

CURRENT ISSUES
IN NORTH AMERICAN STUDIES AND CULTURAL STUDIES

The Making of Americans

How to Remember Martin Luther King and Malcolm X

Martin Luther King Day Lecture 2019

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“They turned King into more of a radical and made Malcolm look moderate,” a historian commented some time ago. “They” in this case meant the liberal-leaning media, but also academics, including scholars of cultural studies. What the comment generally referenced was the sometimes surprising shifts and turns practices of public re-remembering may take. Dr. Schäfer-Wünsche’s talk discusses the ways Dr. King and Malcolm X have been turned into quasi-compatible cultural icons, and it embeds these practices in reflections on the often contradictory processes of political/national self-positioning. If the title of her talk draws on Gertrude Stein’s monumental family saga, Dr. Schäfer-Wünsche takes up Stein’s insistence that ‘Americans’ are constantly being made and re-made. When it comes to public figures, Dr. Schäfer-Wünsche argues, this is much more pronounced and quite often truly striking.

Monday
January 21, 2019
6:00 pm

University of Bonn
Senatssaal, Main building
Am Hof 1, 53113 Bonn

The talk and discussion are followed by a short reception.



Elisabeth Schäfer-Wünsche was a senior lecturer at our program until 2017. She is especially interested in autobiography/memoir, the cultural and political weight of celebrity, African American studies, and effects of globalization. Among her recent publications is an entry on “Gender,” co-authored with Sabine Sielke and published in *Bonner Enzyklopädie der Globalität* (2017).