relationship to the past remains relatively constant, despite the dramatic social and domestic changes which occurred between 1947 and 1989. Television is widely understood to be a shared medium and a domestic medium and it is in this context that it continues to 'live' in memory, particularly for women who have invested so much of themselves within that landscape. Jérôme Bourdon's suggestion that the 'taken for grantedness'³¹ of the domestic landscape renders those 'wallpaper memories' as more dormant represents a gendered inflection. If it is a female's labour, physical and emotional, which has created the very character of that domestic landscape then it seems probable that there is nothing 'taken for granted' at all about her relationship with it.³² I would argue that these memories re-invest the 'wallpaper' metaphor with more biographical significance than previously thought.

26 Susan NG Geiger, 'Women's Life Histories: Method and Content', *Signs*, 1986, p. 348

27 Keightley, 2011, p. 407

28 Annette Kuhn, 'Memory texts and memory work: Performances of memory in and with visual media', *Memory Studies* 3, 2010, p. 298 - 313

29 Ibid, p. 312

30 David Morley, *Family Television: Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure*, Comedia, 1986, p.14

31 Bourdon, 1993, p.13-14

32 Rita Felski, 'The invention of everyday life', *New Formations* 39, 1999, p.13-31

Biography

Hazel Collie is a PhD student in the School of Media and Communication at De Montfort University. Her doctoral research is part of the AHRC funded project 'A History of Television for Women in Britain, 1947-1989. It examines British women's memories of television between 1947 and 1989, and how their talk indicates the changing nature of gendered identities throughout life course and across generations.