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***Media and Memory*, Joanne Garde-Hansen. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011 (174 pages). ISBN: 978-0748640331.**

A Review by Elena Caoduro, University of Southampton

Over the last two decades, the concept of memory has assumed an important position in the humanities, with numerous books, edited collections, specialised journals and conferences appearing on the subject. Scholarly works, including Marita Sturken's *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic and the Politics of Remembering* (1997) and Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allan's edited collection *Journalism after September 11* (2002), have begun to formulate the need to rethink media representations of the past and our relationship with them. Joanne Garde-Hansen's *Media and Memory* attempts to renegotiate the issue from a new theoretical perspective that considers media users both as consumers and producers of their own histories. Garde-Hansen's work provides an initial clearing of the ground, offering a review of major theories of remembering and memorialisation, as well as setting out some crucial parameters in understanding the complex role of technologies for archiving our memories in the digital age. *Media and Memory* is a well-structured, informative book, which focuses on the relationship between memory and various media, specifically radio, television, celebrity culture, digital media, social networks and mobile phones. Garde-Hansen even suggests directions for future work, issues that need further exploration in this field or perhaps fundamental reformulation in this ever-changing digital culture.

Media and Memory, conceived as a cornerstone for educational practice, could clearly function as the essential textbook for introductory modules on memory in media and communication courses with its sets of learning exercises and lists of further readings that accompany each chapter. Garde-Hansen's book will appeal to those approaching the relationship between memory and media for the first time, as its compact format and straightforward style reveal its didactic purpose, without being in any way superficial or banal. Well-researched and very up-to-date, this book provides an engaging read also for more advanced students and academics with its innovative methodologies and a fresh new look at this subject. As such, *Memory and Media* achieves its intention: introducing the reader to key issues in memory studies, as well as drawing attention to new mediations of personal or collective events through media. Despite the impressive overview of theorists and scholars of memory in the first section, the author is sincere when arguing that the book does not "provide the reader with the full depth and breadth" of the complexity of the subject in the digital age (viii). In fact, it would be impossible to cover all philosophers, historians and writers who shaped and developed the field of memory studies in a single volume. Nevertheless, Garde-Hansen's work certainly "opens up the reader's mind to a new appreciation of the exciting, creative and connective possibilities that bringing these two spheres together might offer students" (viii). Divided into eight chapters, the first half of the

book provides a detailed and insightful theoretical background, along with an explanation of theories about remediation, remembering and forgetting; whereas the second half presents four case studies as specific examples of how media and memory interact in different ways.

The first two chapters trace the development of the discipline of memory studies and its connection with media studies, in addition to categorising the various forms of memory: personal, collective, mediated and new. Garde-Hansen maps out more than one hundred years of the history of this field, focusing in particular on debates specifically interesting for the humanities and the social sciences, although memory, per se, is approached from a variety of disciplines, such as psychology, sociology and neurology. The author does not fail to underline its interdisciplinary nature, as the study of memory requires vocabularies and methodologies from different academic fields. Garde-Hansen organises the development of memory studies into three phases: the foundational era, the memory boom, and the "new memory" stage (17). The first phase is characterised by the struggle of French sociologists, historians and philosophers, namely Maurice Halbwachs, Henri Bergson, Paul Ricœur, Pierre Nora and Jacques Le Goff, to legitimise their object of study, memory, among traditional disciplines. "For these thinkers, memory, remembering and recording are the key to existence, becoming and belonging" (18). Their works stem from the reaction to the atrocities of the twentieth century, to fascism, and the fear of forgetting communities' memories and myths; hence, memory intended as a collective, social, spatial or oral phenomenon becomes the focus of their attention to encourage a history from below (23). The second phase is instead marked by an explosion of scholarship dealing with remembrance, trauma and forgetting, such as Paul Connerton's *How Societies Remember* (1989) and Andreas Huyssen's *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (1995). These pioneering works, often centred on the Holocaust, other atrocities and national historical events, were stirred by the testimony of survivors and the fear of amnesia and repression (24). Despite dealing with memorialisation in monuments, memorials and occasionally in film, it is not until a more recent wave of scholarship that memory studies have really engaged with media and cultural studies. The first decade of the twenty-first century has witnessed a resurgence of interest in the cross-contamination between memory and media, intended as creative industries and technologies, which are becoming increasingly malleable, global and digital (29). *Media and Memory* is situated in this last phase and is a welcome addition to the field, as the author illustrates her original contribution with engaging and unique case studies, while her perceptive view of the dynamic relationship between media and memory always remains at the centre.

The author's categorisation of the nebulous notion of memory is a necessary but informative section, as it seeks to link recurring themes and patterns in academic debates. In particular, Garde-Hansen focuses on "mediatised memory" or "mediated memories", showing how Western culture is encouraged to commercialise history and, therefore, mass media tend to manufacture memory (41). However, she expresses her concern with ascribing these adjectives to memory, since "it suggests that something happens to memory by media rather than something equally happening to media by memory" (42). Chapters Three and Four are precisely about this intervention: individuals create memories and manipulate media not just for personal archiving or to contribute to a group's history, but to connect with other people, places and stories. The global, digital and mobile nature of contemporary memory is explored in the remainder of the book, where Garde-Hansen charts the passage from the treatment of past events in broadcast media to the new appropriations by user-producers in digital and social media. Specifically, she expands Andrew Hoskins's notions of "new" and

"diffused memory" (qtd. in Garde-Hansen 45), in order to develop a tentative theory of "connected memory" (140). In the new media ecology, Garde-Hansen argues that memory should be understood as mediated, networked and digital after having been considered in terms of its dynamic relationship between the personal and the collective (149). The creative use of images in social networks provides, therefore, the perfect metaphor to understand "connected memory" as a new form of memory, since entire histories of families are compiled and uploaded in social networks and shared and viewed in each other's newsfeeds.

