In the earliest documents of the genre transmitted from antiquity, biography and its reception are already associated with the creation of positive or negative personal reputations of politicians, artists, scientists or military leaders. Autobiography, in turn, whether spiritual since late antiquity or generally secular since the Enlightenment, has also been used to publicly create and negotiate reputations of its narrators and protagonists. The relation of such reputations created in biography and autobiography to the author figures and historical persons has produced long-standing scholarly and popular debates in terms of fictionality or nonfictionality, semiotic constructedness, and reliability.

In the past decades, however, life writings – including biography and autobiography as much as diaries or letters and, more contemporarily, life narratives and egodocuments in media such as painting, cinema, graphic novels, digital formats and photography, for example – have been critically discussed in terms of cultural and national significations, affective patterns, psychologically and legally coded constructions – relating to trauma studies, witnessing and testimonials – or narratological conventions including perspectives, temporalities or individual and collective memory. The discussion of life narratives and their genre conventions, patterns and protocols as established means of creating and destroying reputations appears to have recently met with only minor interest in the field.

Interdisciplinary and methodologically explicit papers address such critical questions across an international variety of works, genres, media and practices, with attention to theoretical premises of both Auto/Biography Studies and Reputation Politics Studies.

### Conference Venue:
Auto/Biography and Reputation Politics
International Symposium
February 6–7, 2020

**Department of English and American Studies**,  
Hof 8.3, Campus, Spitalgasse 2–4, University of Vienna, 1090 Wien

Supported by the Faculty of Philological and Cultural Studies, University of Vienna

Organizational Assistance:  
Sophie Engelbrecht-Schnür

### Convenors:
Nadja Gernalzick (Department of English and American Studies, University of Vienna)  
Edwina Hagen (Cultural History, Free University Amsterdam)  
Martijn Icks (Ancient History, University of Amsterdam)  
Jennifer Keohane (Communications Design, University of Baltimore)  
Eric Shiraev (School of Policy and Government, George Mason University, Arlington)
Conference Program

Thursday, February 6

09:00  Registration
09:10  Welcome and Introduction
       Nadja Gernalzick, Edwina Hagen, Martijn Icks,
       Jennifer Keohane, Eric Shiraev

Session 1
Chair: Nadja Gernalzick
09:30  Kathrin Engelskircher (French and Italian Language
       and Culture, Mainz)
       The Case of Édouard Louis: Autobiographical Writing
       between littérature engagée and Search for Identity
10:10  Jennifer Keohane (Communication Design,
       Baltimore)
       Narrating the Authentic Self: Campaign Speeches as
       Political Autobiography
10:50  Refreshments

Session 2
Chair: Edwina Hagen
11:10  Richard Toye (History, Exeter)
       Political Memoirs in the United Kingdom since 1900:
       Problems of Genre and Reputation Management
11:50  Katarzyna Waligóra (Theatre and Drama, Kraków)
       Intimate Diary of a Political Campaign: A Citizen
       by Manuela Gretkowska
12:30  Lunch

Session 3
Chair: Martijn Icks
14:20  Edwina Hagen (Cultural History, Free University of
       Amsterdam)
       Political Autobiography and the Post-Revolutionary
       Self: Political Reputations in the Netherlands during
       the Early Nineteenth Century
15:00  Katrin Horn (American Studies, Bayreuther)
       A Nineteenth-Century Case Study in Reputation
       Management: Charlotte Cushman
15:40  Refreshments

Session 4
Chair: Jennifer Keohane
16:00  Bettina Huber (American Studies, Passau)
       My War: Self-Writing on Political Reputation, Personal
       Morals and the War on Terror
16:40  Thomas Fritz Maier (European Studies, Novosibirsk)
       Restoring the Imperial Writer: On the Mobilization of
       Authors' Military Reputation and Ethos in Zakhar
       Prilepin's Vzvod (Platoon)
17:20  Final Discussion

Friday, February 7

09:00  Opening

Session 5
Chair: Eric Shiraev
09:10  Nisha Ghatak (Comparative Literature, Auckland)
       Reclaiming Chastity and Literary Repute in Maitreyi
       Devi's Twentieth-Century Autobiography
09:50  Treena Orchard (Health Studies, Western University,
       London, Ontario)
       Spinning Their Straw into Gold: How Feminist-Hating
       Trolls Helped Fashion Me a Public Reputation
10:30  Refreshments

Session 6
Chair: Julia Lajta-Novak
11:10  Martijn Icks (Ancient History, University of
       Amsterdam)
       The Demon and the Prostitute: Justinian and
       Theodora in Procopius's Secret History
12:10  Lunch

Session 7
Chair: Florian Krüpe
14:00  Farah Latif (School of Government, George Mason
       University, Fairfax, Virginia)
       Narrative (Un)Writing of the Trump Presidency:
       Seeking Catharsis Through Political Satire
14:40  Eric Shiraev (School of Government, George Mason
       University, Arlington, Virginia)
       Character Attacks in US Presidents' Biographies:
       Psychological Mechanisms
15:20  Refreshments

Session 8
Chair: Nadja Gernalzick
15:40  Nadjiba Bouallegue (Letters and English Language,
       Guelma)
       The Exilic Discourse as a Subversive Force: Samia
       Serageldin's The Cairo House and Cristina Garcia's
       King of Cuba
16:20  Chang Liu (Transcultural Studies, Heidelberg)
       On Madonna's Chinese Biography and the
       Negotiation of Reputation Politics
17:00  Irina Tsukerman (Independent Scholar, New York)
       Multimodality and Medial Materiality of Reputation:
       Manal Al-Shairj's Memoir Daring to Drive: A Saudi
       Woman's Awakening and Ferial Masry's Biographical
       Documentary An Ode to My Mother
17:40  Final Discussion