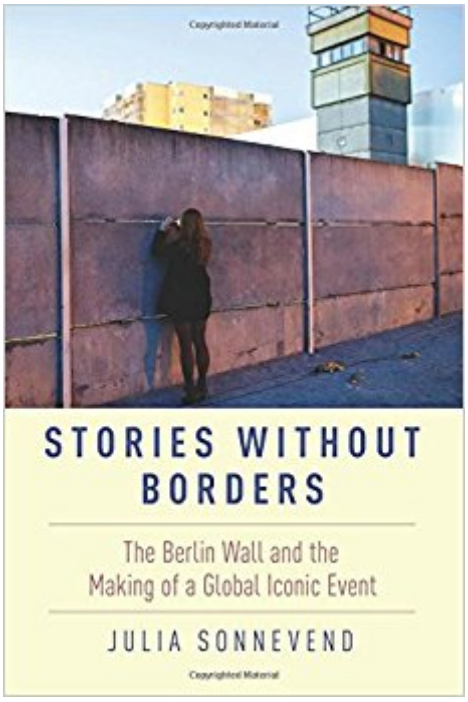
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Stories Without Borders: The Berlin Wall And The Making Of A Global Iconic Event



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Synopsis

How do stories of particular events turn into global myths, while others fade away? What becomes known and seen as a global iconic event? In Stories without Borders, Julia Sonnevend considers the ways in which we recount and remember news stories of historic significance. Focusing on journalists covering the fall of the Berlin Wall and on subsequent retellings of the event in a variety of ways - from Legoland reenactments to slabs of the Berlin Wall installed in global cities - Sonnevend discusses how certain events become built up so that people in many parts of the world remember them for long periods of time. She argues that five dimensions determine the viability and longevity of international news events. First, a foundational narrative must be established with certain preconditions. Next, the established narrative becomes universalized and a mythical message developed. This message is then condensed and encapsulated in a simple phrase, a short narrative, and a recognizable visual scene. Counter-narratives emerge that reinterpret events and in turn facilitate their diffusion across multiple media platforms and changing social and political contexts. Sonnevend examines these five elements through the developments of November 9, 1989 - what came to be known as the fall of the Berlin Wall. Stories Without Borders concludes with a discussion of how global iconic events have an enduring effect on individuals and societies, pointing out that after common currencies, military alliances, and international courts have failed, stories may be all that we have to bring hope and unity.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Julia Sonnevend’s book is not only a splendid work of cultural history but a brave attempt to rethink the place of media in modernity. At once lucid, iconoclastic, and constructive, Stories Without Borders helps us imagine how events become not only larger but also smaller than life, only to become larger again; how they crystallize into milestones as well as signposts at crossroads. Without succumbing to chic theoretical turns or what she deftly calls ’the tyranny of details,’ she helps our collective intelligence along a needed path to maturation." --Todd Gitlin, Professor of Journalism and Sociology, Columbia University "Challenging the corrosive discourse of suspicion, Julia Sonnevend demonstrates the continuing, indeed pivotal presence of the symbolic in contemporary life. Beautifully written, rigorously conceptualized, and deeply researched, Stories without Borders is a brilliant exemplar of cultural sociology."--Jeffrey C. Alexander, Lillian Chavenson Saden Professor of Sociology, Yale University "Did the Wall really fall? This book is important for showing how collective memory can construct a media event-retrospectively!" --Elihu Katz, Emeritus Professor, Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania

Julia Sonnevend is Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Michigan.

This is not a book for non academic types.... I went for the ebook format because the dictionary is crucial. Ms. / Dr. Sonnevend is a great mind who approaches the "ethics" or sociology of major life / news events with a fervor that helps the reader see all the political implications.

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