Garde-Hansen's choices of case studies are certainly representative of memory in the digital era: aside from the episode on the Aberfan disaster of 1966 by the BBC Radio 4 programme *Open Country*, she concentrates on digital media and considers mash-up war videos on YouTube, online fan memories of Madonna, and the use of photo albums on teenagers' mobiles. The author adopts an array of methodologies in approaching her objects of study, as she goes beyond traditional textual analysis to include critically reflective industry interviews, digital ethnography, audience research with focus groups, and questionnaires, an aspect which is worthy of praise. However, the lack of analysis of fiction films or documentaries is noticeable. Although in the theoretical chapters key films such as Oliver Stone's *Platoon* (1985) and Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993) are mentioned to exemplify dynamics of memorialisation, a chapter with a close reading of a relevant film would have been a worthy addition in an introductory textbook for media studies undergraduates.

Chapter Five, "Voicing the Past: BBC Radio 4 and the Aberfan Disaster of 1963 [sic]", is particularly fascinating, as it approaches the relationship between sound and memory, something often neglected within media studies. Whereas some works have focused on the role of music in stirring memories, Garde-Hansen's explores the strength of radio documentaries in mediating the past, voicing histories, and specifically creating drama when there are no photographic images of an event (93). She draws attention to the production context of *Open Country*'s 2004 episode on the Aberfan Disaster, broadcast by BBC Radio 4, considering the dynamics between producer, presenter and audience. The chapter investigates the production process that led to the successful mix of oral-history interviews with survivors and relatives of the victims, and BBC archival material. The documentary gave voice to the drama of the Welsh village where 116 schoolchildren and 28 adults were killed in a coal waste landslide in October 1966. Garde-Hansen points out that the Aberfan Disaster programme shares, on the one hand, the ethos of the series—*Open Country* deals with life in the countryside, sounds of wildlife, and rural and farming-related issue—but, on the other hand, it continues the BBC digital storytelling project, specifically its "Capture Wales" (2001–7) initiative (98). In other words, the radio documentary kept its outdoor noises and sounds with no editorial intervention in order to maintain the spirit of authenticity that still guides the *Open Country* series. At the same time, it embraces the goals of many pioneering oral history projects that aimed at developing a portfolio of communities' stories and performance of memories (101). The chapter concludes with some observations on the BBC's agenda regarding its archiving and digitalisation process. Garde-Hansen raises some interesting questions about the future of the BBC archive, the role of its online iPlayer service, and piracy and copyright issues regarding its records (103). She prefigures a future where communities can finally access archival material on their history freely on the web, without waiting for mainstream broadcast, and hence compare their personal memories with collective ones (104).

Chapter Seven, "The Madonna Archive: Celebrity, Ageing and Fan Nostalgia", probably constitutes the standout element of the book. The exploration of stardom and fan culture from a memory studies perspective represents an original contribution to the field; moreover, the netnographic methodology adopted introduces the reader to new connections between media, consumption and audiences' memories. Garde-Hansen focuses on online fan memories of Madonna through the "Madonna Picture Project" (2010), an archive on the official website of the pop star where fans upload thousands of images from VHS, DVD, cassette and CD collections, promotional and vintage items and concert souvenirs. The author argues that fans construct the Madonna archive through three key modes: memory, ageing and nostalgia; through these frameworks audiences produce personal and meaningful reminders of how they have experienced music and pop culture in general (124). Garde-Hansen takes into consideration several phenomena from impersonators, copying and performing like Madonna, to forum discussion, fan websites and profiles, and groups on Facebook and MySpace. According to Garde-Hansen, Madonna is now capitalising on her own archival power, reinventing herself and reworking her musical and visual catalogue (134). The Queen of Pop should, therefore, be viewed as a "'heritage industry', who, now in her fifties, is offering a mediated space for collective and personal nostalgia, communal reminiscence, and fan articulation of personal memory and ageing" (133).

As part of the "Media Topics" series by Edinburgh University Press, which examines core issues within media studies, *Media and Memory* critically initiates students into major debates in memory studies and gives access to innovative approaches to "old" and "new" media and their relationship with memory. Therefore, in this case, marketing the book as "a compendium of" or "a guide to media and memory" would have better reflected the textbook nature of Garde-Hansen's work, particularly considering the exercises and discussion questions given at the end of each chapter. In fact, the author herself claims that it "is also essentially designed as an introduction to the study of how we individually and collectively make sense and order of our past through media" (8). *Media and Memory* presents as a broad project, which, though challenging, is never unmanageable. The author guides the reader through complex concepts and original ideas without falling into repetition and with enjoyable clarity. On the whole, Garde-Hansen's *Memory and Media* is an encouraging contribution to what hopefully will become a renewed attention to the problems of archiving and remediating digital memories.

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