

CALL FOR PAPERS

Five Decades of Innocence and Experience:

The Work of Eva Figes

An International Conference co-organised by:

Division of Media, English and Culture, School of the Arts, University of Northampton
(UK)

Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana, Universidad de Zaragoza (Spain)

**To be held at the School of the Arts, University of Northampton (UK),
10th-11th September 2010**



Almost five decades have elapsed since the British writer Eva Figes began her literary career. Born in Berlin in 1932 into a family of assimilated German Jews and forced to emigrate to Great Britain in 1939 due to the outbreak of the Second World War, Eva Figes has contributed to the corpus of contemporary literature in English thanks to her prodigious output as both critic and novelist. In 2009 the British Library decided to acquire the rights to her personal archives, and so we think that this is the moment to give Eva Figes the place she deserves in the contemporary literary canon by organising an international conference on her work.

Despite being an established writer and having won some important literary prizes and titles in England (The Guardian Prize in 1967, the Honorary degree of Doctor of Letters by Brunel University in 2002), her work has received relatively limited critical attention. Figes' life experiences – her childhood experience of the Holocaust; emigration to a foreign country; being a woman trying to forge a literary career – have

left significant traces in all her works. Moreover, Figes' own writing career which spans the 1960s to the present in many ways reflects the evolution of British fiction in the post-war period. Her work resists classification within a single, unifying category. Whether seen as a feminist inheritor of Virginia Woolf, analysed as an Anglo-Jewish writer, or regarded as part of a postmodernist literary aesthetic, Figes' work represents a unique contribution to English literature. We welcome approaches to her work from any perspective which provides insight into Eva Figes' wide-ranging and impressive oeuvre.

Plenary speakers to include:

- Dr. David Brauner (University of Reading, UK)
- Prof. Thomas Michael Stein (University of Mainz, Germany)
- Dr. Julia Tofantšuk (University of Tallinn, Estonia)
- A Guest appearance from Eva Figes to be confirmed

Suggested topics to explore include, but are not limited to:

- Eva Figes in relation to Contemporary British Fiction and the literary canon
- The feminist agenda and the construction of female identities in Figes' works
- The question of Jewishness and the presence of the Holocaust in Eva Figes' literary world
- The construction of identity in Figes' fictions
- The persistence of modernism in Figes' works
- Eva Figes as a literary critic
- Eva Figes' relation to postmodernism
- Eva Figes as inheritor of Virginia Woolf
- Eva Figes and Trauma Studies
- The autobiographical aspect in Figes' novels

- Formal experimentalism in Figes' novels
- The ethical dimension of Figes' literary production
- The evolution of Figes' literary career
- Narrative and story-telling in Figes' works
- The experience of motherhood in Figes' writing
- The experience of war in Figes' works
- Writing as self-healing in Figes' literary career

Please submit paper proposals (abstracts of 300 words and short bio) to both conference organisers by **1st April 2010**:

Dr. Sonya Andermahr (University of Northampton, UK):

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